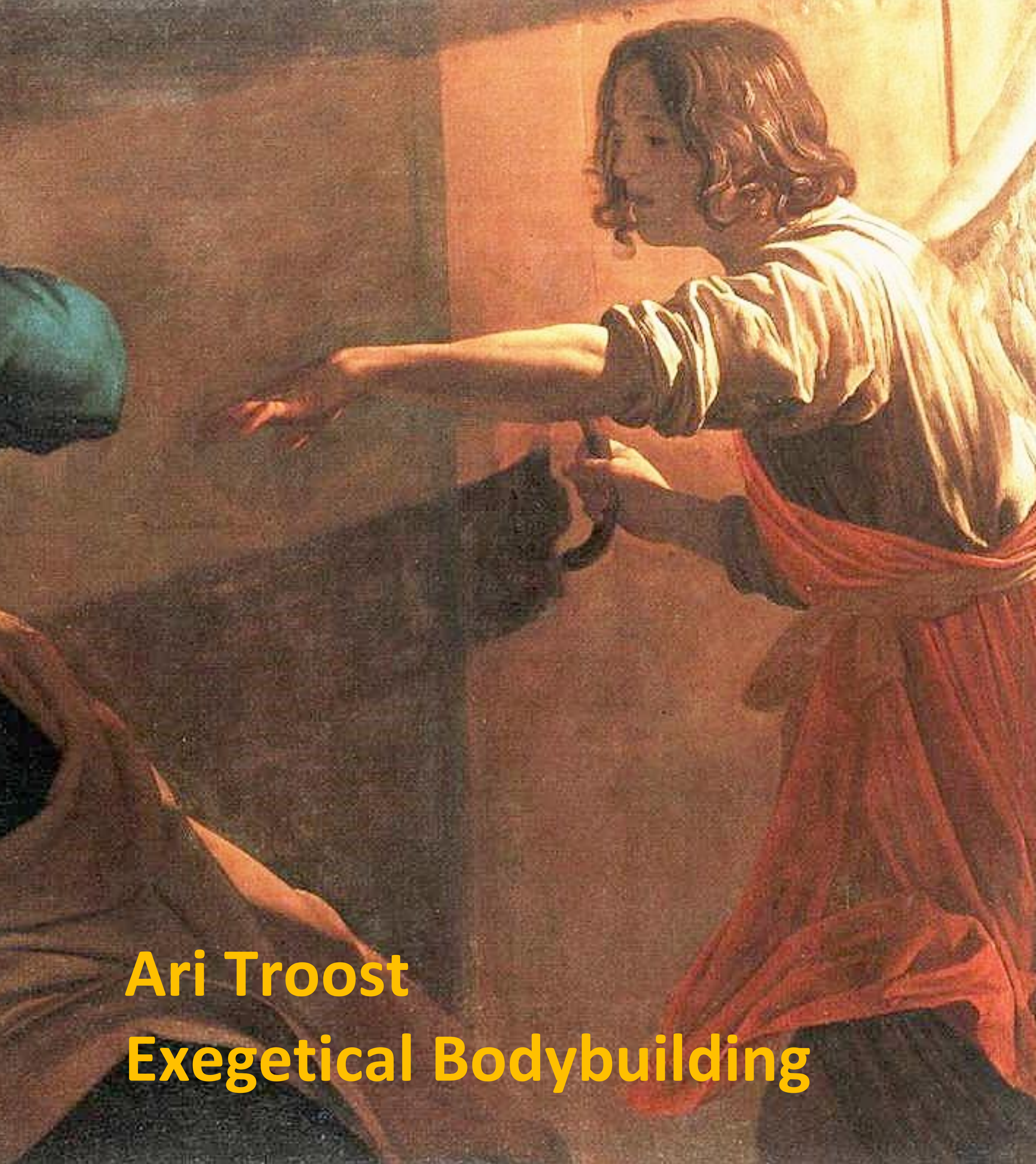

Ari Troost

Exegetical Bodybuilding

Gender and Interpretation in Luke 1–2

Exegetical Bodybuilding

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Exegetical Bodybuilding:
Gender and Interpretation in Luke 1–2

Exegetische Bodybuilding: Gender en Interpretatie in Lukas 1–2

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Arie Cornelis Troost

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This thesis has been written as a part-time freelance work, next to my regular job as a high-school teacher in classical languages and cultures and next to my other vocation, the regular service as a minister in the church. Research, education, and spirituality have continued to be a passionate force in my life over the years. Without the love of Anja, lifelong beloved, and of our children Laurens and Heleen this work would not have been written, as I would have missed the sense of an "I." It is for this reason, that I gladly deviate from the time honoured academic custom to thank your beloved ones by the end of your foreword. Without such love this work would not have been written in the first place.

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A very special word of thanks and friendship is due to the Groningen Crasis group and the Ancient World Seminar. During our monthly meetings we discussed many issues on the intersection of classical languages, archaeology, ancient philosophy, and Judaic and New Testament studies. It is truly stimulating and motivating to have such meetings on a regular basis when you are working on a non-affiliated basis. Especially the discussions with Eelco Glas about Roman masculinities were helpful and inspiring. Caroline van Toor knew how to keep me in good spirits, with just a couple of words. I would also like to thank the participants in the Amsterdam New Testament Colloquium. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to regularly present the progress of my research in this learned company.

Among the participants of the Amsterdam NT Colloquium, I would like to commemorate the late Tjitze Baarda. Professor Baarda was one of those senior scholars I really estimated because of his awesome knowledge and thorough insight, combined with an exemplary and generous kindness. When I read my chapter on autobiographical criticism to the Colloquium, being somewhat uncertain how such a personal work would be received, professor Baarda responded with the unforgettable words, "I was born too early," as he was thrilled by the many

new approaches in the field. Immediately afterwards he sent me an email containing some of his own childhood memories that had motivated his eminent New Testament studies. It was a moving letter, but I understood the real meaning only some time afterwards, when he explained that in one of his first scholarly works he had put some of his personal experiences which proved too early; he never tried again. His experiences and kind words stimulated me to dare and to be adventurous. It is to the memory of this very kind and learned man that I dedicate this work.

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Editorial Note

Titles and capitalisation in a theological context are never neutral, but reflect centuries of (dogmatic) reception. Opposing the idea that the Old Testament would have been superseded by a New Testament, I prefer the title Tanak (or occasionally the Hebrew Bible), to refer to the books of Torah, Neviʾim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). I would have loved to change the title New Testament for Second Testament, were it not for the feeling that this would not be very helpful. Whether a New Testament or a Second Testament, the implied idea remains that there is an Old Testament or a First Testament, whereas I would rather confess that there is only One Testament and that the books collected in what we call the New Testament are interpretations of this One Testament from the perspective of an original Jesus experience. I therefore decided to let it be the way it is, for better or for worse, as Tanak and New Testament, leaving it to the New Testament to bear the historical name of its own pretentions. As to the use of capitals, I refrain from capitalizing nouns that are commonly understood as references to persons of the Trinity, such as holy spirit, son of God, or power of the most high. This must not be taken as a lack of due reverence, but rather as a reservation in order not to invest in what are after all narrative characters with dogmatic assumptions.

In my first chapter, where the authorship of the Gospel of Luke is questioned, it seems odd to keep writing about Luke as an author. I will therefore use the title Third Gospel throughout my work. When reference is made to the Lukan *Doppelwerk* (the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles as a coherent work), I will use the simple reference Luke-Acts, as an alternative designation would lead to an unreadable result. Likewise, referring to chapters and verses, I will retain for clarity's sake the formal notation, as, e.g., Luke 1–2, or Luke 1:35. I will also retain the name of Luke in technical terms, such as "Luke's *Sondergut*," or in official titles of works of art, such as "St. Luke Painting the Madonna."

We are used (or will perhaps never really get used) to the masculine personal pronoun "he" as a neutral signifier. The attempt at inclusiveness with "s/he" does not, however, offer a particularly happy alternative, as the implication of a binary opposition is still kept in place, as if it would be either "she" or "he." Allowing for a greater variety than could be conveyed by writing "s/he," I have chosen throughout this work to use the pronouns "she" and "her," with the explicit comment that these pronouns must be taken as inclusive signifiers.

Quotations from the Septuagint (LXX) and the New Testament are from the editions by Rahlfs and Nestle-Aland 28. Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. In order not to burden the text by a lot of bibliographical abbreviations, I have avoided the use of abbreviations

as much as I could, with the exception of very frequently used works mentioned in the list of bibliographical abbreviations. Generally, a work is referred to by the name of its author(s) and the year of publication of the edition used, further details are being provided in the bibliography. Reference to ancient authors and texts is made according to the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd edition 2014.

Abbreviations

BDAG Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

BHS Elliger, Karl, and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.

ESV English Standard Version of the Bible, 2001.

GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte

HAL Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. eds. *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament.* Leiden: Brill, 1995, 2004.

KJV King James Version of the Bible, 1611.

LEH Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003.

LSJ Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.

LXX Rahlfs, A., ed. *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpres.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1982.

NA^{28} Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. Münster: Deutsche Bibelgesellchaft, 2012.

PG Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed., Patrologia Graeca [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Graeca], 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886

OLD Glare, P.G.W. ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968–1982.

Str-B Strack, Hermann Leberecht, and Paul Billerbeck. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch.* 6 vols. Munich: Beck, 1922–1961.

Introduction

Once it is understood that what seemed like neutrality was actually a vote for the status quo, then we are forced more than ever to take sides.

Kathleen M. Sands,
Escape from Paradise (1994: 6).

The words spoken by Kathleen Sands, that what seems like neutrality is actually a vote for the status quo, have accompanied me for many years. Neutrality, it has been taught to us as students back in the 1970s, was a cherished value at the academy. For me, as a theological student preparing for ministry in the church, young, white, male, nothing seemed wrong with that. Except that we were increasingly asked to reflect on the role of gender, biological sex, ethnicity, and class. Evasiveness, negation, and resistance were my natural responses, until I understood that a vote for the status quo meant a vote against my own fellow students, and therefore against my self-development and freedom. There is a clear interdependence between the way you learn to see others and the way you learn to see yourself. Once you have realised this, you are forced more than ever to take sides, that is, to take a critical stance towards the status quo with its defined roles for gender, race, and class. You have to, because you are involved yourself, and you owe it to others as well. For me, personally, the development of gender took top priority, as will appear from this dissertation, although I am keenly aware that it is hard, if not impossible, and at any rate risky to separate gender as if it were the only category that matters. Gender must always be seen in the context of embodied and situated life, even when only a relatively small section of academia is envisioned: the discourse of biblical exegesis pertaining to the Lukan birth narrative of Jesus.

In this introduction, I will first explain what my dissertation is about (section 1). After this I will go deeper into three topics that are of pivotal importance to my work, namely the authoritative and mythological function of biblical narrative (section 2.1), the importance of gender in understanding the gospels (section 2.2), and the importance of autobiography in biblical exegesis (section 2.3). A brief overview of the three chapters of my work will conclude this introduction (section 3).

1. Four "Objects" of Research

Over the past years, I was often asked what my dissertation was about. I always thought this a difficult question, as there are various ways to answer, while a clear and concise answer was expected. The most simple and down to earth answer, easily given, easily understood, I thought, was that it is about a text from the New Testament, the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke. When I added, that these two chapters contain the nativity story, that is, the well-known Christmas story, at least one of the biblical versions of it, with the message of the angel and the virginal conception, the shepherds and the child in the manger, with Mary and Joseph, and that I wanted to take a critical look at this text in order to understand what the text really says, the chances were that I had already made my subject sufficiently clear. An informed conversation partner, however, would ask the inevitable follow-up question, whether there is still something to be discovered in this text. This question is more difficult to answer, for I had to talk about the reason of why I had chosen such a well-known text, that has indeed already been extensively researched (so much so that it is virtually impossible to account for the enormous amount of material available, such as commentaries, monographs, articles, ancient and medieval sources, pre- and postmodern sources, and works of art, be it paintings, literature, or music). Now my answer needs to be more nuanced.

The Bible has always been used as an authoritative text. Traditional interpretations served to confirm existing ideological positions, especially in the church, for instance on the subject of the relationship between man and woman, on sexuality, on church leadership, or on Christian missions. In the light of a critical questioning of the role of gender, race, and class in modern discursive practices, or of Jewish-Christian relations, or the ideology implied in theological God-talk, or the church's complicity in colonialism and racism, biblical texts are questioned and re-examined. Do they really provide the fuel to keep existing ideological positions in place? Or could we say, with black or ethnic biblical critics, that the Bible is colonised too, and that we have to try and set free the subversive potential of the book? Questions like these are of course not new. The role of the Bible was already an issue in the abolition movement as well as in the first feminist wave, with *The Woman's Bible* edited by Elisabeth Cady Stanton between 1895 and 1898, while the second feminist wave's legacy to the field of New Testament studies in particular is marked by the critical biblical hermeneutics defined by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983). What is new, however, is today's intense hermeneutical awareness of the way race, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation time and again intersect and communicate in complicated and often blurred dialogues, working to obliterate

those who are most vulnerable (Crenshaw 1989). The confident critical "I" of earlier days has by now been replaced by a rather uneasy "I," that is, an "I" that is aware of guilt and shame, that struggles for liberation, but quite often stumbles into the pitfalls of objectivity and innocence (Wekker 2016).

As a critical "I," I know that I myself am part of ideological structures, both contributing to it and benefitting from it, due to which my claims to hermeneutical objectivity are useless. Whether I like it or not, I automatically take sides. I am, therefore, a struggling "I," insofar as I try to be aware of my position, and I try to do my best to advance the hermeneutic space that is needed to allow others to develop themselves in full autonomy. Doing so, I am not especially defining the liberation of others—since I cannot know and should not pretend to know what liberty would mean to others. Rather I am serving my own liberation, as I would finally experience the enriching grace of meeting the other for who she is.

Turning to the way gender works in biblical hermeneutics and related studies on the ancient world, we are faced with an already considerable body of research. Lin Foxhall (2013), who investigated the role played by gender, especially as a concept organizing modern understanding of antiquity, explained that we are engaged in a complex conversation, as modern developments in the way we understand gender motivate our view of classical antiquity, while reversely the way antiquity deals with gender serves to legitimise modern understanding. This counts of course also for the way we read the Bible, and the New Testament with it, as a collection of works stemming from the ancient word. As the Bible is still an authoritative book, the way modern understanding of gender is legitimised requires further investigation in the light of recent gender research in antiquity. The Gospel of Luke, or the Third Gospel, is in this respect a particularly important text.

Already in the 1970s, during the second feminist wave, the Third Gospel was identified as an ambiguous text that through its carefully divided attention between male and female characters alike seemed to propagate what we might want to call gender equality, though on the other hand the overall message seemed to remain basically an androcentric one. The conclusion, and still the present-day status quo, was that we might have to stick to the idea that there is a double message in the Third Gospel (Seim 1994b). In light of the results of recent gender research in the ancient world, however, I would suggest that what has been perceived as a double message, could actually betray a problem with the concept of gender itself. I have the strong impression that the concept of gender as we know it, has been developed within a symbolic order that came into being with emerging modernity during the Enlightenment, and

focuses on male and female reproductive physicality.[1] If I am not mistaken, this concept of gender differs so much from the way gender was perceived and constituted in the ancient world, that we are simply unable to fully understand the way gender in antiquity worked. It may even be, that the concept of gender, as we use it, does not apply to the way men and women "were" in the ancient world, and that the use of this concept is an instance of parontocentrism.[2] To make things not more difficult than they already are, I take it for granted, at this stage of research at least, that we can know our own time and that we can see the difference between our own time—as far as it is one time (which I believe it is not)—and earlier times.[3]

This would then be my second answer to the question what my work is about: it is about the construction of gender in the ancient world, and especially in Luke 1–2, in distinction to modernity, with the *caveat* that the concept of gender as we use it, might, after all, not apply to the ancient world. Questions that I would like to put to the text concern, for instance, the rather enigmatic dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Mary when Mary is told that she will conceive and bring forth a son, Jesus (Luke 1:34–35). Trapped in modern notions of gender and sexuality, it seems almost impossible not to read this text then as conveying the message of a miraculous pregnancy or a virginal conception, perhaps initiated by a metaphorical procreative act of God. My question would be whether this text is really about the technology of procreation. Would that be the stuff a gospel is made of? Or is our modern concept of gender playing a hermeneutical trick on us and do we have to imagine 'something completely different'? At this point, however, fresh questions may come in. The trickiest one is why gender should be important in the first place. Would gender not betray a typically modern interest, especially since I have suggested just now that the concept of gender may not even apply at all? Is gender not a very unlikely issue to be dealt with in a gospel, as the author's intention (the term itself is already tricky) would have been to spread the good news, not bothered by intricate theories

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[1] The term "symbolic order" is introduced by Lacan in his *Écrits* (1966, English translation Lacan 2002: 6–48). My use of the term (inspired by Mooij 1983) is somewhat eclectic, in fact coming close to Lévy-Strauss' order of culture that is mediated by language, that is, a language-defined set of values prevalent in society. With symbolic order, I mean a coherent set of culturally defined discursive signifiers, pointing to basic assumptions about who we, as humans, are and how we should be. A symbolic order works to give meaning to our existence, exacts in a certain way our submission, and moulds our lives. This is not to say that there is necessarily only one symbolic order, or that everyone necessarily fits into one symbolic order. Nevertheless, the inherent claim of a symbolic order is universality. The symbolic order, then, is about cultural dominance.

[2] The term parontocentrism has been introduced by Bal 1988b: 86–88. Parontocentrism is "the tendency to argue from the central position of the present, in parallel with androcentrism and ethnocentrism." Parontocentrism is “the fallacy of taking the present as the norm” (Bal 1988b: 267 n. 23).

[3] On the question whether we can really speak of "our" modernity and whether we would be able to express the difference between our times in relation to every other time, see for instance Ricoeur 2004: 305–314.

concerning gender that would haunt generations to come? With questions like these, we are gradually moving to a third object of my research, the theory of hermeneutics itself.

Hermeneutical theory reflects on the way a text (in the broadest sense, including works of art and theoretical discourse) is brought to understanding. In the development of hermeneutical theory, which began with Friedrich Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century, the focus has shifted from understanding the author (through the study of biography) via the text itself (through understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of the text) to the role of the reader (by giving account of the reader's self-perception in view of the various contexts she is living in).[4] When I am addressing gender in the ancient world, I have to turn—paradoxically—to a modern concept and a modern reader. As a reader, I start inevitably reading with preconceived notions of gender in my mind. As we tend to notice what we already know, chances are that we will find our modern ideas of gender only confirmed by the text, with this advantage that the text's authority provides our presuppositions with just the touch of venerable respectability that is needed to abide safely by our preset ideas. On the other hand, reading in an intentionally deviant manner may help me unsettle preset notions brought to the text, working to enlarge my understanding of gender, precisely through the experience that gender, modern and ancient, do not converge. Hermeneutical awareness, then, is required, using modern concepts not with the claim that they may be "in" the text, but using them in a heuristic way, looking for the frictions and cracks in the wall. The third object of my research, therefore, is hermeneutical theory itself, with the aim to find a way to unsettle preset notions of gender and create space to gradually let arise other possible ways to understand gender (provided that the term is at least temporarily useful).

A critical and perceptive conversation partner will have noticed by now, that there is apparently even a fourth object of my research: it is about the way I perceive myself within the reading process. It cannot be denied, I myself am in play. The involvement of the reader *an sich* in the process of interpretation is anything but new. In biblical scholarship, Rudolf Bultmann already in 1957 asked attention for readerly presuppositions. It has become more and more accepted in biblical scholarship to be aware of your own position and make a statement on your position. There is, however, a chasm between my position (that is, say, as a white, middle-class, highly educated and privileged man of mixed Saxon-Frisian descent, who happens to live in post-war Western Europe and professes to be of a Christian and feminist persuasion—to mention only a couple of constituents) and my autobiography (that is, "I" as someone who was brought

[4] The theory of hermeneutics, usually traced back to Schleiermacher, is developed by Dilthey (see Dilthey 1981), Heidegger (see Heidegger 1962) and Gadamer (see Gadamer 2004). Comprehensive reference works on the subject of hermeneutics and biblical studies include Wischmeyer 2004; 2009; 2016; and Zwiep 2014.

up in a loving family coping with the traces of post-war trauma, with this isolated youth and this body of mine, to which other people responded, signifying me whether I liked it or not). My point is that "I," as a reader, is not a stable and coherent entity. I am continuously and inevitably changing my autobiography during the process of interpretation. My position, therefore, may look like a matter of fact (after all, I "am" a white, highly educated man etc.), but my description is actually the result of my "I," who is carefully selecting, skipping, and reinterpreting so as to present a reasonably acceptable position. To put it still differently, when I am giving account of my personal presence in the hermeneutical process, I am trying to put my self-evaluation into discourse, thereby inevitably altering and polishing it. Giving account of my reading "I," I must accept that I am changing this "I" at the same time (Ricoeur 1995). It is in an approach that has been labelled at the turn of the century as "autobiographical biblical criticism" (Kitzberger 2002a), that this hermeneutical awareness is brought to bear on biblical criticism.

Especially in the field of autobiographical biblical criticism, research on gender, race, and class has been explicitly defined. To me personally, especially autobiographical biblical criticism with a view to gender has been important. The Bible has always been there in my youth, though not as a God given source of authority, nor even as a book that was regularly read. The book was always there as a piece of culture, a source of stories that related somehow to the way things were done, said, and experienced. As a man, brought up with the self-evidence of male prerogative and at the same time feeling a lifelong uneasiness with gender roles, the use of biblical narrative attracted my attention. What does biblical narrative do to establish gender? How is biblical narrative used to legitimise patterns of gender? In retrospect, it seems hardly surprising that I chose precisely this Lukan text as the textual object of my research. It is a text in which interpreters, both hermeneutic and creative, have read a "happy holy family" (Reinhartz 2004), with a precocious child that is called to obedience, a devoted mother, and a dutiful father. This really sounds too well-known and it calls for a critical examination. This, then, is my involvement in the work presented here.

I would like to add that it is not the anecdotic I am after. Although it may be very helpful to understand my own life, the way I relate to my body and to the various contexts in which I was brought up, this would hardly interest a scholarly readership unless there is a more general point involved. This more general point which I would like to make, is the call for moral responsibility. We are called to develop a mature judgement (Neiman 2014), which means that we dare to do away with the childish feelings of safety offered by a coherent symbolic order; it means that we refuse to live behind the veil of innocence, and that we stand up and take responsibility, accepting that there are cracks in the building of culture; it means that we

become aware that people are excluded, as they do not find a safe place in the building; it finally means that we accept the moral duty to correct this where and whenever possible. Becoming aware of your own personal involvement in reading such authoritative texts as biblical (and other ancient) texts, may enable you to accept moral responsibility and to live accordingly.

2. Function, Gender, and I

I have outlined four objects of the present thesis: the text of Luke 1–2, the construction of gender, the theory of hermeneutics, and my autobiographical self. The term "object" may sound more objective than intended, as if there is an object lying outside of me, waiting to be explored. There is no object without observation, and observation inevitably implies interpretation. I will, therefore, in the following sections clarify a few elements of the positions sketched above. I will discuss three elements, namely the authoritative and mythological function of biblical narrative, the importance of gender in understanding the gospels, and the importance of autobiography in biblical interpretation.

2.1 The Function of Biblical Narrative

First, I would like to discuss the authoritative and mythological function of Luke 1–2. In the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke, we find, among other stories, the story of the birth of Jesus (another version is found in the Gospel of Matthew). The story of the birth of Jesus has been highly influential. Jesus as the son of God, the virgin Mary and the virginal conception, the idea of a reversal between John and Jesus and the accompanying thought that Judaism would have been substituted by Christianity: these are elements that are deeply rooted in our modern cultural residue.[5] With these stories, we are in the midst of what is called the authority of the Bible.

The Bible has always been used as an authoritative book, especially so in religious communities.[6] Usually a moral and epistemic authority is attached to the Bible. The Bible is also used, however, in a mythological way, perhaps even more so in a culture like ours, that is gradually putting aside its religious substratum, but nevertheless professes to be aware of its "Judeo-Christian heritage" (being unclear about what is really meant by this heritage). The

[5] With the term "virginal conception" I refer to the idea that "Jesus … was historically conceived by Mary who was and remained bodily a virgin in the process, or, in other words … was conceived without the intervention of human seed," that is her *virginitas ante partum* (Fitzmyer 1973, quoted from 1981b: 41). This idea should not be confused with the "virgin birth," the idea "that Mary remained a virgin even at the time of Jesus' birth (i.e., that his birth was miraculous, or caused no rupture of the hymen or other bodily lesions)," that is the virginal parturition (Fitzmyer1973, quoted from 1981b: 41–42). I will stick to these stipulative definitions, with the exception of the reference to Gilman's novel *Herland* (1915, edition Gilman 1979), where the term "virgin birth" is used, although obviously "virginal conception" is meant. As Fitzmyer suggests, the two terms are often used interchangeably (ibid.). A critical discussion of the virginal conception is especially found in Fitzmyer 1973; Brown 1977; Fitzmyer 1981b; Schaberg 1987; Schaberg 2005; Schaberg 2012b.

[6] On authority, Bible, and religious communities, I have used Bocheńsky 1974; Stalder 1976; Smit 2017.

Bible's mythological status consists in that it provides the grand stories or master narratives (Lyotard 1979) through which we explain, legitimise, and give meaning to the way we act, not in a direct authoritative way, but in an indirect way, by means of well-known narrative patterns and works of art, through philosophical-ethical traditions, through literature and cinema, and in general, through humanitarian principles, laid down for instance in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This mythological function of the Bible succeeds as long as we live in a continuum between symbolic order and time-hallowed interpretation.[7]

The mythological use of the Bible counts even for present-day Dutch society that professes to have separated state and church, a society that calls itself secularised and witnesses a general decline not only in church attendance but also in knowledge of the Bible and Christian history (the so-called biblical illiteracy). A very recent example is the swimmer Maarten van der Weijden who tried to swim the famous skating tour of the Eleven Cities (*Elfstedentocht*) in the Dutch province of Friesland in August 2018. This tour of almost 200 kilometres always has a stirring effect on Dutch people, both through the memory of past heroic performances in the barren cold and the fact that the tour is now only incidentally organised due to the relatively warm winters. Van der Weijden, himself cured from cancer, undertook his effort in order to collect money for cancer research, but was shortly before the finish taken out of the water by order of his personal physician to prevent further serious damage (or even worse) to his health. Two of the main and most serious Dutch newspapers commented on this heroic effort in a truly biblical religious way. In "The Adoration of the Suffering Maarten" (*NRC Handelsblad*) he was directly compared to Jesus. It was as if he had walked on the water. Like Jesus who took upon himself the suffering of mankind, van der Weijden swam himself broken-down to cure mankind's suffering from cancer. He greedily drank the water contaminated with E-coli. It was a modern passion narrative, not in fourteen stations, but in eleven cities. His supporters were standing along the Via Dolorosa, helping him like Simon of Cyrene, even offering him his favourite pizza. After he was taken out of the water, his wife like a pieta took her husband in her arms. In "You can hardly have it more Christian" (*de Volkskrant*) we read that the whole event was a high mass celebrated on the banks of the Frisian waters. Van der Weijden being taken away on a stretcher was compared to the descent from the cross. He had acted out of a feeling of guilt, to do repentance for his cure and to redeem others through his own suffering. The newspapers were unified in their conclusion that people are in need of a "Good Man" and want to witness suffering because of its beauty and the hope of resurrection.[8] Amusing though the example may

[7] For the mythological use of the Bible, see especially Frye in Frye and Macpherson 2004.

[8] *NRC Handelsblad*, 20 August 2018, by Floor Rusman (Rusman 2018), and *de Volkskrant*, 21 August 2018, by Sander van Walsum (Van Walsum 2018). I have summarised and translated parts of their accounts.

be, I find this sudden eruption of a culturally embedded theological residue disquieting. For on closer inspection, I am not sure whether we would really like to appreciate such heroic self sought suffering from a modern Christian theological perspective. We must face, however, the presence of such patterns of understanding in our cultural residue and maybe even in our own minds.

An example taken from Luke 1–2 is the happy holy family, mentioned earlier. The idea of a holy family is common enough through endless representations in art, or through the yearly performances of the nativity scene in Christmas celebrations with children, and even through the way the holy family figures in the modern Jesus cinema (that is, the whole of movies on Jesus' birth, life, and passion). Adele Reinhartz (2004; 2007: 65–96) explained that especially the Jesus cinema presents an image of family life in which Josef is the breadwinner who represents his family in the community; as a man, he has a role in the healthy development of Jesus, while Mary is a serene woman, almost like a nun, who is occupied by domestic life and her nurturing role. Thus, a sound, happy, and desexualised family life is the basis for the future well-being of the child. It is most questionable whether such a nucleus family would ever have existed in the context in which Jesus grew up, and to assume such a family in the case of Jesus is hardly warranted by exegetical evidence, but these are the images that apparently keep informing a modern readership. The psychological element of the nucleus family is not only present in creative receptions, such as the Jesus cinema, but also in hermeneutic receptions, such as biblical commentaries. In the way the scene of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:40–52) is explained, to mention just one example, we find very similar notions of family life, featuring a dutiful father and a worried mother, faced with a precocious child who despite his amazing talents has yet to learn the value of obedience. Thus, culturally defined presuppositions keep informing the interpretation of biblical texts. The text is, as it were, colonised and superseded, in order to fulfil the mythological duty of rendering modern values self-evident.

When cracks arise in the walls of this cultural building, and the symbolic order ceases to be the massive bastion of self-evidence, due to a growing awareness of diverging and intersecting contexts and of the dissymmetrical division of power, influence, and autonomy, the mythological function of biblical narrative (let alone its religious authoritative function) starts to be questioned. We then begin to realise that that the notions and principles implied in its mythological use are culturally defined and in many respects indeed questionable and hardly biblical.[9] It requires a critical and adventurous reading to resist the power of the combined forces of religious authority and modern myth building. A story in which these combined forces

[9] On the use of modern mythologies, see Barthes 1957. On the use of myths, see also Barbour 1974.

are extremely virulent is the virginal conception. Although it is clear that already in antiquity the idea of a virginal conception was found suspicious by critics of the early Jesus movement, and although the writers of the gospels apparently tried to cope with the questions raised by the idea of a virginal conception (Schaberg 1987; 2005; 2012b), it is also true that a simple observation that the virginal conception is "in" the text is untenable. Nevertheless, the combined forces of religious authority (as there are, dogma, liturgy, traditions of interpretation) and mythology (Christmas carols, nativity plays, works of art, literature and cinema) have firmly anchored the idea of a virginal conception, working not only to keep the church's teachings in place, but also to reinforce the ideal of modern family life, even if (or maybe precisely because) so many modern families are broken. Working further on the track set out by Jane Schaberg (1987), who recognised in the portrayal of Mary the desperate situation of single pregnant teenage girls in her own impoverished hometown city of Detroit, I will argue, in my first chapter, that a virginal conception in Luke's text is understandable, although not probable. I believe that we should dispose of mythological notions of the family, invested as they are with modern sexuality and power.[10] In my reading, the Third Gospel bypasses such issues, in order to evoke the Exodus motive, where desperate people find their way under the protective wings of God's presence.

2.2. Gender and the Gospel

I would like to add some remarks on gender research and the Third Gospel. Much research has already been done on gender both in classical studies and in Judaic and biblical studies.[11] With regard to the Third Gospel, however, we seem to be in an impasse. The way in which the Third Gospel takes care to grant a good deal of narrative space to women, especially through the technique of narrative pairing, has received much attention, but how should we evaluate this attention?[12] Does the gospel propagate a kind of (modern) gender equality? Or is the gospel rather conservative, establishing some gender roles for men and other gender roles for

[10] See Schaberg 1987; 2005, 2012b and 2012c.

[11] In the field of classical studies, see especially Laqueur 1990; Halperin, Winkler, and Froma 1990; Hallett and Skinner 1997; Foxhall and Salmon 1998a; Foxhall and Salmon 1998b; Gleason 1995; Gleason 1999; Kuefler 2001; Rosen and Sluiter 2003; Roisman 2005; Skinner 2005; McDonnell 2003; McDonnell 2006; Van den Hengel 2009; Foxhall 2013. In the field of New Testament and related studies, see esp. Anderson, Moore and Kim 2003; Gleason 2003; Moore and Anderson 2003; Mayordomo 2006; Penner and Vander Stichele 2007; Colleen Conway 2008; Brittany Wilson 2014a; 2014b; 2015. The list is not exhaustive, these are the works that I consulted. A useful means for further survey provides O'Brien 2014.

[12] See, e.g., Jeremias 1972; Parvey 1974: 139–140; Swidler 1979: 181; Via 1987; Witherington 1988: 129; Corley 1993; Seim 1994a; 1994b; D'Angelo 1999.

women?[13] The ambiguity in this matter has led Turid Seim (1994b) to speak of the gospel's "double message." I will argue that, although there is reason to accept a double message on a superficial level, there is in fact not really a double message.

The problem arises from a parontocentric use of the concept of gender. We are using modern, bodily based concepts of "man" and "woman," and silently assume that these concepts apply to antiquity as well. Most probably, however, we are missing the point as we still do not fully understand how gender (as we understand the term) was understood in the ancient world, that is, provided that the concept of gender as such applies at all. Let me give an example. When we call Jesus a man, we assume that Jesus was perceived as a man by his contemporaries in quite the same way as we perceive a man nowadays. But was he? Maud Gleason (2003) has already explained that Jesus, in the elite gender logic of his time, would not really be considered a man, although we do not quite know how non-elite Jewish contexts would have responded. By the end of 2017, a pastor of the Swedish church triggered a heated debate by proposing to call Jesus by the Swedish neuter pronoun. Of course this pastor had not the slightest intention to doubt the physical masculinity of Jesus. The point was clear that Jesus' physical manhood did not matter at all, but that the gender expectations connected to Jesus' physical manhood tended to drive people away from a full understanding of the gospel's liberating meaning, in particular women, transvestites, and transsexuals. It was a revealing and a saddening observation that the subsequent debate in the Netherlands focussed on the physical masculinity of Jesus, precisely the aspect the Swedish pastor thought least relevant. The revealing side of the debate was that modern gender is entirely focussed on the body, instead of taking (expected) behaviour into account. The saddening side of it was the apparent inability, even among scholars of name and fame, to account for a methodological reservation that gender in the ancient world might have meant something different from what we are used to and that responses to the body in the ancient world may have been different.[14]

The question formulated by Gleason has lost nothing of its urgency: by whose gender standards (if anybody's) was Jesus a real man? Or, to put it in a broader context: When are you considered a man in antiquity? An important trigger for me to reflect on this subject was the

[13] Davies has argued that the presence of stories about women should be explained by Luke's writing "for an audience wherein women were numerous" (Davies 1991: 188–189, 90). See, however, Seim 1994a and the literature cited there.

[14] The debate entered the Netherlands through a notice on an international internet service that provides Swedish news in English translation, by Catherine Edwards (2017). The Dutch newspaper *Trouw* covered the theme in a well-considered way (Vollebregt 2018). The debate in the media was commented on by Van Geest (2018), who appreciated the well-meant intentions of the pastor, but rejected the attempt to make Jesus gender neutral. In response to Van Geest, Smit (2018) pleaded for considering Jesus' manhood in the context of his own time, and suggested that Jesus may have been regarded as, what we would now call, queer.

2013-2014 joint exposition in Basel, organised by the Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, and the Skulpturhalle Basel, under the title "Wann ist man ein Mann?"[15] This exposition was devoted to the way men were represented in antiquity, set off against modern feelings of uncertainty regarding manly gender roles. Actually, the question posed by the Basel museums was only possible within an already changing focus in ancient and biblical studies, from an idealised approach (literally, based on "ideas" in the platonic sense) to a much more physical approach, in which the body is no longer seen as just a symbol (a signifier), but rather as a contextual presence. As Halvor Moxnes, who has described this change, has put it, the question is now "what do we see when we look at bodies, not just as symbols, but as physical and social realities? A new perspective requires new research strategies" (Moxnes 2008: 164).

New research strategies may not have to be that new. Already in 1987 in her study on what she called the technologies of gender, Teresa de Lauretis returned to the idea derived from Simone de Beauvoir of the embodied lived experiences, that is, experiences related to the situatedness of your body. De Lauretis explained that until then the concept of gender was by and large derived from the basic notion of sexual difference. As the notion of sexual difference does not work any longer, due to its inherent binary way of thinking, we are in need of a concept of gender that is not derived from the sexual binary. De Lauretis demonstrated that technologies of gender (textual strategies, modern cinema, and institutional discourses such as theory) work to construct gender time and again in a complex and multifaceted way. Gender, then, is not a static finished product, but rather an ongoing process, in which you are yourself involved.

Responding to De Lauretis, I would suggest that it still makes sense to stick—with due carefulness—to the distinction between gender and biological sex, for which De Beauvoir is usually credited, provided that we consider gender (and biological sex with it) not as static concepts. Biological sex concerns the way you are born ("nature"), while gender means the cultural and overall discursive significance that is attributed to your biological sex ("nurture").[16] Ever since modernity, we are used to a naturalistic approach to gender, in which behaviour, including sexual behaviour, is inferred from biological sex: you are a man, so you should behave like a man, dress like a man, walk like man, socialise like a man, or you are a woman, so you

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[15] "Wann ist man ein Mann?" joint exposition, supervised by Ella van der Meijden, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig ("Das starke Geschlecht in der Antike") and the Skulpturhalle Basel ("Athlet und Wettkampf in der Antike"), Basel from 6 September 2013 to 30 March 2014.

[16] Actually, the distinction between sex and gender in De Beauvoir's work is somewhat more complicated. For my purpose, to sketch the difference in the use of the idea of gender between modernity and the ancient world, I trust the more simple view will suffice. For a discussion of gender and sex in De Beauvoir's work and further references, see section 1.2 in Lennon 2014.

should behave like a woman, act like a woman, dress like a woman, even speak like a woman.[17] In short, as soon as you are born, you are gendered by dominant discourse, that is, you are gendered *into* the symbolic order. This is why De Beauvoir could say that you are not born a woman, you are taught to become a woman, *"On ne naît pas femme, on le devient."*[18] This naturalistic approach, according to which your due behaviour is inferred from the physical body comes, in my view, very close to the naturalistic fallacy in which an *ought* is falsely derived from an *is*.[19] This mechanism is so strong, that the concepts of (biological) sex and gender virtually merge, resulting in a rather blurry public debate, in which "gender theory" is seen as one of those modern liberal pet concepts fiercely attacked by religious conservatives ("gender theory as a global war against the family"), instead of what it really is: a scholarly and scientific field of research focusing on the way gender is perceived and constituted.[20]

Research on the way gender in the ancient world was perceived, understood, and represented has shown that the way gender was perceived and constituted in the ancient world was indeed complex and multifaceted. Of course there is the body as point of departure. We may ask what it meant to be a body (I prefer not to say "to have a body") that looks in such and such a way, say masculine or feminine, from the centre of the empire or from border regions, Roman, Greek, or Jewish, or Parthian, or disabled, deformed or beaten and weather worn, small or heavily muscled. We should, however, also seek an answer to the question how people did respond to this body, among other things with respect to gender. How is the body signified? Or is, perhaps, the body still a signifier in itself, pointing through its outward physical representation to an idea of gender? I have already suggested that the concept of gender, as we

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[17] On the paradigm shift in "human sexual nature" at the turn towards modernity, see Laqueur 1990: 5, and Backscheider 2000.

[18] De Beauvoir 1949. The quotation is in section 2.4.1 "Childhood."

[19] The is-ought problem was first described by the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776) in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, 3.1.1 (1739, in Norton and Norton 2000: 302): you cannot jump from a descriptive statement to a normative statement without explanation and reason, if it would be possible to give a reason at all and it is not rather a matter of passion, which still is a debated issue (Wright 2009: 254–255; Neiman 2014: 101–107 [p. 236 n. 16 mistakenly Norton p. 31 instead of 302]). Hume does not use the term "naturalistic fallacy."

[20] For gender theory as a global war against family values, see esp. Pope Francis on various occasions, for instance during an address in Tbilisi, Georgia, 1 October 2016, when he said that "a great enemy of marriage today is the theory of gender" (San Martín 2016). The subject was recently brought at length by Vincenzo Turchi during a conference at Santa Croce University, Rome, 12-13 May 2018, reported and discussed by Allen (2018); Allen rightly notices that "in general, when Vatican personnel over the years decry the rise of 'gender theory,' they're not really referring to a specific theory associated with a given thinker. Instead, they mean a broad intellectual and cultural push." In a more general way the subject was addressed in a speech by Pope Francis to the 23rd General Assembly of the members of the Pontifical Academy for Life, 5 October 2017 (Zenit 2017), and in the *Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia*, of 12 February 2016 at Havana, Cuba; nos. 19 and 20 of this declaration deal with the family (see e.g. Catholic News Agency 2016). See also Derks (2017) on the position of Pope Benedict XVI.

tend to understand it, may not apply to the ancient world. I am even unsure whether the distinction between gender and biological sex really applies to the ancient world. I defend, therefore, that we should look for another paradigm. A paradigm is a standard example of scientific investigation which embodies a coherent set of assumptions and works as a research tradition until it is replaced by other assumptions (Barbour 1974).

The search for another paradigm entails its own hermeneutical problems, for how could we ever hope to find what we do not yet know? A paradigm characteristically encompasses what is known, and tries to make sense of the yet unknown in terms of its own parameters. However problematical the relationship between gender, body, and cultural discourse may be, for the time being we have no better tools than just these concepts of gender and body. On the one hand, we have the body in its physical and social appearance, that is in its vulnerability, it strivings and attempts to settle itself in the field of cultural discourse. On the other hand, just because I, as a modern reader, am aware of the role of gender in cultural discourse, a modern notion of gender is the inevitable starting point for a continuous confrontation with presupposed knowledge concerning the author's gender and the way gender emerges from the text. The growing awareness of the otherness of gender in the text keeps pace with a growing awareness of the way my own gender is formed, and *vice versa*.

In order to understand this ancient gender paradigm, I have to work my way through the various models that have been proposed so far. Models are ways to restructure the world one sees, by means of an extended metaphor (Barbour 1974). These models are basically of a gradual, bipolar type. As Virginia Burrus has described this type,

> there is by now widespread scholarly agreement that gender in antiquity was mapped not as a binary of two fixed and "opposite" sexes (as is typical of our own modern western culture) but rather as a dynamic spectrum or gradient of relative masculinities. On the positively valorized end of the spectrum were "true men," fully masculine; on the negatively valorized end, "true women," lacking masculinity. For men, the challenge was to establish virility and to avoid sliding down the slippery slope of feminization. This challenge shaped the terms of rivalry and contestation that allowed for both the making and the unmaking of men. Women were, in turn, expected to conform to their essentially feminine nature and a drift toward the masculine pole was typically deemed highly suspect. (Burrus 2007: 4–5)

In the course of my research, it appeared to me that this gender model, described by Burrus, actually covers a variety of ways to perceive, understand, and represent gender, due to which the proposed gradual (but still bipolar) scales do not work sufficiently. I will propose a new model, based on multidimensionality, allowing for shifting and intersecting positions (Crenshaw 1989), by means of which it would be possible to describe more accurately what is going on in the construction of gender in the ancient world, and in particular in the Third Gospel. My conclusion will be that, far from a double message, there is a clear message, though admittedly an elusive one, propagating a specific kind of beyond-manliness that is attainable by men, women, and indeed, all kinds of gender "ambiguous" persons (that is, in terms of an ancient gender paradigm), such as foreigners in general, foreign women in particular, eunuchs, disabled, ugly and vicious people, slaves, and outcasts. This specific kind of beyond-manliness, I will argue, is not quite a transcendent, ethereal or spiritual way of being, detached from the body. Rather, its locus of residence is the body in a new form, a new body in which Christians participated through baptism.

One final question needs to be introduced. Why should it matter, to understand the way gender was perceived, understood, and represented in the ancient world? Or, returning to the Jesus debate, why should we want to understand the way Jesus' masculinity was understood? Due to the authoritative and mythological use of the Bible, the way the Bible deals with gender does matter at all levels of our culture, insofar as modern culture is shaped by Christianity. In the domain of religious communities, the way gender in the New Testament is read, is for instance of influence on the question whether church offices are attainable to women, or the way same-sex marriage is responded to. I have the strong impression that Roman Catholic theological anthropology in particular offers an instance in which notions of "man" and "woman" that have come almost straight to us from Aristotle and early imperial Roman morals, are invested with a naturalistic idea of "man" and "woman" that basically stems from modernity, as a result of which physical nature is granted an ontological status.[21] I will argue that this runs counter to the way the Third Gospel deals with the issue of "man" and "woman." My problem is that the struggle for the autonomous body, as I see it on the basis of my reading of the Third Gospel, is obscured. One of the tenets of my work is the notion of an embodied situated person. Research on gender (and race and class) in the Bible should involve the freedom of who you are, with soul and body inextricable and irreducible, even when you are not a church going person, or a gospel accepting

[21] For a survey of (Roman Catholic) theological anthropology, see Houtepen (2006). Cf. also Farley (2006). In this respect I feel some doubt about the way Braidotti (1989) proposed a politics of ontological difference. I find it somewhat problematical to grant an ontological status to differences that have to do with the way the body is experienced and perceived. On the other hand, I do understand and accept the need to differentiate as a political means. Understood this political way, ontology may be acceptable.

believer, but just someone who shares the same cultural space in which the gospels, and the Bible as a whole, continue to play a role.

2.3 Hermeneutics and Autobiography

Finally, I would like to briefly introduce the hermeneutical aspect of my research. I will refrain from a survey of recent developments in hermeneutical theory.[22] To position myself in the field, a (simplified) summary will suffice. The traditional communication model presupposes a sender, using a medium to send a message that has to be decoded by a reader (Jakobson 1960; Greimas and Courtés 1979: 45-48; 1986: 45). Author oriented approaches prior to the New Criticism, hold the author responsible for the meaning of a text. The competent reader has to decode the text and understand as much as possible of the author's intentions. The more you know about the author, the better. This procedure may make sense in the study of modern literature, when much is known about the author and the text may (at least partially) be explained in terms of the author's biography. In biblical criticism, however, this procedure leads almost inevitably to a circular reasoning. As the texts are mainly anonymous or pseudonymous, the knowledge we possess about the author is largely derived from the text itself. To use the reconstructed author in its turn to explain the text runs the risk of circular reasoning.

The author oriented approaches were relieved by text oriented approaches. In these approaches, meaning is supposed to be "in" the text. Meaning is produced through differences, resulting from binary oppositions, especially in the structuralism type of Claude Lévy-Strauss or the structuralist semiotician Algirdas Julien Greimas (Greimas and Courtés 1979; 1986). Another approach holds that meaning is produced through sign systems, such as the semiotics defended by Charles Sanders Peirce, Umberto Eco, and again Greimas. Or, more specifically, meaning is produced through narratological structures, as explained by Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal (1997). The author has nothing to do with this: the famous "death of the author," often retraced to Roland Barthes (1968). Any attempt to reduce meaning to the author suffers under the intentionalist fallacy. It is the textual structure that does the trick. Within biblical studies this has led to a wealth of careful analyses of narrative structures.

Once it was understood that even a severe text-immanent approach was strongly dependent upon readerly choices and presuppositions, attention shifted towards the reader in the reader oriented approaches. In these approaches, meaning is attributed by the reader. The reader "writes" the text. Approaches include reception aesthetics, reader response criticism,

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[22] A comprehensive survey of (biblical) hermeneutics (in Dutch) is offered by Zwiep 2014; 2016.

positioned and personal criticism, and poststructuralism and deconstructionism. The reader even tends to disappear herself behind language and culture. Thus, in postmodernism, we have a reader, who is an instable "I," an ever-changing combination of various intersecting interpretative contexts. This may lead us to the saddening insight, that at a certain stage of research "everything goes" and that an almost arbitrary readerly choice is the final receding point. This may be true to some degree, but from a critical and scholarly (and scientific) point of view it is not acceptable. The reader is always able (or should be able) to account for her reading, both in terms of position and of moral impact. In terms of position, you should be aware of where you are, the position you are in, and, preferably, the personal motivations you bring to the text. In terms of moral impact, you should be aware of who you are writing for, and how your work strengthens or criticises dominant positions, and supports marginalised, suppressed positions. To give account of your reading in terms of moral impact requires a criterion of moral accountability (Kosterman 1993). To give account of your work in terms of your position and motivations requires an autobiographical approach.

An autobiographical approach, though the term may cause some confusion, is not quite new. In biblical criticism, Bultmann (1961) already asked attention for the personal in exegesis. More recently, Nancy Miller (1991) in literary criticism, and Janice Capel Anderson and Jeffrey L. Staley (1995), Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger (1999, 2002), and Peter-Ben Smit (2006) in biblical exegesis and theology, called for an assessment of the autobiographical (to mention only those works that are in my view really groundbreaking). When I wholeheartedly join in this track of criticism, it is not because I feel the urgent need to put my personal belongings in the limelight as if I would not feel any shame at all, but because I believe that in good scholarship the reader is always and inevitably involved, and I refuse to hide myself behind the veil of innocence. I hope to avoid the many pitfalls undermining the field, and to show what can be done with it, first, as a means to clarify your own position; then, as a heuristic means to find what might otherwise have remained concealed, and, finally, as a transformative, maybe even therapeutical means within the process of giving meaning to your life and to the text.

3. Three Chapters: Author–Text–Reader

The considerations sketched above lead me to divide the presentation of my research into three chapters, dealing with authorship, textual characteristics, and readerly positions respectively. Of course these three cannot be strictly divided. Author, text, and reader are just starting points in the hermeneutical process.

In the first chapter I will take my point of departure in the question for the author. The text of the Third Gospel is usually thought to have been written by a man, but what if the text was written by a woman? Would this make any difference to me as a reader? Let us imagine, just for the sake of hermeneutical experiment, that the text was written by a woman. Actually, such a thing has already been done in the beginning of the twentieth century by some members of the German history of religions school. It is interesting to see how in their research modern presuppositions with regard to men and women are brought to text, while on the other hand the interpreter's own religious and scholarly contexts seem to determine for a large part the direction chosen and the conclusions allowed. When the suggestion that the text was written by a woman did indeed affect their way of reading, a new question emerges. Would it be possible to manipulate my reading by deliberately assuming that the text is written by a woman, that is, to use the hypothesis of a woman author as a heuristic device? But then, what would I, as a man, know of women's writing? Refusing an essentialist track, and searching for a contextualist approach, that is, reading for an embodied, situated author, I will try to read by means of a black womanist's novel, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (1983), juxtaposed to the text where the angel Gabriel announces to Mary the future birth of Jesus. Instead of a reading focused on the question who, if anyone, fathered Jesus (too anthropomorphic in my view and too obsessed with sexuality and power), my reading says: Who cares about one or other technique of procreation, as if such would ever be the issue in an *euanggelion*. It is about a woman in an oppressive situation, who is empowered to stand up; it is basically an Exodus story.

In the second chapter, I will turn towards textual questions. How is gender constructed in the narrative? After a survey of literature on the subject of gender in the ancient world, I will propose a new model to map gender. The introduction to the handbook on architecture by the Roman architect (if such he was) Vitruvius helps me to define such a gender map. I admit that it may be at first sight surprising to use a Roman manual on architecture to understand gender in the New Testament, as both worlds are really different in subject, in geographic space and, to a less degree, in time. In view of the overall cultural process of a grand moral reorientation, initiated by Augustus, I believe, however, that the comparison makes sense. Vitruvius' is not a

technical how-to manual, but a reflection on the morals of technical skills. In his time, gender was an inseparable part of morals. As it is, during early imperial rule gender *is* morals (again, provided that the concept of gender applies somehow to the ancient world). Luke's gospel is not a missionary work limited to theological themes, hanging in a vacuum, but equally a grand view, directed to a well-educated Greco-Roman public, providing a new anthropology of which gender is part. Comparing these two texts, a new text arises, which is my proposed gender map, in which body, gender, sexuality, and virtuous behaviour find their place in continuous interaction with each other. In the Third Gospel, the body divine is put forward as a new body, to be attained in this life, through the gendered Greco-Roman values such as understanding, commanding the word, continence, and the like, and confirmed by baptism as a token of this new body. This body is an ideal construction, in a way manly by gender, but really elusive, of an almost invisible beyond-manliness.

In my third chapter the reader will be my vantage point. After a survey of literature on positioned and autobiographical criticism, I will propose a definition of autobiographical criticism. This definition will lead me through three readerly exercises. First I will try an explanatory approach, that is, I will use parts of my autobiography as a means to understand and explain my reading of sections of the text of Luke 1–2, in particular the narrative of Zachariah entering the temple to fulfil his priestly duties. I will continue with a heuristic approach, in which I will use parts of my autobiography to find elements in the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus (and in myself as well) that have hitherto been overlooked. Finally, my third readerly exercise will propose a transformative (and maybe therapeutic) reading, in which an autobiographical approach of the theme of John and Jesus as a narrative pair is used to "rewrite" parts of my autobiography, so as to be able to live with it in a new perspective. The value of these readerly exercises lies in the methodical awareness of the role played by gender in all three approaches, and in the moral evaluation that is connected with this. I will conclude this chapter, therefore, with a discussion of evaluative criteria.

Chapter 1

Reading for Gendered Authorship: The Annunciation Scene of Luke 1:34–35

"Whose it is?"
"God's. I don't know no other man or what else to say."

Alice Walker, The Color Purple (1983: 4)

In this chapter I will explore the role of presupposed knowledge with regard to the author in the interpretation process. I am particularly interested in the difference made by gender expectations with which we approach the author, more specifically when the text is handed down to us anonymously or pseudonymously and we do know very little about the assumed author. What are we doing when we read (that is, presuppose) a man or a woman author (or authors)? Does it make a difference to your appreciation of the text? Does it influence your understanding of the text? Would it be possible to become aware of your gender expectations and even to oppose them? I will address these questions in relation to the annunciation scene of the Third Gospel.[23] In this scene, the birth of Jesus is announced to Mary through the words of the angel Gabriel:

> πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ
> καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι·
> διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.
> "Holy spirit will come upon you,
> and power of the most high will overshadow you;
> therefore also what is to be born, holy it will be called, son of God." (Luke 1:35)

These words have always been invested with gender expectations. Thus, based on these words, is the traditional notion of a virginal conception. I will argue that these words have nothing to do with a conception, although I can understand how they came to be read in such a way. Let me

[23] The term annunciation is used to refer to the scene in Luke 1:26–38 where the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive and become the mother of Jesus. By extension, the term may also be used for the parallel scene on Luke 1:8–20 where Gabriel announces to Zachariah the future birth of John.

start, however, with a concise explanation of the problem of gender expectations with regard to the author of a text.

Prior to the development of the New Criticism in the literary criticism of the late 1940s, biographical circumstances of the author were considered important to understand a work of art. The more you knew about the author, the better you would be able to understand the text in its context. This approach fitted well into the hermeneutics developed in the 19th century by Wilhelm Dilthey in the track set out by Friedrich Schleiermacher, and further developed in the 20th century by Hans-Georg Gadamer. As Gadamer (2004) explained, in order to reach a *Horizontverschmelzung*, that is, a fusion of horizons, you had, as it were, to "relive" the author. In biblical studies too, this approach has a long track record. When I studied theology back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the *Sitz im Leben* of a text was still an important part of biblical exegesis. The methodical shift to text-immanent approaches, set in by the New Criticism and furthered by structuralist literary criticism in the 1960s, led in biblical exegesis in the course of the 1970s and 1980s to an emphasis on the lexical and stylistic structure of text. "Let the text speak" was the motto for many years to come, for instance in the so-called Amsterdam School of exegesis, pioneered by Jan Fokkelman (1975), and also in semiotic exegesis, systematised by Algirdas Julien Greimas (1979, 1986). The author disappeared behind the horizon. After all, we do know little to nothing about the authors of biblical texts. Such information as there is, is mainly gleaned from the text itself or, in some cases, collected from other sources.

The author may have disappeared behind the horizon, the author is still there, be it often hidden and invisible, as someone who, although we know virtually nothing about "him," is still assumed to be a "he." For a very long time it seemed obvious that women in the ancient world did not write. Much research has been done in this field, especially starting in second-wave feminism, to correct the assumption of men's authorship, mainly with the aim to restore to women their own history, and to empower women's struggle for a just future. Nevertheless, the burden of proof is still on those who advocate a woman author: the norm remains that the author was a man, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. To put it differently, we read ancient texts still with the implicit, silent, and self-evident hypothesis of a male author. There is a critical point involved in this silent hypothesis of men's authorship. Not only is this hypothesis untenable in view of research already done on the subject, its silence converges in a disquieting way with objectifying mainstream exegesis. It is as if research on the gender of the author is only of secondary importance, a deviation from the norm instead of being one of the fundamental constituents of hermeneutics. Let me explain this point.

With the shift from text-immanent approaches to readerly approaches, within the larger movement from structuralism to poststructuralism, postmodernism, and deconstructionism in the early 1980s, we have learned that the reader's role in the process of interpretation is decisive. In biblical exegesis this idea was already somehow present, as for instance the German theologian and exegete Rudolf Bultmann in 1957, at a time when text-immanent reading had just started, asked attention for readerly presuppositions in exegesis. Generally, however, it lasted until 1982 before the literary critic Jonathan Culler summarised and explained in a concise and critical way what readerly presuppositions meant for "reading as a woman" (Culler 1982: 43–64). The critical point involved is that we, as readers, inevitably respond to the gender of the author. A literary work written by a man will be differently (and in hegemonic discourse likely in a more positive way) responded to than a work written by a woman, just because it is written by a man (Troost 1996). Similarly, representatives of hegemonic discourse tend to respond differently (and in the Dutch situation again generally in a more positive way) to works written by a white person than to a work written by a person of colour (Wekker 2016). Patterns like these not only affect our understanding of the text, they also affect our self-understanding. What we read and how we read returns to us. The way I read, and what I read, contributes to who I am and who I will become. It matters, therefore, whether I am reading (raced or classed) women's experiences or men's experiences, when I am "reading together" my world of experience and my identity, that is, collecting a basic view on the world in which I live and of which I am inextricably part.

The fact that I respond to the gender of the author may be relatively easy accounted for in the case of modern novels, where we generally know who the author was. We can easily know how, when, and where she lived, and in many cases also the intentions with which she wrote. However, in the case of biblical texts that have been used for centuries in an authoritative and mythological way, but that are for all we know in most cases mostly anonymous or pseudonymous, the silent hypothesis of a male author is far more problematical.[24] It must be kept in mind that in the case of nearly half of the books of the New Testament, for instance, claims to its authorship are even clearly false (Ehrman 2013). It is this authorial "void" in antiquity, which allows us as modern readers to project back in time precisely the kind of (male) author that suits us best in order to re-establish and reinforce our authoritative or mythological use of the Bible. The author we create, in turn, affects the way we

[24] For the authoritative and mythological use of the Bible, see my introduction. In short: with authoritative use I mean the use that is made of the Bible in churches and religious institutions to legitimise rules, conventions, theological patterns etc. With mythological use I mean the use that is made of the Bible in society as a whole, usually unwittingly (but not necessarily so), to explain or refer to, with regard to art, literature, human rights, etc.

read and reconfirms again the way we understand the text. In the end we are trapped in a "hermeneutical circle" (Gadamer 2004) that makes it almost impossible for us to step out of these confines, even when we experience—and know—that a one-sided and man-focused (race focused, class focused) way of reading is harmful, and works to distort the development of our identity, instead of stimulating the development of a free and mature judgment (Neiman 2014).

How could we oppose gender (race, and class) expectations regarding the author with which the (anonymous, pseudonymous) text is traditionally invested? Or, to put it differently, how could we break the hermeneutical circle established by the silent hypothesis of a (white, educated etc.) male author? Many are the obstacles and pitfalls on the way out. In this chapter, I will define five methodological steps to deal with the hermeneutical problems we are faced with. These steps are, of course, not neatly demarcated in practice. As it is, they rather tend to interact with each other. From a methodological point of view, however, it makes sense to present them as separately defined steps. First, you have to become aware of your own presuppositions regarding gender; there is a willingness involved here, inciting you not to choose for the status quo, but rather to be critical. Second, you have to make an epistemological move towards openness to the yet unknown. Third, you may have to counter-read by means of the explicit hypothesis of a female author just in order to create interpretive space. Fourth, you need to avoid the risk of an essentialist division between men and women; you cannot know in advance how a woman or a man would write in a specific time in a specific location. Finally, you have to allow for experiences that are not your own, that is, you should imagine what the other went through. In short:

(1) Be aware of your own presuppositions regarding gender.
(2) Allow for epistemological openness.
(3) Try a counter-reading as a heuristic device to create space.
(4) Avoid gender essentialism.
(5) Imagine the one "who is not you."

In the first section of this chapter I will go deeper into the question of readerly presuppositions regarding gender. I will do so by means of two examples derived from the reception of originally pseudonymous writings, namely the early work of the Brontë Sisters, and the debate on the gender of the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. I will conclude this section with a plea for epistemological openness. In the second section I will present a historical case study of a counter-reading of Luke 1–2, in which the hypothesis of a female author actually did play a

decisive role. This case study is taken from a debate around 1900 in the German history of religions school on the question whether the first two chapters of the Third Gospel were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic (Resch 1895), allowing for the possibility that Mary, as a Hebrew or Aramaic speaking woman, somehow authored parts of the text, or whether they were originally written down in Greek (Harnack 1906), suggesting an intermediary author, be it a woman, be it a man, between Mary and the Greek text. Imagining a woman or a man as an author, the danger of gender essentialism is always there. In order to avoid essentialism, I will, in the third section, defend a concept of bodily situated knowledge based on Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 2002) and De Beauvoir ([1949] 2011). Trying to approach the one "who is not me" I will read, in the fourth section, the words spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:34–35 through the lens of (a section from) Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (1983). This helps me to get a glimpse, and maybe even to understand somehow, what it would have been like to live as a very young woman in those days in the countryside of Roman occupied Judea, becoming pregnant outside marriage and most probably faced with a severe threat of punishment, and how the biblical words may have sounded in such a context.

1. Why Reading for Gendered Authorship?

The necessity to read for gendered authorship is provoked by, first, the fact that our knowledge of the author's gender influences the way we read and evaluate the text. We each have our own readerly presuppositions, by which we respond to what we perceive as the author's gender. It is important, therefore, to be aware of your "sense of an author" (section 1.1). Second, we must read for gendered authorship, because our readings have an effect upon ourselves as well as upon others. This is particularly true for biblical texts that are used in an authoritative or mythological way. It is a moral obligation to look for an epistemological openness to the yet unknown (section 1.2).

1.1 The Sense of an Author

How is our knowledge of the author's gender likely to influence our reading of a text? When you are reading a text, you are decoding the signs in the text by applying various interpretive codes (Bal 1988a). The codes you bring to bear on the text will determine what kind of knowledge you produce. You are taught to apply certain codes in specific contexts, leaving other codes (unconsciously) aside as less probable. When the author of an ancient text is known to us with reasonable certainty and we do have reliable biographical information concerning this author, the reader will be inclined to bring this information to the text as a biographical code, thus contributing to a consistent mental rewriting of the text in view of who the author most probably was.[25] When, however, the author is unknown to us, as is the case with anonymous or pseudonymous texts, in cases of doubtful authorship, or when virtually nothing is known concerning the author except a name and perhaps a few spurious references, unspoken and preconceived assumptions concerning the author will inevitably be brought to bear on the text. Maybe as a reader you find evidence in the text, or clues, of a certain style or subject matter, contributing to this assumed author. Reversely, however, the author you have constructed in that way, tends to return to you as a given and will work to reconfirm your already preset notions concerning this author.

It has been argued by Richard Hunter, in his discussion of the way in which classical texts of debated authorship—such as the *Letter of Sappho*, of which the inclusion in Ovid's *Heroides* is contested—are treated by commentaries, that especially in the case of classical texts that are

[25] In a sense, then, the reader is an author. On readers as authors in classical commentaries, cf. Shuttleworth Kraus 2002: 7–27. On readers as authors in biblical studies, cf. Schaberg 2012a: 9–28.

studied within in a literary-aesthetically apprehensive readership, a certain aesthetic and even moral appreciation of the text depends on your "sense of an author," that is, the feeling you have developed of who, or what kind of author, the writer of this specific text in reality was or might have been (Hunter 2002: 89–90).[26] The aesthetic appreciation consists in your notion of what is beautiful and good, the moral appreciation consisting in the normative status you assign to the text as a standard of good literature. I find Hunter's sense of an author a useful concept, as it expresses neatly how the biographic code functions in case of unclear authorship: you develop an idea of who the author might have been and continue by attaching an aesthetic and moral evaluation to it. There is, however, a critical aspect omitted by Hunter: gender, race, and class are important constituents of the sense of an author. I will explain this with regard to the aspect of gender by means of two examples. First, I will demonstrate how in the reception of the originally pseudonymous writings of the Brontë Sisters gender expectations played a role. Second, I will show how in the Homeric question gender expectations even have led to decisions as to the supposed author.

The Brontë Sisters were well aware of the fact that the aesthetic and moral apprehension of a work of art is by and large determined by readerly presuppositions concerning the gender of the author. Writing in a time when women were not supposed to write novels, the early nineteenth century, they originally published their poems and novels under the not easily gendered pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, following the custom of the time practised by women writers. Thus, Charlotte Brontë writes:

> Averse to personal publicity, we veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming Christian names positively masculine, while we did not like to declare ourselves women, because—without at that time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called 'feminine'—we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice; we had noticed how critics sometimes use for their chastisement the weapon of personality, and for their reward, a flattery, which is not true praise. (Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell, 1850)[27]

[26] Hunter discusses in particular the question of aesthetic condemnation of poems of doubtful authorship in the field of classical scholarship. On the *Epistula Sapphus* as part of Ovid's *Heroides*, cf. Rosati 1996.

[27] The "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" was published by Currer Bell (Charlotte Brontë) 19 September 1850, and republished many times in editions of the Brontë Sisters' works, such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* or Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*. This quotation is from Goreau 1988: 52–53.

Both William Wordsworth and Robert Southey advised Charlotte Brontë that writing was not a pastime fit for a lady. Southey, addressing her writing—but not the quality of her writings itself— wrote to her that "literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and recreation."[28] As it was more and more suspected that Currer Bell was really a woman by name of Charlotte Brontë, the quality of her writing became the target of an aesthetic verdict, as her writing was increasingly supposed to be "coarse" (Fraser 2008: 24; Lucasta Miller 2002: 17). This example demonstrates that the sense of the author's gender influences the perception of the quality of what is written, that is, the aesthetic appreciation of the text. The implied moral verdict is that women should not write at all.

The effect described for the Brontë Sisters is also present in modern appreciation of ancient writers, as my second example, taken from the Homeric question, will show. Since classical antiquity, the question has been whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written by one author or by multiple authors. Although in modern reception it was already suggested by Samuel Butler (1897) that the poet of the *Odyssey* was a woman, because the *Odyssey* would reflect women's worlds of living, the tradition that the author was a man remained vivid.[29] More recently it has been proposed by Andrew Dalby (2006) that the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* probably was a woman, because, as Dalby observes, "certain features in … these epics are better—more subtle, more complex, more universal—than most others." (139–153) On the basis of this aesthetic appreciation he argues that a woman author of "Homer" is probable. Basically, this is only a working hypothesis, the probability of which is underpinned by, first, the absence of direct evidence of the poet's identity, and, second, the (assumed) existence of women's traditions of oral literature (such as existed in the ancient world, for instance, around Sappho). It is interesting to see that, by now, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, women's writing is considered to be "subtle," "complex," and "universal," whereas in the early nineteenth century it was supposed to be "coarse." Obviously Southey and Wordsworth thought quite differently about women's writing than Dalby does. But then the implied moral appreciation is different, for while Southey and Wordsworth thought women should not write at all, Dalby accepts the existence in early times of locations of women's writing.

Edith Hall, discussing the question of Homeric authorship, called Dalby's argument unscientific: "it has been argued that 'Homer' was in fact female, on the unscientific grounds

[28] Quoted by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The life of Charlotte Brontë*, originally published 1857, Shelston 1975: 173.

[29] Butler 1897, 1900. Butler held the *Iliad* for man authored, because of its manly ethos. For a discussion, whether Butler really believed in his own arguments, see Hall 2008: 116–117. Following the track set out by Butler, the novelist Graves (1955) proposed that Nausicaa, according to him a Sicilian princess, was the author of the *Odyssey*.

that both epics seem ‘sympathetic’ to women and sometimes to question violence.” (2008: 116) The question is what exactly is "unscientific." I venture that what is really at stake is the question how a woman or a man would write in a specific time and place. Implied in Dalby’s position is that violence would belong to a man’s world, but this is only a presupposition projected back into "Homer’s" time. Dalby’s argument implies a parontocentric fallacy, in that he takes modern day notions concerning violence and gender as a norm. Taken by itself, however, Dalby’s suggestion of a woman author is scientific enough, as it is a working hypothesis that apparently triggers other explanatory models of the text’s origin (such as the existence of women’s oral traditions), and highlights other textual features (subtlety, complexity, universality) and content (sympathy toward women, questioning of violence), nowadays usually assumed to be connected to women’s experiences. The weak point, therefore (and probably this is what Hall would want to call unscientific), is Dalby’s parontocentric, and even essentialist, reduction of assumed women’s subject matter and style to a female author. Indeed, if we take a look at the *Iliad*, at the way Achilles receives the members of the Greek delegation in his tent, who try to persuade him to give up his resentful attitude and take up fighting again, one is struck by the careful, indeed "home-making" qualities of Achilles (Homer, *Il*. 9.185ff.). Would this indicate the sudden hand of a female author, as Dalby might want to say? But then, why could this scene not be written by a man? Would not a man be able to question excessive violence or obsessive sticking to honour, especially as this kind of behaviour would betray a lack of self-control, deemed unmanly in the world of "Homer"?

Things are indeed complicated and modern notions of men's and women's roles do not easily apply to ancient texts. The point is that not only your aesthetic and moral appreciation as a reader is adapted to your sense of an author, but also that the author you construct in the act of reading is adapted to your own (time and place-bound) conception of how a woman or a man would write. Here is a hermeneutical problem to which I will return in due course. First, I will turn to specific problems implied in the interpretation of New Testament texts.

1.2 Author/ity and Openness

The texts collected in the New Testament are, of course, part and parcel of the ancient world. With New Testament texts we encounter similar problems as with so many ancient texts: although names of authors are handed down to us (such as Matthew and Mark, or Paul and Peter, James and Jude), we do know very little about these authors with certainty. The New Testament itself provides some information, in particular about Paul. Outside the New

Testament we have early Christian and patristic sources, such as Papias (ca. 60–163 CE, in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15–16.), the Muratorian Canon (a fragmentary list of books of the New Testament, probably dating back to 170 CE), and the *Ecclesiastical History* by the church historiographer Eusebius of Caesarea (shortly before 325 CE) to provide us with additional information, while pagan or archeological evidence is scarce. In the course of redaction-critical research in the twentieth century, the question has been raised whether there is just one author, or whether various sources can be established. From the late 1970s onwards much research has been done on the author's gender in the field of Tanak studies, New Testament studies, and ancient world studies.[30] But still the burden of proof remains with those advocating a woman as author.

Why would the silent hypothesis of a male author in New Testament studies still be prevalent, although so much research has been done on the subject? I suppose it has to do with normative claims attached to the New Testament and indeed to biblical texts in general. As I have explained in my introduction, New Testament texts are used both as authoritative texts and as mythological texts. This is why from the 1980s onwards the question for women's authorship of biblical texts was raised in the first place, as women were searching not only for a reappropriation of their own heritage, but also for a legitimation of other ways of believing, acting, and reading that would do justice to women's experiences both in Christian religious communities and in society as a whole. The silent hypothesis of a male author is part of the normative function of the text, at least so within dominant interpretive discourse. To put it differently, New Testament texts are considered male authored because they ought to be so, that is, because men's authorship and authority are implicitly considered synonymous and the text would lose, to a certain degree, authority as soon as a woman author would be proven more or less convincing. Women's authorship would imply a decrease of authority (Braidotti 1991; Wekker 2016).

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[30] On pseudonymity in Tanak, see esp. Brockington 1953; Joyce Baldwin 1978. On gendered authorship in Tanak, see for instance Bekkenkamp and Van Dijk 1987; Goitein 1988; Van Dijk-Hemmes 1992; Brenner and Van Dijk-Hemmes 1993. On anonymity, pseudonymity, and pseudepigraphy in the first two centuries CE, in particular in early Christian writings, see Fenton 1953; Aland 1961; Guthrie 1962; Metzger 1972; Rist 1972; Brox 1975; Fischer 1976; Collins 1977; Meade 1986; Via 1987: 50; Aland 1990; Kraemer 1991b. On gendered authorship in New Testament writings in particular, cf. Achtemeier 1975: 11 (the Gospel of Mark*),* Swidler 1979: 161–93, 271, 278–81 (proto-Luke probably compiled by a woman; followed by Via 1981: 49–50; cf. however, Stevan Davies 1991); Schüssler Fiorenza 1978: 156–157; 1979: 34; 1983 (Mark and John partly women authored, esp. 1983: 316–333); Stevan Davies 1980: 95–109 (Apocryphal Acts partly authored by women); Kraemer 2012: 527–528; Bourland Huizenga 2013. On gendered authorship in the Third Gospel, see the literature cited by Karris 2002: 24–27 and D'Angelo 2002: 45 n.3. In the field of classical and related studies in general, see for instance Waithe 1987; Snyder 1989; Kraemer 1991b; Lefkowitz 1991; Lefkowitz and Fant 1992; Plant 2004; Greene 2005; Pomeroy 2013.

Why should the silent hypothesis of a male author be a problem? When little is known about the author, you run the risk, as a reader, of unwittingly "writing" your own author, that is, of providing yourself unconsciously with precisely that kind of author/ity that is needed to underpin your own way of reading. Thus, as a reader, you run the risk of remaining within your own interpretational frame and of endlessly turning around within the hermeneutic circle, caught in earlier conventional, mainly religiously, societally, and scholarly informed scriptural readings that sanction and measure religious and societal practices as a whole, and gender scripts in particular. An example is the reading of the Third Gospel by David Seeley (1994):

> the domestic joyfulness of the infancy narrative, the flagrant unselfishness of the Good Samaritan, the father's tender love for his prodigal son—all of these speak to readers of the better selves they might become. (Seeley 1994: 102)

It remains to be seen whether the infancy narrative really is the scene of domestic joyfulness, and indeed, whether we have a domestic scene at all. Likewise, once the rather uncomfortable position of Samaritans in those days is understood, solidarity with a fellow destitute might be a more appropriate description of the Samaritan's behaviour than the somewhat romantic "unselfishness" suggested by Seeley. Finally, the father's tender love may be more problematical when his behaviour vis-à-vis his elder son is taken into account. What is happening, however, is quite clear: the subject matter, birth and infancy, evokes in Seeley a parontocentric code of domesticity and an appropriate response of joyfulness, just as the Samaritan's care and the father's re-acceptance of his younger son evoke in Seeley a code of Christian charity involving unselfishness and tenderness. This, in turn, serves to set an example to his readers, who apparently are not acquainted with, for instance, domestic violence or shared need.

Taken in itself, however, Seeley is right when he suggests that what we read evokes in us an idea of the better selves we might become. In developing our identity, however, gender, race, and class play a major role, if not to say that gender, race, and class are (part of) our identity. It matters to me whether I am confined to conventional identities that are generally understood as (white) men's identities, or whether I am allowed to go beyond the conventional, in the open space created by mutual encounters. As Paul Ricoeur explains, drawing on Emanuel Levinas, it is precisely in mutual encounters that an undefined open space may arise, in which "a surplus of meaning" is set free (Ricoeur 1976; Stoker, Vedder and Vroom 1995; Venema 2000). This surplus of meaning may work as a "third," the result of a mutual encounter between the text and me, which in turn will change both the text and my identity. Deliberately changing the hypothesis of

a gendered author from a silently implied male author to an explicit reading *as if* this particular text were authored by a woman may open such horizons of interpretation. Admittedly, by counter-reading the text this way I would continue writing my "own" author. At least, however, I would know that I am writing my own author, and I would be prepared to take responsibility for my reading, accounting for it along preset good scientific criteria of intersubjectivity and accountability. It is of pivotal importance for a reading "as if," that you are able at all times to explain what you are doing and why you are doing so. This will provide the epistemological basis for a move towards openness of the yet unknown.

1.3 Conclusion

Discussing the question of the gender of the author in anonymous and pseudonymous texts, I have argued that our aesthetic and moral appreciation of a text depends on our sense of the author, that is, we respond to the gender of the assumed author. Our appreciation is aesthetic, because a judgment is involved on the quality of the text, while our appreciation is moral, because reading a gendered author influences your identity. The moral judgment is of particular importance to biblical studies, due to the authoritative and mythological function of biblical texts. As biblical texts are still used to prescribe, legitimise, or explain modern conventions, we must be prepared to acknowledge aspects of gender, race, and class in the way we (silently) conceive of the author(s), in order not to continue religious and societal gender-scripts, prescribing others as well as ourselves how to live, behave, feel or believe. Becoming aware of your own presuppositions regarding gender (race, and class) is a first prerequisite. Allowing for epistemological openness through mutual encounters is a second. In the next section, I will explore the heuristic potential of such encounters, by counter-reading the text with the explicit hypothesis of a woman author.

2 Counter-Reading Luke 1–2: The Case of Resch and Harnack

The explicit hypothesis of a female author is not entirely new in biblical studies. It has, in fact, been done before, in Germany around 1900, in an intriguing debate in which the theologian and church historians Alfred Resch (1835–1912) and Adolf Harnack (1851–1930) played an important role. This debate, on the question whether Luke 1–2 could have been written by a woman, offers an interesting case study of the way gender expectations are connected with readerly locations. I will first introduce the background of this debate, which is the ancient tradition that the author of the Third Gospel would have been a physician (section 2.1). This tradition clearly informed the way the author was imagined, as appears from the cases of Alfred Resch (section 2.2) and Adolf Harnack (section 2.3), who both, be it on different grounds, argued for traces of women's authorship in Luke 1–2. I will argue that their positions, parontocentric as they may be, can be understood from their readerly locations as liberal protestant scholars in a time, the 1900s, and place, Berlin, which saw a rapid development in academic, religious, and social respect.

2.1 Luke the Physician: Hobart, Cadbury, and Medical Language

According to tradition the author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles was a physician called Luke. In the New Testament, in Colossians 4:14, mention is made of a companion to Paul in his imprisonment, Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς, "Luke, the beloved physician." This passage was in a very early stage combined with information provided by Philemon 24 and 2 Timothy 4:11. In Philemon 24 Paul mentions Luke and a few others as οἱ συνεργοί μου, "my fellow workers," while in 2 Tim 4:11 only Luke is still with Paul: Λουκᾶς ἐστιν μόνος μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, "only Luke is with me." This information was taken as evidence that Luke, a companion of Paul, was a physician. Already Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian, both writing toward the end of the second century CE, believed that this Luke, the companion of Paul, was the same as the author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.[31] Probably the earliest reference to the author of the Third Gospel and Acts as a physician is found in the Muratorian Canon, where we read: *Lucas iste medicus,* "Luke, the well-known physician."[32]

Additional information is provided by Eusebius of Ceasarea, who reports in his *Ecclesiastical History* that Luke, the author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, is of Antiochene descent, τὴν ἐπιστήμην δὲ ἰατρός, "a physician by profession," and a companion

[31] Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.2 (Rousseau and Doutreleau 1974); Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.5 (Braun 2001). Tertullian is positive about the author of the Third Gospel, on Acts he is less clear.
[32] *Canon Muratori* 1.3–4 (Lietzmann 1921: 4–11).

of Paul.[33] What is particularly interesting about Eusebius' report is that he seems to be aware of a special character of the Third Gospel and Acts due to the author's medical profession. Moreover, Eusebius shows himself interested in the sources used by the author he calls Luke. Concerning the special character of the text connected to the author's medical profession, Eusebius remarks that Luke, as a medical doctor, learned from the apostles the healing of souls, of which Luke would have given proof in both the Third Gospel and in Acts. As to the author's sources, Eusebius mentions the traditions of those who were from the beginning witnesses and ministers of the word and of whom Luke affirms that he followed them right from the start, which is a reference to the prologue of the Third Gospel (Luke 1:2–3).

The evidence from scriptural and patristic sources inspired William Hobart (1882) to try and find evidence of the author's medical profession in the text. Eventually he traced a list of four hundred Greek medical technical terms and expressions the author would have used, according to Hobart unique in the New Testament, but common with ancient medical writers such as Hippocrates, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, Dioscorides, and Galen.[34] Hobart's hypothesis was followed and discussed vividly by many scholars well until the 1960s,[35] but already convincingly rejected in 1919 by Henry Cadbury.[36] According to Cadbury, medical terminology in the Gospel and in Acts only has a general character and should be considered common knowledge. Most of the terms listed by Hobart do also appear in LXX and Flavius Josephus (a first century CE Jewish historiographer). In order to make his point, Cadbury went as far as to trace in Lucian, a second-century CE writer who had never before been suspected of any medical interest, at least 115 words, described by Hobart as medical terms, including some words which, according to Hobart, only occur in the Third Gospel and Acts.[37] Moreover, Cadbury established in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew a number of medical terms that do not appear in the Third Gospel and Acts. Cadbury concluded that "the style of Luke bears no more evidence of medical interest than does the language of other writers who were not physicians." (1919: 50) Cadbury did not

[33] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.4.6 (Bardy 1986: 100).

[34] It should be noted, however, that Hobart was not the first in this respect. Delitzsch (1857: 705–707) proposed Lukan authorship of Hebrews, referring to an approach in this Epistle and to lexical peculiarities suggesting the signature of a medical person, inter alia mentioning the verb ἐπιχειρεῖν in Luke 1:1, as a word frequently used by Hippocrates ("ein Lieblingswort des Hippokrates", 1857: 706 n. 1).

[35] For instance Harnack 1892: 1–4; Zahn 1897: ii, 427; Harnack 1906: 10–11, 122–137; Ramsay 1908; Van Veldhuizen 1926; Fenner 1930 ("Exkurs über Lukas den Arzt," pp. 107ff.); Duncan Blair 1959; Lindeboom 1965a, 1965b.

[36] Cadbury 1919; 1927. Creed 1930: xix–xxi, accepts Cadbury's rejection partially, retaining some of Hobart's arguments.

[37] Cadbury 1919: 65–72 ("Excursus: Medical Terms in Lucian"). Cadbury chose Lucian "as being nearly a contemporary and a fair parallel to Luke. Both writers have a large vocabulary and a ready command of Greek. Lucian was an Asiatic Greek who travelled into the western world. This is also the tradition about Luke the physician. But otherwise the test was chosen entirely at random." (1919: 50)

exclude the possibility that the author of the Third Gospel and Acts actually was a physician, but, as he argued, this cannot be established by reference to the medical language and interests of an ancient physician.

Hobart’s theory shows that preconceived knowledge concerning the author may lead one even as far as to find matching language in the text. Unfortunately, neither Hobart, nor Cadbury acknowledges the question of gender, undoubtedly because they assumed that a medical person in antiquity was a man anyway. It is therefore the more remarkable, that Hobart's theory triggered two German scholars, Alfred Resch and Adolf Harnack, to engage in a discussion on the author of Luke 1–2, in which female authorship was considered highly probable. In the following sections, I will examine this debate and its context closely. It will appear that the reader's location fosters specific notions of the author, including gender, while the explicit hypothesis of a female author does change one's perception of the text.

2.2 Mother Mary Spoke to Me: The Case of Alfred Resch

Taking seriously the remark in the prologue to the Third Gospel that the author had been informed by eye-witnesses (Luke 1:2), Resch conjectured that the information contained in Luke 1–2 was provided by Mary herself (Resch 1895; 1897). In 1895 Resch argued, following Johannes Hillman (1891) and Johannes Weiβ (1892), that the Third Gospel originally started with the third chapter. The first two chapters originally would have been part of an earlier Hebrew infancy gospel of Jesus, the *tôlĕdôt yēšhû'a*.[38] Although a Hebrew *Vorlage* of Luke 1–2 would definitely strengthen the case for Mary as the main informant, as Mary would undoubtedly have spoken Hebrew or Aramaic, the problem remained that such a Hebrew text did not exist. The problem was solved, so to say, by the German Hebrew scholar Franz Julius Delitzsch, who in 1877 translated the Greek New Testament into Hebrew, and thus rendered the idea of a Hebrew original of Luke 1–2 acceptable, at least in the eyes of Resch.[39] The choice, then, whether Luke 1–2 was originally (partly) written in Greek or in Hebrew, was not really made on the evidence of existing sources, but on preconceptions of how a Jewish woman like Mary (or, for that matter, a Jewish priest like Zachariah) would have spoken.

[38] Resch 1895: 812–823, 834; 1897: 10–29, 238–241, 319–334. Mat 1–2 equally drew on the *tôlĕdôt yēšhû'a*, according to Resch.
[39] Published in Delitzsch 1883; Delitzsch 1885. More recently a faint echo of Delitzsch's theory is still heard in Farris (1995: 14–98), who argued that a number of poetic texts in Luke 1–2 (the Magnificat or the Song of Mary in Luke 1:46–55, the Benedictus or the Song of Zachariah in Luke 1:68–79, and the Nunc Dimittis or the Song of Simeon in Luke 2:29–32) were originally pre-Lukan, written in Hebrew by Jewish-Christian poets, and only afterwards incorporated into the Third Gospel.

In order to defend his case, Resch analysed the wealth of references to Tanak and LXX in Luke 1–2 (1895: 836). The most prominent intertext, according to him, is the book of Ruth, which he characterised as a family narrative. Resch was convinced that the conjectured infancy gospel must have been of approximately the size of Ruth, and he recognised many parallels between the two narratives.[40] In both narratives, he explained, we find a family history concerning the house of David from which the Messiah went forth. In both cases we read prophetic speeches pertaining to the gentiles. In addition, in both cases a genealogy is presented (1897: 192–193). Finally, Resch saw lexical congeniality with Ruth through numerous parallels, especially in the annunciation and visitation scenes.[41] On the basis of these references, Resch concluded that the (hypothetical) Hebrew infancy gospel, and Luke 1–2 with it, must have been arranged after the book of Ruth.[42]

Resch's main argument to regard Mary as the one whose notes or communications form the basis for this work, lies in the convergence of a moderate narrative characterisation of Mary within the text, and the sober narrative style of Luke 1–2 as a whole (1897: 323–324). Needless to say that Rech’s argument is based on his idea of how a woman like Mary might speak. His remark that Mary would have been “moderate,” and her style “sober,” sounds rather like a reflection of the appropriate behaviour of average bourgeois women by the end of the nineteenth century. For why did Resch not focus on Mary's active narrative participation? And why would he call her style sober? In view of her own words in the Magnificat, or the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), that God "has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly," her style might just as well be called revolutionary and highly poetical. The revolutionary potential was, in fact, exploited by Paul Winter (1954) who proposed the thesis that the Song of Mary and the Song of Zachariah (or the Benedictus, Luke 1:68–79) are really Maccabean war songs, songs of thanksgiving after battle.[43] Furthermore, Resch’s notion of authorship seems to have influenced his treatment of the Ruth parallel. For why did he relegate Ruth to the domain

[40] Parallels listed by Resch include: Luke 1:28/Ruth 2:4; Luke 1:30/Ruth 3:11, 2:2, 10, 13; Luke 1:38/Ruth 2:13, 3,9; Luke 1:42b/Ruth 3.10; Luke 1:45/Ruth 3.18. Parallels regarding the birth of John the Baptist: Luke 1:59/Ruth 4.17; Luke 1:66b/Ruth 1:13; Luke 1:68a/Ruth 4.14; Luke 1:68c/Ruth 1:6; Luke 1:72/Ruth 1:8. Parallels regarding Jesus’ birth: Luke 2:4b/Ruth 1:19, 2:18, 3.15; Luke 2:11/Ruth 4.17. Parallels regarding Simeon: Luke 2:28/Ruth 4.16, a.o. The total number of parallels recognised by Resch is 24.

[41] Resch 1897: 29–69. The term visitation is used to refer to the scene of Luke 1:39–56 where Mary visits Elisabeth.

[42] Resch 1897: 28–29, 319–320. A weak point in Resch’s comparison is that the genealogy is found in Luke 3:23–38, that is, outside of Luke 1–2. Apparently, Resch had Matthew’s genealogy in mind, for the ten names in Ruth’s pedigree (Ruth 4:18–22) reoccur in Matt 1:1–17. In Matt 1:5 Ruth is mentioned, in Luke 3:32 Boas.

[43] According to Winter (1954) the Magnificat would have been authored by a woman, whom he calls “a mother of warriors,” much like the Maccabean mother of 2 Macc 7. The songs would have reached the author of the Third Gospel through a "Baptist document" of Jewish-Christian origin.

of family narratives? Apparently, preconceived ideas of how a woman would speak led him to interpret Luke 1–2 as a family narrative, as an infancy story, soberly conveyed by a moderate mother. The same goes for Ruth, as he also called this book a family narrative.

The idea that Luke 1–2 conveys information provided by Mary came to be connected with "Luke the physician" in an unexpected way many years later. Lindeboom, a Dutch New Testament scholar, argued in 1965 that Luke would have derived his information directly from Mary, because he would have been the only evangelist who reports things about her, "which a woman would rather tell her physician" (Lindeboom 1965a: 67, my translation). In general, Luke's attention to stories about women would follow from his medical profession (Lindeboom 1965a: 104). In itself, an argument like this does not deserve attention any longer, were it not for the clear and illuminating example of parontocentrism, that is, a modern day vision of the medical profession: a physician as someone to whom you confide your personal experiences. It remains to be seen how medical doctors worked in antiquity, but an originally Hebrew or Aramaic speaking woman like Mary, who would confide the private experiences she had kept in her heart (Luke 2:51) to a well-educated Greek speaking medical doctor seems to evoke the world of an early twentieth-century general practitioner of the English or Dutch countryside, rather than, for all we know, the world of a physician in Roman occupied Judea or the Jewish Greek diaspora.

In short, preconceived ideas on how a woman, as a mother, would speak to her physician influenced Resch's perception of the text. This led him to characterise Luke 1–2 as referring to a family narrative, based on a parallel with the book of Ruth, and as part of an originally Hebrew written infancy gospel (even when we have no evidence at all that such a text ever existed), and to call its narrative style sober and conveyed by a moderate mother, bypassing the high poetic and revolutionary sections. The explicit hypothesis of a woman author definitely distorted his perception of the text, but it is equally true that his vision of the way a woman would speak was distorted as well. Be this as it is, the hypothesis has helped him to describe a parallel with the book of Ruth, which certainly makes sense.[44] I will now turn to a contemporary of Resch, Adolf Harnack, who like Resch, suggested a woman source of Luke 1–2, be it for very different reasons.

[44] It would take too far to go deeper into the Ruth parallel in this place. In Troost 1996 I investigated the parallel.

2.3 Prophesying Daughters: The Case of Adolf Harnack

Harnack, too, reflected on the sources of the Third Gospel, but his solution was quite different. Harnack started with the remark by Eusebius in the *Ecclesiastical History*, discussed above, that Luke would have been a physician.[45] Repeating many of Hobart's arguments, Harnack recognised three signs of the author's medical profession.[46] First, the whole of the Third Gospel and Acts is more or less written from a medical perspective. Second, cures are abundant in the narrative, while the description of diseases betrays medical knowledge and perception. Third, language betrays the author's profession through the use of technical terms, even when no typical medical affairs are dealt with. Harnack quoted approvingly Theodor Zahn who believed that Hobart had decisively proved that Luke was acquainted with Greek medical language.[47] Like Resch, Harnack concluded that information concerning the birth of Jesus is so specific, that a woman (or women) must be held responsible for this information. Unlike Resch, however, Harnack did not think that Mary was the source. Rather, Harnack defended that the four prophesying daughters of Philip mentioned in Acts 21:9 were the real source. He tried to substantiate his claim by analysing the biblical references in a number of poetic sections in Luke 1–2: the Magnificat (or the Song of Mary, 1:46–55), Mary's dialogue with the angel (1:34–35), the Benedictus (or the Song of Zachariah, 1:68–79), and the Gloria (or the Song of the Angels, 2:14).[48] In the following, I will focus on Harnack's discussion of the Magnificat and the Benedictus, as his discussion of the other two sections is of a more technical character.

In these two songs, Magnificat and Benedictus, Harnack recognised mainly LXX references to the Psalms and the Prophets (apparently drawing on Plummer 1896). He went at length into the formal parallels between 1 Samuel 1–2 (1 Kgdms 1–2 LXX) and Luke 1–2.[49] The passages concerning Hannah in 1 Samuel 1–2, especially 1:11 and 2:1, 7, 10, he regarded as the most important references in the Magnificat. Harnack concluded that the Benedictus shows a priestly character, in accordance with the way Zachariah is characterised in Luke 1 (that is, as a Jewish priest), while the Magnificat would reflect motherly concerns, dependent on Hannah's

[45] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.4.6 (Bardy 1986: 100); Harnack 1892: 1–2.

[46] Harnack 1906: 10–11 and "Anhang I: Der Verfasser des 3. Evangeliums und der Apostelgeschichte ein Arzt," 122–137. Earlier, Harnack expressed at least some doubts concerning Luke's authorship of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles as a whole (Harnack 1892: 1–4).

[47] Zahn 1897: ii, 427; Harnack 1906: 10 n. 3. Delitzsch's defense of a second-century CE tradition that "Luke" was also responsible for the medical composition of Hebrews (Delitzsch 1857: 705–706) did not meet with approval and was rejected by Harnack (1892: 2).

[48] Harnack 1906; 1915b, repr. 1931: 153–179. As far as I know, the Nunc dimittis (the song of Simeon in Luke 2:29–32) is not discussed.

[49] Parallels listed by Harnack include 1 Sam 1:11 with Luke 1:15, 48a; 1 Sam 2:1–10 with Luke 1:46–55; 1 Sam 2:1, 10 with Luke 1:69; and 1 Sam 2:21, 26 with Luke 2:52.

Song in 1 Samuel 2:1–10, in accordance with the way Elisabeth is characterised.[50] For Harnack sided with those scholars who thought that the Magnificat was originally ascribed, not to Mary but to Elisabeth. This was due to a *varia lectio* in a couple of manuscripts and versions, where the text reads in 1:46a “and Elisabeth said” instead of the common “and she said.” Here we have an example of how preconceived ideas of how a woman would speak in a specific situation even interfere with textual criticism. Therefore I will review briefly the discussion on this text-critical problem.[51]

Although the Magnificat is ascribed to Mary by an overwhelming majority of textual witnesses, there is an old tradition, probably based in Western Latin textual tradition, that Elisabeth had been the enunciator of the Magnificat. Three Old Latin versions of the New Testament attribute the Magnificat to Elisabeth, reading in 1:46a *et ait Elisabeth,* "and Elisabeth said." The manuscripts concerned are *Vercellensis* (a) and *Veronensis* (b), from the fourth or fifth century, representing the "European text," and the less important *Rehdigeranus* (l), from seventh or eighth century, already influenced by Jerome’s Vulgate translation (Aland and Aland 1989: 193), but nevertheless first hand in this passage, which seems to indicate a persistent tradition. Reference to Elisabeth as the enunciator of the Magnificat is also found in a few patristic textual witnesses, in particular the Latin version of Origen’s *Homiliae in Lucam* 7.3, in which reference is made to codices attributing the Magnificat to Elisabeth.[52] There are also indications of an attribution of the Magnificat to Elisabeth in some Latin and Armenian versions of Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*.[53] Apparently, the Elisabeth tradition is an isolated Old Latin phenomenon, with the suggestion of Greek roots as early as the beginning of the third century. The three New Testament codices, as well as the Origen and Irenaeus passages were already known in Harnack’s time. What aroused renewed scholarly interest in Harnack's time was the first edition of the full text of a Latin sermon by Nicetas of Remesiana (fifth century), *De utilitate hymnorum*, by Dom G. Morin in 1897.[54] This sermon reads "Elisabeth" in Luke 1:46 in two passages.[55]

Interestingly, the discussion whether Elisabeth pronounced the Magnificat or Mary, was initiated by two scholars almost at the same time, apparently independent from each other,

[50] Harnack 1900b, repr. 1931: 84; 1906: 556.
[51] In the appendix I give a more extensive explanation of this text-critical problem.
[52] Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 7.3 in Rauer 1959: 43.10; Crouzel, Fournier, and Périchon 1962: 156–157.
[53] Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.10.2 and 4.7.1 in Rousseau and Doutreleau 1974: 118–119; Rousseau 1965: 456–457.
[54] Morin 1897a; 1897b. The text by Nicetas has previously been referred to as *De psalmodiae bono*. Cf. Bardenhewer 1901: 190. A review of the discussion gives Benko 1967. A bibliography gives Laurentin 1957a: 15–23. See also Harris 1929, 1930; J.G. Davies 1964.
[55] Nic. Rem., *Ut. Hym.* 9.16 and 11.11 in Turner 1923: 238–239.

François Jacobé (1897, pseudonym for Alfred Loisy) and Harnack (1900b).[56] Jacobé, the earlier one, refers explicitly to Morin's edition of Nicetas, while Harnack, on the other hand, does not deal with Nicetas at all. I find it hard to see why Harnack should participate in a hot philological issue, three years after the debate had begun, without referring even once to Jacobé (Loisy), who started the debate, or referring to the reason why the issue was put on the agenda, the publication by Morin. This is the more astonishing as Harnack's participation in the debate attracted most attention.[57] Be this as it is, Harnack's choice for the reading "Elisabeth" was, after all, not based on text-critical considerations, but on his assumption of how a woman like Elisabeth might speak. As Elisabeth is characterised in the text as an elderly woman, much in the style of Hannah in 1 Samuel, Harnack could easily typify the Magnificat as a song expressing a woman's personal experience, instead of the revolutionary text it actually is according to Winter. The fact that Harnack passed by the scholarly discussion launched by Jacobé and Morin, charges the suspicion that the only real argument for reading "Elisabeth" instead of "she," lies in his idea of how Elisabeth would have spoken, a barren woman in the style of Hannah in 1 Samuel.

It seems that Harnack, in his treatment of the Magnificat and the Benedictus, found himself in trouble somehow. On the one hand, he was convinced that the Magnificat and the Benedictus were both originally written in Greek by the author called Luke. On the other hand, he wanted to account for the special character of Luke's *Sondergut* (the sections in the Third Gospel that are not found in the other canonical gospels, such as the prologue and the infancy narratives), in which he included the relatively large amount of attention paid to women characters and their prominent narrative roles (a phenomenon of which he believed himself to be the first observer),[58] and in particular the gender-specific character of the Magnificat, that is, according to his interpretation.[59] He was in need, therefore, of a woman (or a group of women) as the oral source through which the *Sondergut* passages would have reached the author. Harnack was convinced that such an oral source actually existed and that we have to locate this oral source in the four prophesying daughters of the evangelist Philip, in whose house in

[56] Harnack 1900b, repr. 1931: 62–85.
[57] Harnack 1900b was quickly followed by Harnack 1901 with additional arguments. To this Hilgenfeld, who by the time was already engaged in a series of articles on the introductory chapters of the Third Gospel, responded in negative terms (Hilgenfeld 1901c). Like Harnack, Hilgenfeld ignored Jacobé's contribution. Regarding Irenaeus, Harnack at first expressed his doubts, but afterwards he was convinced by Burkitt (1906) that Irenaeus, too, read "Elisabeth" (Harnack 1906: 79 n. 2).
[58] Harnack 1906: 109–110.
[59] On Luke's *Sondergut,* see e.g. Petzke 1990.

Caesarea Paul stayed, according to Acts 21:8–9.[60] Luke, as a companion to Paul, would have met these prophesying daughters and talked to them.

Harnack based his claim on a report by Papias, referred to by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, that these women narrated miraculous stories. According to Papias, Eusebius tells us, the daughters of Philip related the story of a contemporary raised to life, as well as the story of Justus Barsabas (the same one as mentioned in Acts 1:23) who drank a deadly poison, καὶ μηδὲν ἀηδὲς διὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου χάριν ὑπομείναντος, "and was not any the worse for it through the grace of our Lord."[61] Eusebius continues, saying that

> καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου εἰς αὐτὸν ἥκοντα παρατέθειται ξένας τέ τινας παραβολὰς τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ καί τινα ἄλλα μυθικώτερα,
> the same [Papias] also added other things had reached him from oral tradition, and certain strange parables of the Saviour and teachings of Him and some other fabulous things.[62]

Whether Eusebius meant to say that these other things, parables, teachings, and more fabulous things were equally transmitted by Philip's daughters is uncertain.[63] Harnack also held these women prophets responsible for the Third Gospel's Samaritan interests, as Philip is reported to be the first missionary to the Samaritans.[64]

What made Harnack think that the daughters of Philip were in contact with Elisabeth and Mary? Harnack does not explain, but a clue may be found in Eusebius' report itself, for there are traces of a confusion between Philip who was one of the twelve apostles, and Philip the Evangelist who was one of the seven deacons mentioned in Acts 6:5 and who had four prophesying daughters, with whom Paul and Luke stayed in Caesarea according to Luke 21:8–9. Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus, quoted by Eusebius, says that Philip, one of the Twelve, is buried

[60] Harnack 1906: 69, 72. This hypothesis of Harnack is not mentioned in Schüssler Fiorenza's inventory of possible women-authored New Testament texts, though she recognises the sources pertaining to these women prophets (1983: 60–61, 162–68, 299). On Philip and the women prophets, see Tucker and Liefeld 1987: 53–87; Chesnutt 1991; Spencer 1992; Kollmann 2000.
[61] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.9 (Bardy 1986: 155).
[62] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11 (Bardy 1986: 156).
[63] Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza 1983: 299.
[64] Harnack 1906: 110–111. Spencer, in his study of the literary portrait of Philip in Acts, affirms both the historical basis of the meeting between Philip and Paul described in Acts 21:8–9, and that "the author of Luke-Acts, as part of the "we"-group … met Philip personally." (Spencer 1992: 270)

in Hierapolis, together with two of his daughters, while a third one is buried in Ephesus.[65] Proclus, also quoted by Eusebius, says that all four women prophets are buried with their father in Hierapolis.[66] It seems that Eusebius was vaguely aware of this confusion between the two Philips.[67] The four prophesying daughters' information could easily have been thought to stem from intelligence provided by the Philip who was one of the Twelve.

In short, in Harnack's studies on Luke 1–2, we again find an example of how preconceived ideas of how a woman would write, influence the way in which a gendered author is constructed. Even his decision in a textual-critical problem, the enunciator of the Magnificat, is dominated by these preconceived ideas. While the debate, that began with Morin and Jacobé (Loisy), took to textual-critical arguments, Harnack unperturbed went his own way, arguing that the Magnificat was just what a barren woman like Elisabeth (or Hannah) would have said. And although Harnack defended a male authored medical style Greek original, not explicitly referring to Hobart but nevertheless quite in line with Hobart's followers such as Zahn, he again went his own way by attributing the *Sondergut* to women's voices. Why, one may wonder, did Harnack so stubbornly go his own way and why was he committed to find women's voices in the text in the first place? Could there have been some major involvement on his part to read women's voices "under" the overall idea of a man author versed in medical language? In the next section I will try to uncover the reason for Harnack's involvement.

2.4 Harnack's Location and his Sense of an Author

What made Harnack committed, more or less implicitly, to the question of gendered authorial voices, while at the same time sticking to conventional men's and women's role divisions? In order to find an answer to this question, it might be helpful to focus on his readerly location, that is, on Harnack's scholarly, societal, and religious context. Harnack, as is well known, was convinced that the early Christian mission was for a large part effectuated by and through women, of whom he was able to list the names and roles.[68] His studies on this subject are embedded in the history of religions school in 1900s Germany, in which he himself played a leading role.[69] A flow of publications produced by scholars in this school, for instance Hans

[65] Polycrates *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.3 (Bardy 1986: 141–142). The fourth daughter seems to be missing in Polycrates' report. Ancient Hierapolis lies near the modern city of Pamukkale, in the west of Turkey.
[66] Proclus, *Dial. Caius*, *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4 (Bardy 1986: 142).
[67] After having presented Polycrates' and Proclus' reports, Eusebius continues to speak about Luke: ταῦτα μὲν οὗτος· ὁ δὲ Λουκᾶς (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4–5; Bardy 1986: 142) which suggests an opposition.
[68] Harnack 1908: 64–84; 1915a: 58–78. Critically discussed by Kraemer 2012: 528–529.
[69] Dobertin 1985; Smend 1990.

Achelis, Peter Corssen, Leopold Zscharnack, Friedrich Augar, Herbert Preisker, and Gerhard Delling, attest to their common interest in women in the early church,[70] as well as in ancient Judaism.[71] A few years before Harnack held the daughters of Philip responsible for Luke's *Sondergut*, Corssen published—in the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, a scholarly journal edited at the time by Harnack himself—a detailed article on these daughters, in which he examined the remark by Eusebius that these daughters spread the stories used by Luke (Corssen 1901). A year earlier, Hans Achelis had published an article in the same journal, on inscriptions found in the Greek Aegean Islands, showing evidence for the presence of early Christian communities (Achelis 1900). Achelis' study prefigures Harnack's and Corssen's studies, in that he finds and examines evidence of leading roles in early Christian communities of women mentioned by name. In the course of his exposé Achelis finds occasion to embark on a lengthy discussion of the same four prophesying daughters of Philip and their role in the spreading of early Christianity. Surprisingly, Harnack does not refer to Achelis or Corssen (but he did not refer to Hobart, Morin, and Jacobé either). Finally, Harnack also made a case for a woman as author of Hebrews, in the person of Prisca, together with her husband Aquila.[72] Apparently, we do not have an isolated line of research, but a broader field of interest in the role of women in early Christianity that would have been made invisible by a developing church. Where does this flow of gender-specific research originate?

The publication by Gerhard Ficker in Germany in 1905, of *The Debate Between a Montanist and an Orthodox,* a text probably dating from the fourth century, might offer a clue.[73] This work defends that Mary, the mother of Jesus, could have written the Third Gospel by herself, but she refrained from it because it was not right to do so. The Montanist asks whether the Orthodox thinks that women are not allowed to prophesy. After all, Maximilla and Priscilla

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[70] Achelis 1900; Corssen 1901; Zscharnack 1902; Augar 1905; Preisker 1927; Delling 1931. See the inventory in Wire 1990: 202–203 ("Appendix 2: Early Twentieth-Century Research on Women").

[71] Interestingly, Brooten (1982b: 83–84) discusses the possibility that the terms ἱέρεια and ἱέρισσα in ancient Jewish inscriptions mean "priest" in the cultic sense of the term remarks that "some may find this hard to believe. Women cultic functionaries do not fit our image of ancient Judaism. To be sure, seventy-five and eighty years ago there were those who argued that women could have held some official position in the ancient Israelite cult, but their view gradually fell out of scholarly favour." Cf. references cited by Brooten (1982b: 246 n. 32 and 33). The studies in favour of women as cultic functionaries that are cited range from the period under discussion here, 1898 to 1908. See also Schüssler Fiorenza 1979; 1983.

[72] An example is the debate concerning the author of Hebrews, traditionally ascribed to Paul. Already Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.3.5; 6.20.3; Bardy 1986: 99; Bardy 1994) reported that some people have their doubts. Various men authors have been proposed, until Harnack (1900a: 32ff) first defended the probability of a woman author, Prisca (admittedly together with her husband Aquila). Silent resistance to Harnack's hypothesis was noticed by Schiele (1905), who again defended the probability of Prisca's authorship, starting from a reconsideration of anonymity and pseudonymity in early Christian literature. See further Hoppin (1969; 1997).

[73] *Dialogus Montanistae et Orthodoxi*, in Ficker 1905; Heine 1989: 112–127; discussed by Kraemer 1991b: 238–239. On Montanism, see Elm 1994 and the literature cited there.

did prophesy, as did the four daughters of Philip. Deborah did prophesy. And the apostle Paul allowed women to prophecy with their head covered.[74] The Orthodox responds that women do prophesy and he cites Luke 1:48, where it is written that Mary prophesied, saying, "From now on all generations will call me blessed."[75] The real point is that women are not allowed to speak in public or to write books in their own names.[76] Mary did not write books, in order not to dishonour her head by exercising authority over men, which is a reference to the words written by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:4–6.[77] When the Montanist continues to ask whether the precepts of Paul about praying and prophesying with a veil are really about writing books, the Orthodox responds that this is indeed the case, Mary "had the evangelist for her veil. She did not write the Gospel in her own name."[78]

This *Debate* is interesting, as it is basically about the relation between a speaking/prophesying woman and a writing man. Women are allowed to speak, so the Orthodox holds, it is writing that is forbidden by Scripture. The writing male author is merely the veil of the speaking woman author. The Orthodox's point of view may not be representative for the early Christian tradition as a whole, but so much is clear: we must allow for the possibility that not women's voices as such are rejected, but only writing in their own names. To put it differently, we must reckon with the possibility that pseudonymity is a strategy used to downplay women's names, not women's words. Harnack's position on the authorship of Luke 1–2 seems to reflect this tension between women who speak (Mary related to the daughters of Philip who in their turn told Luke) and men who write (Luke heard the words and wrote them down).

It would be helpful if we could substantiate the claim that Harnack had been acquainted with the *Debate* even before its date of publication. Harnack and Ficker were formal collaborators since 1902, but they were acquainted to each other much earlier. Harnack, at least on one occasion as early as 1895, defended Ficker publicly.[79] On the other hand, the publication

[74] Ficker 456: 24–31.

[75] Ficker 456: 33–34 with corrections προεφήτευσε for προεφήτευσεν and μακαριοῦσί for μακαριοῦσιν.

[76] Ficker 457: 1–3.

[77] Ficker 457: 5–8. Cf. 1 Cor 14:33b–36; 1 Tim 2:12.

[78] ἔχει κάλυμμα τὸν εὐαγγελιστήν. Οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ὀνόματος αὐτῆς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀναγέγραπται, Ficker 457: 15–16.

[79] [Paul] Gerhard Ficker, 1865–1934, was at the time professor for church history at Halle University (Rebenich 1997: 654). Harnack defended Ficker in the controversy following the paper in which Ficker defended the pagan character of the Abercius Inscription. This paper, read to the Prussian Academy in 1894, was attacked by the Roman-Catholic church historian Louis Duchesne in 1895, who proffered a Christian reading (Weitlauff 2001: 260). By letter of October 4, 1894, to Theodor Mommsen Harnack bitterly complained about Duchesne's attack (Rebenich 1997: 653–658). A couple of years later, on 4 April 1902, still before the edition of the *Debate*, Harnack reported to the members of Commission on the Church Fathers ("die Kirchenväterkommission") of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, that Ficker offered his assistance to the commission by providing the members with his draft collations of Jerome's *Chronicle,*

of the *Debate* does not provide a sufficient explanation of the remarkable flow of gender-specific research around 1900. Maybe it just underscores my conclusion that Harnack's reference to the four prophesying daughters of Philip was not an isolated phenomenon and that the idea of women's writing concealed behind pseudonymity was already there.

Another clue may perhaps be found in a scholarly debate ensuing from Harnack's work. Papers by Harnack and members of his school that were published in the liberal protestant, Berlin based *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (*ZNW*) were quickly responded to in another scholarly journal, the Roman Catholic *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie (ZWT)*. Adolf Hilgenfeld, editor of *ZWT,* proved himself in particular an opponent of Harnack's studies on Luke 1–2.[80] Hilgenfeld followed Hillman's and Resch's theses that the Third Gospel originally started with the third chapter, but he showed himself more cautious with the first two chapters (Hilgenfeld 1901b). He agreed that Luke 1–2 originated from a Jewish-Christian source and contains some purely Jewish pieces, especially the Magnificat and the Benedictus. As a Roman Catholic scholar, Hilgenfeld would of course welcome any argument to strengthen and reinforce the idea that the Magnificat was really spoken by Mary. It is easy to understand, therefore, that he showed himself sympathetic to Resch's suggestion of a Hebrew *Vorlage* to Luke 1–2, and opposed Harnack's theory that the Magnificat was originally ascribed to Elisabeth. Thus, we witness in the first place a collision between liberal protestant scholarship and Roman Catholic scholarship (O'Meara 1991). It must indeed have been impossible for Roman Catholic scholars to accept that the Magnificat was not originally spoken by Mary.[81] The attention paid by the *ZNW* scholars to women leadership in the church must have been equally distasteful to *ZWT* scholars, as this would undermine Roman Catholic emphasis on men as missionaries in early Christianity, and as a consequence criticise the exclusive role of men in the (contemporary) Roman Catholic Church.

There also seems to be a political component in the debate between the two theological journals. In view of the recent *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s, during which Bismarck attempted to

free of charge; the commission was chaired by Harnack, together with Mommsen, with the aim of editing the series Greek Christian Writers of the first three centuries (Rebenich 1997: 190).

[80] Hilgenfeld 1901a, 1901b, 1901c, 1901d. Apparently, Hilgenfeld confused Resch with a contemporary New Testament scholar, A. Nebe, for he referred to Resch's work as *Die Kindheitsgeschichte unseres Herr Jesu Christi nach Matthäus und Lucas unter Herbeibeziehung der ausserkanonischen Paralleltexte quellenkritisch untersucht*, 1897 (Hilgenfeld 1901b: 180). The correct title should be *Das Kindheitsevangelium nach Lucas und Matthaeus usw.* 1897, while A. Nebe was the author of *Die Kindheitsgeschichte unseres Herrn Jesu Christi.*

[81] Not surprisingly, many years later, in 1957, the French Roman Catholic mariologist René Laurentin still defended a Hebrew original (Laurentin 1957b: 13, 18 passim; 1982). Hilda Graef, a German mariologist, concluded in 1964 that Luke 1–2 could be considered as a combination of Mary's own memories with other material, reworked by the author "naturally under the influence of the Holy Spirit." (Graef 1964: 17–18)

place the Roman Catholic Church under State supervision, Roman Catholic scholars might have felt the need to defend themselves against what appeared as State supported liberal theology. It must be remembered that especially the laws of 15 May 1872 promulgated by minister Falk forbade Roman Catholic clergy to fulfil any public office, after which many of them sought refuge in the Netherlands, including editors and writers of the *ZWT*. In 1887 they were allowed to return to Germany, in the course of the negotiations between Prussia and Pope Leo XIII, but, generally speaking, Roman Catholic distrust of (liberal protestant) State politics remained. Hilgenfeld's critique on Harnack (and, in a lesser degree, on Resch) is only two decades after this struggle.

This does, however, still not explain why protestant liberal scholars should pay so much attention to the issue of a leading role for women and women's authorship in early church and Judaism. Could it be that their reflections were part of a broader movement in society? After all, it was the time of the first feminist wave, between 1880 and 1920, which produced among many other things *The Women's Bible*. It is doubtful whether the contributions assembled in *The Women's Bible,* written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) and others, and published in the USA between 1895 and 1898, ever reached scholars like Harnack and Resch. But they must have been acquainted with the developments and tenets of the women's movement, as these gradually pervaded societal organisations. In Berlin in 1890 the International Conference on Labour Legislation had already paid attention to the position of women through acceptance of the Resolutions concerning Female Labour.[82] Stanton and Susan B. Anthony had visited Great Britain and France in 1883.[83] Stanton's proposal for an international conference in view of the organisation of the international suffrage movement, led to the foundation of the International Council of Women, in Chicago in 1893, and of national Councils of Women, such as in Germany in 1894. In 1896 and again in 1904 Berlin saw the international conferences of the International Council of Women, organised by the German Council of Women. Especially the 1904 conference, visited by five thousand women and drawing much attention in Berlin (received as they were by the empress and the *Reichskanzler*),[84] cannot have passed unnoticed by liberal Berlin based scholars. At this conference the issue of votes for women led to the foundation of the more radical International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWSA).[85] In 1910, Berlin finally saw the

[82] Reinalda and Verhaaren 1989: 64, 436.
[83] The *Declaration of Sentiments* was accepted at the conference in Seneca Falls, near New York, in 1848 and professes the equality of men and women and the right of women to give full scope to their gifts in all fields of society (Tuttle 1986: 76–80, 288–89; Reinalda and Verhaaren 1989: 11–12).
[84] Bosch 2005: 349–357, esp. 355–356.
[85] ICW 1966; Reinalda and Verhaaren 1989: 19–21, 23.

formation of the International Union of Liberal Christian Women (IULCW), which was probably closer to the state of mind of liberal Protestant scholars.[86]

Harnack and others cannot have escaped this climate. At least Harnack's own daughter Agnes von Zahn-Harnack (1884–1950) had not.[87] It was, so to say, in Harnack's own family. Like a true prophesying daughter she was the first woman to be accepted in a German university. After she completed her PhD in 1912 with a study on *Aloys und Imelde*, a tragedy by Clemens Brentano not yet published at that time, she became one of the cofounders of the German Association of Academic Women in 1926, stimulating women's participation in the university. She wrote many books and articles on the Women's Movement, and finally in 1931, one year after her father's death, she became chair of the German Federation of Women's Associations. Like her father, she represented the typical brand of liberal Protestantism of the time, with its humanist historical attitude which made her go into *Innere Emigration* during the Nazi terror, while her younger brother, her cousin, and his wife were executed because of their role in the resistance.

Apparently, with Resch and Harnack we have early examples of men trying "to be in feminism" without saying so and probably without knowing it themselves. It is obvious that the way they constructed a gendered authorship was conditioned by their own location as liberal Protestant male scholars in the history of religions school, in the turn-of-the-century Germany. Although they showed interest in the question of gender, like many other scholars in this school, their research was not motivated by feminist concerns. Their own non-dogmatic agenda impelled them to explain the existence "in" the text of rather "unusual" elements, namely the Ruth parallel (Resch) and the ascription of the Magnificat to Elisabeth (Harnack). At the same time, however, the convictions they held about how a woman or a man might write led them to interpret their findings in a rather androcentric fashion, and to gender the author accordingly. Women's contribution was accepted up to the level of oral tradition, insofar as private experiences were concerned (Mary) but also insofar as this oral tradition was part of the early Christian mission (Philip's daughters). The actual writing was reserved for men, which is an unexpected and surprising reminiscence of the Orthodox's position in the *Debate*.

The assumed women's oral tradition was argued for by referring to a supposed Hebrew or Aramaic source, which in its turn was deduced from the LXX styled text of Luke 1–2. It is here that confessional interests came to play a role. A Hebrew or Aramaic source (Resch) was acceptable to Roman Catholics, as this would account for Mary as the real source. A Greek

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[86] Since 1975 the International Association of Liberal Religious Women. See Reinalda and Verhaaren 1989: 22, 410, 416; Dröes 1991: 118–19 n. 136.

[87] On Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, see Meseberg-Haubold 1991; Cymorek and Graf 2005; Gisa Bauer 2006.

source (Harnack) was unacceptable as it would exclude Mary as the original enunciator of the song. That Harnack thought the words of the Magnificat fitting for Elisabeth, and proposed to alter the Greek text accordingly, did not make his case better. Harnack's thesis, that women were the driving force in the early Christian mission and that part of the Third Gospel would have been transmitted by women missionaries must have closed the door in an ecclesiastical context that barred women from ministry.[88]

2.5 Conclusion

The studies by Resch and Harnack offer an example of the heuristic value of the hypothesis of a female author. Among the interesting results are the Ruth parallel to Luke 1–2 (Resch) or the evaluation of the question of who pronounced the Magnificat (Harnack). On the other hand, however, conventional parontocentric notions about how a woman would write (or speak) are clearly involved. Two important theoretical points can be gleaned from this case study. First, there is the decisive importance of readerly locations. Second, there is the urgent need to avoid gender essentialism. These two issues will be the outset of the next section.

[88] Harnack officially considered the Roman Catholic French theologian Duchesne a friend, despite the way in which Duchesne attacked Ficker. Nevertheless, the ironical tone with which Duchesne addressed Harnack cannot have passed unnoticed (Rebenich 1997). I venture that academic politeness actually covered a world of difference.

3 The Body of Knowledge

When dealing with the gender of the author of an anonymous or pseudonymous text, we have to find our way between parontocentrism (projecting modern notions of gender back into ancient times) and essentialism ("this is naturally how a wo/man will write"). After a brief survey of research on the author's gender (section 3.1), I will propose the concept of "the body" as a means to proceed in this question, relying mainly on Merleau-Ponty's notion of bodily perception (3.1.1) and on an analysis by König of bodily representation in Greek and Roman novel (3.1.2). Turning towards the Third Gospel, I will use Moore's deconstructionist interpretation of this text to make a start with a bodily reading (3.2). I will conclude that, though it may not be possible to decide positively whether the author was a man or a woman, it should be possible to "re/member the author," as suggested by Moore, imagining what it might be like to have a specific body "there and then" (3.3).

3.1 The Search for Gendered Authorship at a Dead End?

As I have already explained, the search for (traces of) women's authorship in biblical texts started in the 1980s, in the course of the second feminist wave. Schüssler Fiorenza rightly warned that "the suggestion of female authorship does not overcome the androcentric character of the writings." (1983: 61)[89] With regard to the Third Gospel, a female author has been suggested on the basis of the special attention paid by this gospel to women's roles.[90] Gradually the focus in biblical studies shifted from the idea of an author to the idea of men's and women's voices in the text.[91] But even then, the question remained on what grounds one could establish men's and women's voices. The social context of the Third Gospel was taken into account.[92] A linguistic track was followed as the Third Gospel would show a special kind of

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[89] Schüssler Fiorenza makes some suggestions on women's authorship in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John, as these two gospels give a prominent role to women disciples. She observes that "Mark's portrayal of the leading men disciples is rather critical and almost negative," while "the circle of women disciples exemplifies true discipleship" (1983: 316–323, esp. 319). She leaves open the question of a gendered author, referring to the writer of Mark as "s/he" or "his/her" (1983: 316, 320). In her discussion of the Gospel of John, she equally refers to the author as "s/he" (1983: 323–333); only in the final lines of this section she allows that "the evangelist … might have been a woman."
[90] Via 1987: 49–50. D'Angelo has argued that the only clear argument for a male writer lies in the perfect active masculine participle παρηκολουθηκότι in the Prologue of Luke 1:3 (D'Angelo 1990: 452 and n. 29).
[91] On multiple voices, female and male voices in biblical texts, see Brenner and Van Dijk-Hemmes 1993.
[92] On the Third Gospel and its social context, see esp. Corley 1993; Seim 1994a; 1994b.

Jewish Diaspora Greek.[93] Another approach took into account the literary parallels with classical and contemporary Jewish (midrashic) literature, trying to determine whether there is some preferred gendered generic pattern.[94]

The problem, however, remains. On what grounds could we define the characteristics of men's or women's voices, or what types of language or genre would preferably be used by women or by men? On the one hand, the interpreter has to avoid the Scylla of essentialism, which confines men and women to their biological sex. In this approach, being a man or being a woman is the way you are born, which would entail a certain way of thinking, behaving or writing. Searching for traces of a woman or man as an author within this paradigm, you run the risk of confirming already preset, allegedly unavoidable, but nevertheless parontocentric notions of gender. On the other hand, the interpreter has to avoid the Charybdis of culture-bound socialisation. According to this position you become a woman or a man as a result of your socialisation within a specific time and place, and in particular within language (discourse), as a consequence of which you run the risk of a reduction of your subjectivity as a man or a woman to your sociocultural location. In this approach, the way you learn to be a man or to be a woman determines how you feel, act, and write "as a woman" or "as a man."

Would this dilemma mean that the search for a gendered author is actually at a dead end? I do not think so. First, we should reformulate the abstract concept of authorship, so as to allow for a diversity of embodied voices. I will address this embodied authorship in the following sections. Second, our concept of gender may not apply to the ancient world. In that case, we have to follow a different track, where gender is neither reduced to the body, nor to an ontological status. I will address this point in my next chapter.

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[93] On the subject of Diaspora Greek, see esp. Wifstrand (2005: 17–27) and the discussion of Wifstrand's position in Alexander 2004. On the language of 1:5ff as a "biblizistische Konstruktion," see Jeremias 1980:20. Even the style of direct LXX quotations is polished, so as to make them fit in with the biblical scenery (Jeremias 1980: 9. 34–35). On the Hebraisms, see (next to the positions taken by Delitzsch and Resch) esp. Winter 1953. On Luke's use of Hellenistic rhetoric, see more recently esp. Parsons 2007.

[94] On genre and Luke–Acts, see e.g. Pervo 1987 (on the basis of Hägg 1983) on the parallel with the historical novel; Edwards (1991) compared Acts with Josephus and *Chaereas and Callirhoe*. Parts of the Third Gospel and Acts show affinity with Jewish-Hellenistic narrative (Holzberg 2001: 36; Ramelli 2001; Whitmarsh 2008: 13). Alexander compared the preface to the Third Gospel with contemporary historical and scientifical prefaces (1993; 2005: 1–20), and the Third Gospel and Acts with epic (2003). The account of Paul's voyage and the shipwreck (Acts 27) seems to draw on a classical epic register (Holzberg 1995: 22, though Alexander 2005: 69–96 focuses on sea-travels in Greek romance). Bonz (2000) argued that the author was influenced by Virgil's *Aeneid* (cf. Alexander 2005: 165–182 for a critical evaluation of ancient epic and its relation to New Testament narrative; a similar claim was made for the Gospel of Mark by MacDonald 2000).

3.1.1 The Body as a Source of Knowledge: Maurice Merleau-Ponty

In order to overcome the dilemma of an essentialist concept of a gendered on the one hand and a contextually determined gendered author on the other, I would propose to turn to the body. Whether you are born a man or a woman, or whether you are taught to be a woman or a man, the ultimate reference point of experience is always located in the body. I cannot deny that I have a body and that having a body means to be perceived, by myself and by others, as someone who has this specific body (a woman's body, a man's body, a black person's body, a body not in accordance with hegemonic notions of beauty or health, a disabled body, a pitiable body etc.), on behalf of which I have learned to experience myself in a certain way, and on behalf of which I am perceived in a certain way. Jacques Lacan has already described the socializing, gendering force you experience when you are entering into the symbolic order (the language-defined set of values prevalent in society).[95] Though my body cannot be reduced to its biological sex (or to the colour of my skin, to my outward appearance and so on), it is this outward appearance that gives first raise to the perception of my body and the culturally determined significance that is attributed to it, due to which I am incorporated (or incarcerated) into the symbolic order.

It is interesting to note, that René Descartes, who is usually valued (and criticised) for his preferring the *cogito* of the mind over the body, already accentuated the mutual influence of body and soul, and situated this reciprocity in a bodily function.[96] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who in his 1945 study on perception criticised the opposition between the thinking subject (the "I" of the *cogito*) and the material object (the body, as extended matter, that is, Descartes' *res extensa*), and thus between the perceiver and the perceived, argued that you do not "have" a body, but that you "are" your body. I am my body. My bodily subject is formed by the sensory experience of my own body. As an incarnated subject I am living my body and I am with my body part of the world. This means that the body has an epistemological value: my perception of the world is always informed by my bodily shaped relation to it.[97] Here a *via media* emerges between the two extremes of essentialism on the one hand and reductionism on the other.[98]

More recently, Shaun Gallagher (2005) defended a theory of embodied cognition. Gallagher criticised what he saw as the Cartesian neglect of the role of the body, arguing that

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[95] I have introduced my use of Lacan's concept of the symbolic order in my introduction, section 1, note 1.
[96] Descartes in his 1649 book *Les Passions de l'âme* (Descartes 2008: 90–98).
[97] Merleau-Ponty in his 1945 book *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (translated in English, Merleau-Ponty 2002). In 1948 Merleau-Ponty explained his position in a series of seven broadcast lectures, the *Causeries 1948* (in Dutch translation, Merleau-Ponty 2008).
[98] Cf. also Gallop 1988.

through a process of mutual interaction of body, mind, and world, the body influences my self-consciousness, perception, language, and social cognition. Frederique de Vignemont (2006), reviewing Gallagher's study, has put the question what, then, really shapes the mind. The body itself or the way we mentally represent the body? To this I would reply that what shapes the mind is, indeed, the mental representation of the body. The way I experience my body influences how I think about myself. But it is also true that my mental representation is dependent on my experience of my body within the various symbolic orders my body participates in. It seems probable, therefore, and even likely, that to distance myself from a hegemonic symbolic order that teaches me to develop a negative mental representation of the body, and to search and find a context in which the body is differently perceived and more positively appreciated, leads me to a different mental representation.

Basically, I believe, this implies a return to the phenomenological approach initiated by Merleau-Ponty and De Beauvoir, according to which the experience of the body is a product of situation (Lennon 2014). My body is viewed in its vulnerability, exposed to the gaze of others, always there to be signified whether I like it or not; my body is represented and signified by the people I am living with, the society I am living in, including myself, as we are all participating in various discursive practices that may be coherent or conflicting, but are most likely always intersecting. Outward visual characteristics—the selection of which is itself already culturally determined—trigger the way I am signified and signify myself; in particular signifiers of gender and race play a prominent role (Alcoff 2006). This "I" of mine is a white man, but what it means to be a white man depends on my experience. As my bodily experience is instable due to my repeated experience of conflicting, contradicting, and divergent discursive practices, this instability may lead me to experience new horizons and mentally represent my body in new and different ways. In this sense, my body is the field par excellence where new knowledge is produced. As my mind is inextricably connected to the body, what really shapes the mind is the way I see myself in my vulnerable materiality, taught by the intersecting discursive practices I am living in. Once we arrive at this insight, it will be clear that every crack in the house built by race and gender offers me the chance to reshape my mind. As Kathleen Lennon (2014) says, quoting approvingly Linda Alcoff (2006),

> Such changes require that people are brought to view their own bodies and the bodies of others in a different way: 'perceptual practices are dynamic

> even when congealed into habit … people are capable of change' ([Alcoff] 189).[99]

In the following sections, I will explore the possible value of this concept of bodily knowledge for a reading of ancient texts.

3.1.2 The Body in Greek and Roman Novel: Jason König

Could these theoretical insights concerning the body be brought to bear on the question of gender in anonymous or pseudonymous texts stemming from antiquity? Jason König (2008), reflecting on bodily representation in ancient novels, makes some remarks that may well count for Luke 1–2. Without wanting to draw rash conclusions about whether this text could be regarded as a novella, it is obvious that a marked bodily representation, recognised by König in ancient novels, is also visible in Luke 1–2. Indeed, the whole point of Luke 1–2 is the word becoming body (2:15). As König explains, emphasis in Greek and Roman novel is on bodily beauty (129–130), but the protagonists' bodily integrity is "humorously undermined" (130–131). When we turn to Luke 1–2, we find that almost none of the characters conform to notions of bodily beauty. Some of them are old, such as Zachariah, Elisabeth, Simeon, and Anna. Zachariah becomes mute, which is a severe bodily defect. Elisabeth is barren and becomes pregnant against all odds. An exception is perhaps Mary who is a παρθένος, "a young woman" (1:27), but here another concern of bodily integrity emerges, as König defines it, that is "the protagonists' maintenance of chastity" (131).

Besides, Luke 1–2 relates mental emotions that affect the body: at the vision of her niece, the child jumps in Elisabeth's womb (1:41); Elisabeth screams (1:42); compassion is felt in the bowels or entrails (1:78). In addition, Luke 1–2 displays an extraordinary amount of verbs denoting speech.[100] Furthermore, there are many words denoting silence or being silent, as well

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[99] There are other ways to reflect on the epistemic value of the body. A very useful survey for the field of feminist criticism gives Lennon 2014. In the field of ethnic studies (with a critical assessment of the untenable split between ethnic studies and women's studies), see Wekker 2016. In the field of theological anthropology, see Meiring (2014; 2015), who bases himself Lakoff and Johnson 1999, trying to establish the value of the corporeal turn in philosophy for theology and related disciplines. Meiring's starting point is the oppression physically experienced by black people in South Africa: "There is … a bodily knowing where the black body has often been denied its dignity and humanity, where it has been perceived as subhuman and uncivilised." (Meiring 2015: 2)

[100] Verbs denoting speech in Luke 1–2 include εἶπον (19 times including the varia lectio in 2:15), λέγω (5 times), τὸ εἰρημένον (2:24), ἀντιλεγόμενον (2:34), λαλέω (14 times, including 2:15), καλέω (14 times), ἀποκρίνομαι (1:19, 35, 60), εὐαγγελίζομαι (1:19; 2:10), ἀναφωνέω (1:42 *hapax legomenon* in New Testament), εὐλογέω (7 times incl. *v.l.* 1:28), αἰνέω (2:13, 20), δοξάζω (2:20), ἀνθομολογέομαι (2:38

as (bodily) communication within silence, such as beckoning, nodding, issuing a decree or writing.[101] Often, the interplay between speech and silence contributes to what König would call a humorously undermining situation, such as the group of family and neighbours, refusing to listen to Elisabeth, turning instead to the father Zachariah, who is unable to speak anyway and has to communicate by means of a writing tablet, only to agree with his wife concerning the name of their son (1:59–63); or the screaming Elisabeth, though Mary is the only other person present (1:42). A third example of an undermining distribution of speech may be found in the opposition of the (written) decree of Caesar, a powerful event as it concerns πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, "the whole inhabited world" (2:1), but is countered by the spoken words of the angel that concern παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, "the whole people" (2:10).

A similar bodily representation of mental affairs can be traced in Greek novels, such as, e.g., *Callirhoe* (König 2008: 130–133). Greek novels often gain their effects by drawing into themselves ideas and speech patterns from across an enormous range of human experience, setting them into dialogue with each other (König 2008: 137–138). The same could be said of the body. Like the novel, the body cannot be conceived outside a web of interrelations of which it is a living part. In other words, the body is intercorporeal in much the same way as the text is intertextual. As König says, "associations between body and text are deeply ingrained both in the structure of Greek and Roman novels, and in the detailed texture of the reading experiences they offer" (138).[102] In short, there is a similarity between body and text, to such a degree that bodily texture and narrative texture are interwoven with each other (König 2008: 144).[103]

Seen from this bodily perspective, the ancient tradition that the author of the Third Gospel would have been a physician could already be regarded as an indexical sign of the experience of bodily intensity. Eusebius, when he calls Luke a healer both of the body and of the soul, touches on what may well be the heart of the matter. There is, at least in Hellenistic literature of the period, a close connection between body and text. This would mean that we can read the Third Gospel as if it were a body. Whether this text is "male" or "female" remains to be seen. For the time being I suggest that the question should rather be whether and to what

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hapax legomenon in New Testament), αἰτέομαι (1:63), προφητεύω (1:67), μακαρίζω (1:48), χρηματίζω (2:26), ἐπερωτάω (2:46).

[101] In addition to not being able to speak (1:20, 22) also σιωπάω (1:20), κωφός (1:22). Communicating within silence: διανεύω (1:22), ἐννεύω (1:62 *hapax legomenon* in New Testament), ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα (2:1), γράφω (1:3, 6.3, 2:23), ἀπογράφομαι (2:1, 3, 5)

[102] König draws here on Holquist's interpretation of Bakhtin (Holquist 2002).

[103] Another example of this approach is Rimell (2002), who analyses relations between body and text in ancient novels, using the body as a guiding metaphor for her characterisation of Petronius's *Satyrica*. McEwen (2003) reads the architectural handbook of Vitruvius as a bodily description of architecture. For an analysis of the role of the body within modern (eighteenth to twentieth century) art and literature, from a psychoanalytical perspective, cf. Brooks 1993.

extent the text shows a bodily integrity. To put it differently, to read for "male" or "female" as such would be useless, because the human body would be missing. You should always ask, in reading, whose body you read and what this body looks like. If I am not mistaken, this line of reflection converges with the line of argument followed by Stephen Moore in his deconstructionist reading of the Third Gospel. In the following sections I will discuss Moore's reading of the Third Gospel at some length, in the hope that my reading of Moore will help me in a heuristic way to find traces of bodily knowledge in the text.

3.2 The Body of Luke: Stephen Moore

Moore offers a deconstructionist reading of the Third Gospel. His line of argument is full of metaphors, at times leading to rather sweeping and elliptic associations and ambiguities. Especially the bodily metaphor tends to take over the argument. Precisely this approach, however, may be very helpful to develop my line of argument. Thus, for instance, Moore's remarks on photographical techniques and the central perspective well-known from the painter Velásquez, as constituents of the all devouring gaze of the author of the Third Gospel, leads me on the track of the voyeuristic and gendered aspects of the textual body. I have selected two elements in Moore's argument that seem promising. First, there is the tradition that Luke was also a painter. Though this tradition has little claim to historicity, it does raise the question why the author called Luke should have been called a painter. Could there be something in the Third Gospel that would have triggered such a tradition? I will discuss the Luke-the-painter tradition in section 3.2.1. A second element that seems worthwhile is Moore's metaphor of Luke as an “obese androgyn.” This is an excessive bodily metaphor, but it may be helpful as a heuristic device. Section 3.2.2, then, will be devoted to this obese androgyn.

3.2.1 Visualizing the Body I: Luke as a Painter

According to a tradition found in Nicephorus Callistus, a fourteenth-century Byzantine writer, and traced by him to Theodorus Lector, a Greek church historian who probably lived in the sixth century, the apostle Luke would have painted a portrait of Mary.[104] This portrait came into the

[104] The tradition that Luke would have been a painter is based on Byzantine tradition. Various sources were collected and critically examined by Dobschütz in an appendix to his study on the legends concerning the acheiropoieta, the icons of Jesus or Mary made "without (human) hand," that is, miraculously (Dobschütz 1899: 267**–292**, "VII. Lukas- und Nikodemos-Bilder"). His arguments are repeated and summarised by Dorothee Klein 1933: 7–10; Plummer 1922 (2004): xxi–xxii; and Creed 1930: xxi. Grigg

possession of the Empress Eudokia of Constantinople, the wife of Emperor Theodosius II (ca. 401–450 CE), during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem:

> καὶ ὅτι ἡ Εὐδοκία τῇ Πουλχερίᾳ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Θεομήτορος, ἣν ὁ ἀπόστολος Λουκᾶς καθιστόρησεν, ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἀπέστειλεν.
> [Theodorus relates] also that [Empress] Eudokia sent forth from Jerusalem to Pulcheria the painting of the Mother of God, which the apostle Luke had painted.[105]

Eventually this legend was spread to Rome and from there further into the West.[106] In the Middle Ages, the apostle Luke became patron saint of the painters' guilds. As such he is usually represented in a seated position drawing or painting Mary, as the Madonna with the child Jesus in her arms.[107] Perhaps the best known example, and probably the first, of this type of paintings is *St. Luke Drawing the Virgin* by the Flemish master Rogier van der Weyden (ill. 1).[108] The paintings constituting the "Luke painting/drawing the Madonna" type, mostly stemming from the Low Countries and Rome, used to serve as a master-proof to get accepted into a guild of painters, or were offered as altar-retable to local guild chapels. The general iconographic scheme shows Luke seated behind an easel, or holding a piece of paper in his hands, painting or drawing, while intently looking at the Madonna who is holding her child. In many cases there is a group of spectators present.

(1987) puts the Luke-the-painter tradition in the larger frame of Byzantine claims "that many of their highly venerated images were created in the time of Christ and the apostles" (3).

[105] Theodorus Lector (also referred to with his Greek name Theodoros Anagnostes), *Ecclesiastica historia* 1.1*;* the text survived only as an extract in Nicephorus Callistus (also referred to with his Greek name Nicephoros Callistes Xanthopoulos), *Historia ecclesiastica* 14.2 (PG 86:166a); Dobschütz 1899: 269**–271**; Dorothee Klein 1933: 8.

[106] According to Dobschütz (275**), the legend that Luke was as painter, was created in Rome and should be regarded as a Roman counter piece to the Greek acheiropoeta. Dorothee Klein does not follow this conclusion; Grigg recognises the legend as originally Byzantine. On other sources referring to Luke as a painter, from the eighth century onwards, see Dobschütz 1899 and Dorothee Klein 1933: 8–10. Luke would even have provided the third Gospel with a whole series of illustrations, according to Grigg 1987: 5 and 8 n. 31.

[107] On the iconography of Luke drawing or painting the Madonna, see especially Dorothee Klein 1933 and Kraut 1986. In addition, see the references cited by Filedt Kok 2006: 23–29.

[108] Rogier van der Weyden, ca. 1435–1440, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Filedt Kok 2006: 6. For more examples of the motive, both of Luke drawing the Madonna and of Luke painting the Madonna, see the survey by Filedt Kok 2006.

Ill. 1
Rogier van der Weyden (1400–1464), *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin*, about 1440; oil and tempera on panel, 137.5 x 110.8 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

I find it curious that an author who has written (relatively) intimately about Mary, and who has narrated her words and even thoughts, would have gone into tradition as someone who is painting her.[109] Besides, as Luke would have listened to her story while painting her, we are reminded of the Montanist conviction that Mary provided the information to be codified by Luke. The interesting thing is, however, that Luke is not writing, but painting. What enabled this leap from writing to painting? Could it be that a connection was perceived between painting and writing the Gospel? After all, the early eighth-century patriarch Germanos of Constantinople relates that a painting of the Mother of God is sent by Luke to Theophilus in Rome, the very same as the addressee of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, thus already emphasising in an early stage of reception the metonymical relation between the painting and the infancy narrative; a relation that is underscored by the use of the Greek verb (καθ)ἱστορέω by both Germanos and Nicephoros, to denote writing and painting alike.[110]

[109] As Dobschütz has remarked, "Dass man aber gerade Lukas als Gewährsmann wählte, liegt wohl daran, dass man ausging von Bildern der Madonna mit dem Kinde, der Szene, wie sie der Evangelist Lukas so malerisch darstellt." (1899: 275**)

[110] καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἡ παρὰ τοῦ ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ ἱστορηθεῖσα τῆς πανάγνου καὶ θεομήτορος ἔτι ζώσης αὐτῆς ἁγία εἰκων καὶ πεμφθεῖσα ἐν Ῥώμῃ πρὸς Θεόφιλον, πρὸς ὃν καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἔγραφε καὶ τὰς πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀπέστειλε, ἥτις καὶ ἕως τοῦ νῦν θαυματουργεῖ, "the holy icon of the all-holy and mother of God painted while she was still living, by the apostle and evangelist Luke, and sent to Rome to Theophilus, to whom he both wrote the Gospel and sent the Acts of the Apostles, the [painting] which to this day works wonders." (Germanos, *Oration to Leo [III] the Isaurian*

Moore offers a promising suggestion, be it a very brief one and only in a footnote (1992: 132 n. 15). He recognises in the Third Gospel a blurring of the word-image opposition.[111] The author, as Moore remarks, applies painting techniques in his writing. What, exactly, Moore understands by these painting techniques he does unfortunately not explain, but his reference to Diego Velázquez' *Las Meninas* suggests that it is the Third Evangelist's central, ever observing perspective Moore has in mind.[112] For in *Las Meninas* (ill. 2), finished in the years 1656–1657, Velázques has represented himself at the easel, looking at the spectators. These spectators, reflected in the mirror on the wall opposite, include the Spanish king and queen themselves.

Ill. 2
Diego Velázques (1599–1660), *Las Meninas*, 1656–1657, oil on canvas, 318 x 276cm. Museo de Prado, Madrid

According to Moore, quoting Michel Foucault's description of *Las Meninas,* the way the author of the Third Gospel has represented himself is comparable to the way Velázques did:

(729 CE), *apud* Georgios Mon. 4.248.11, in Dobschütz 1899: 188*–189*, text 29.15–19, discussed by Dobschütz 1899: 270** and 276**. Further passages, cf. Dobschütz 1899: 270** n. 2.

[111] On the theoretical implications of blurring the demarcation line between word and image, see Bal 1991.

[112] It would have been wonderful if Moore had explained something about ancient painting techniques in relation to the Third Gospel's narrative technique, as ancient painting reoccurs as a theme in ancient novels, e.g. in the prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe*.

> "The painter is turning his eyes towards us only in so far as we happen to occupy the same position as his subject."—the inscribed reader whose role he is sketching. His "gaze, addressed to the void confronting him outside the picture, accepts as many models as there are spectators"—or readers. "As soon as they place the spectator in the field of their gaze, the painter's eyes seize hold of him, force him to enter the picture, assign him a place at once privileged and inescapable." (Moore 1992: 132 n. 15, quoting Foucault 1970: 3–4)

In other words, the point Moore seems to make, basing himself on Foucault, is that the author of the Third Gospel is an inescapable observer, ready to draw you into the narrative, or—to remain in the painting metaphor—ready to make a painting, not only of Mary, but of you as well. I find this an intriguing suggestion, for it would mean that while I am trying to imagine an author, the author is already imagining me. Unfortunately, again, Moore does not go further into this as he prefers to call the author a "photographer" instead (1992: 132 passim). This would mean that the author remains an external observer, an outsider, capturing stills, the result of a scrutinizing and observing gaze, leaving to us only stills without voices. As Moore emphasises the gaze, probably a gender component comes in, that is, the author as a voyeuristic observer. It would be worthwhile to return to the painting techniques, the part bypassed by Moore, and try to understand the relationship between "observing" and "being observed."

Let me turn, therefore, to another group of paintings, of roughly the same period, quite closely resembling the "Luke drawing/painting the Madonna" type. I mean the group of paintings representing the story of the fourth-century BCE painter Apelles painting Campaspe, the lover of Alexander the Great (ill. 3 and 4).[113] Apelles fell in love with the woman he was painting and Alexander offered Campaspe to Apelles (what she would have experienced nobody seems to care about, unfortunately), in exchange for the portrait, which Alexander thought as beautiful as Campaspe herself. In most paintings representing this story, we encounter exactly the same iconographical scheme as in the "Luke drawing/painting the Madonna" type: a painter, seated before his easel, observing the woman seated right before him, the easel placed in such a direction as to enable the onlooker to see both the painting and the woman observed.[114] It is

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[113] The story is reported by Pliny the Elder in *Nat.* 35.86–87 (Mayhoff 1897), where Campaspe is called Pancaspe.

[114] Examples of the "Apelles painting Campaspe" type include Jodocus (Joost) de Winghe (1544–1603), ca. 1600, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Willem van Haecht (1593–1637), ca. 1630, Mauritshuis, The Hague (Inv. no. 266); Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), ca. 1705, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (ill. 3); Nicolas Vleughels (1668–1737), 1716, Musée du Louvre, Paris; Francesco Trevisani (1656–1746), 1720,

clear that we have two very different stories, derived from very different sources, but the outward iconographical similarities are striking and comparison of the two groups of paintings is almost inevitable, urging us to define a possible gender-component hidden in the "Luke drawing/painting the Madonna" type.

Ill. 3
Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), *Apelles Painting Campaspe*, about 1705, oil on canvas, 300 x 261 cm. State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena; Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770), ca. 1740, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (ill. 4); Jacques Louis David (1748–1825), ca. 1820, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille. Sometimes, the moment at which Alexander presents Campaspe to Apelles is represented, such as Gerard Wigmana (1673–1741), ca. 1720 (private collection); Gaetano Gandolfi (1734–1802), 1793 (private collection); Charles Meynier (1763–1832), 1822 (private collection).

Ill. 4
Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770),
Alexander the Great and Campaspe in the Studio of Apelles, about 1740. Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 54 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Do we have in the "Luke drawing/painting the Madonna" type also a typical male writer/painter, looking at a woman? And does this writer/painter likewise transgress the boundaries of his medium and envision a certain feeling of love and eventually establish a kind of possessive relationship through his observing writing/painting? That is, is there a gendered "look" conveyed by the Third Gospel? As a matter of fact, Moore does notice that something is going on in the Third Gospel, making a pun of it by calling the Gospel of Luke, the Gospel of the Look (1992: 85–158). But we must not allow the pun to obscure the question: is this a gendered/gendering look?[115] At first sight, I would be inclined to answer this question in the affirmative. The observed women do not see the picture themselves. The possessive relationship is established through the gaze of the observer. The painter is a voyeur, while the act of painting itself could be understood through metonymy as an act of feeling the observed, and through metaphor even as an act of possessing the observed. This is, however, only at first sight. On closer scrutiny, things may be more complicated.

A 1532 panel of *St. Luke Painting the Madonna* by the Dutch painter Maarten van Heemskerck presents us with an interesting deconstruction of the genre, which may help to get a more nuanced insight in what actually happens in the painter-metaphor (ill. 5).[116] On the

[115] In my use of the terms "gendered look" and the meaning of the gaze, I rely on Pollock 1988.

[116] Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574), *St. Luke Painting the Madonna*, 1532, oil on panel, 168 x 235 cm., Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, inv. os I–134; Cat. Haarlem 1929: 55; Dorothee Klein 1933: 56–58; Reznicek 1955; Reznicek 1969; Friedländer 1975, vol. 13, no. 183; Grosshans 1980: 109–116 (cat. no. 18);

painting by Van Heemskerck we see Luke painting the Madonna in the usual composition, looking from the right to the left of the panel. Van Heemskerck has worked a couple of symbolic details into his painting, one of them being a bull on the side of Luke’s chair. The traditional symbol of Luke, as will be remembered, is a (winged) ox or a bull.[117] Van Heemskerck, however, has made it a strange scene, since the bull is being ridden by a man. Who is this bull rider? Luke or rather Van Heemskerck himself?[118] Or is he perhaps the onlooker, who through the act of looking ("Luking" as Moore might want to say) becomes an accomplice in voyeurism? But why would he ride backwards on the bull?

Ill. 5
Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574), *St. Luke Painting the Madonna*, 1532. Oil on panel, 168 x 235 cm. Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

Exh. cat. Amsterdam 1986a: 191–192 (cat. no. 70); Exh. cat. Amsterdam 1986b: 30–31; Van Asperen de Boer 1987; Filedt Kok 2006: 18–20; Biesboer 2006: 497–500; Jonckheere 2012; Erftemeijer, Fuhri Snethlage and Köhler 2014: 15. The painting was originally presented to the artists’ guild chapel, in the central "Great or St. Bavo’s Church" in Haarlem. The remarkable perspective of the painting suggests that the canvas was originally intended to be hung at some considerable height, perhaps as an altar-retable (Exh. cat. Amsterdam 1986b: 30).

[117] Thus first by the second-century writer Irenaeus of Lyon, *Haer*. 3.11.8, and Hippolyt of Rome (second and early-third century), *Comm. Ezek.* 1.1–5 (fragm.) GCS Hippolytus 1:183, based on Ezek 1:4–6.10.13–14.22 and Rev 4:5–7, with the argument that the bull would refer to the offering by Zachariah in Luke 1:5 (Ireneus) and to the priestly glory described by Luke (Hippolytus). See also the late fourth and early fifth-century writer Jerome, *Comm. Matt*. 1.3, where the calf prefigures that Luke starts with the priest Zachariah.

[118] According to Dorothee Klein (1933: 57) and Exh. cat. Amsterdam (1986b: 31) the rider is Luke. According to Tummers, curator of the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, it is the painter, Van Heemskerck (Codart 2008).The halo surrounding the bull-rider’s head would suggest that we have to do with Luke; the rider’s position, however, remains unusual and hard to interpret.

In view of the Renaissance iconography of this painting, with its many classical references, it seems allowed to recognise here an allusion to the well-known mythological image of the girl Europa who was kidnapped by the god Zeus in the guise of a bull.[119] A quick glance may perhaps convince the critical onlooker that the painter would have commented on the virgin with her child through this reference to Europa, a girl who after all was made pregnant against her will by the highest god and had to accept this as a valuable gift. This, however, would be too easy a conclusion. On closer scrutiny, it appears that the bull in the Van Heemskerck painting does not take with him a girl; it is a man who is abducted and he is hardly able to remain seated as he rides backwards. This is remarkable and it has not yet been sufficiently explained. I would say that Van Heemskerck plays a trick with us. As the painter is observantly gazing at Mary with her child, behind his back the rider/reader is abducted sitting in the wrong direction. It is as if the (male identified) spectator is questioned: How do you look? Do you think you are in command of your observant gaze by looking at this painting of a painter who is looking at the virgin who is holding her child? You are wrong. You are simply abducted by the text without a notion of where you are going to. You think you see a serene Madonna? You should imagine the similarity between Mary and the abducted and raped girl Europa. I invite you to reembody her position.

An even more pressing appeal to the reader (pressing, that is, in the sense that it is virtually impossible to escape) is the painting of Luke by the Spanish painter (of Greek descent) El Greco, dated 1608 (ill. 6).[120] Here, we do not see Luke in the act of painting, but just showing the finished work to the spectator.

The wonderful thing is that in El Greco’s work, the painting is incorporated into the book. Writing and painting are now part of the same book; it comes down to the same, the writer holding a paintbrush, though it is hard to see whether it is not actually a writing pencil. The second very interesting thing about this painting is that the observant gaze on Mary and her child is missing. As the painter is traditionally looking at Mary, and the painter is now looking to us, the implication is inevitable, that we are now in the position of Mary, looking at our own counterfeit. We are invited by the painter, who really is El Greco as he has painted Luke as his self-portrait, to see ourselves reflected in the image of Mary, technique reminding of Velázquez *Las Meninas,* where we saw the Spanish king and queen reflected in the mirror opposite.

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[119] As Dorothee Klein (1933: 57) remarks: "Das Symboltier, Attribut des Lukas, wurde hier nicht mehr als ein wirklicher Stier in die Szene eingeführt, sondern gleichsam nur in abstracto erwähnt: Ein "antikes" Relief auf de Sarkophag-ähnlichen Bank des Lukas, nach dem Schema vom Raub der Europa komponiert, bringt den heiligen Evangelisten selbst noch einmal, auf dem rasenden Stier reitend." Exh. cat. Amsterdam (1986b: 31) likewise accepts the reference to Europa.

[120] El Greco (1541–1614), *St. Luke (San Lucas Evangelista),* between 1602 and 1605, oil on canvas, 100 x 76 cm. Catedral de Santa María de Toledo, Toledo.

Ill. 6
El Greco (1541–1614), *St. Luke (San Lucas Evangelista)*, between 1602 and 1605. Oil on canvas, 100 x 76 cm. Catedral de Santa Mariá de Toledo, Toledo.

At the same time, the intent gaze of the painter towards us, onlookers, may give us the uneasy feeling that we are the observed persons. Returning once more to Moore, we could now say that the author of the Third Gospel, as the omnipresent observer Moore holds him to be, is also observing us, readers and onlookers. That is, the Third Gospel does also envision us, reflected in the mirror of the text's description of Mary and Jesus. Reading Luke 1–2, we create the vision of Mary basically after our own image and likeness.

The tradition that the author of the Third Gospel and Acts would have painted Mary as the mother of God, although this tradition does not have any claim to historical probability, seems to reveal something about the particular narrative perspective of the Third Gospel. The Third Gospel offers an intricate play with perspective, due to which the reader is drawn into the narrative. The author we call Luke is writing/drawing the reader/spectator, turning him into an author himself. This spectator-author, who initially thought he was looking at the virgin with her child, may well arrive at the conclusion that he was on the wrong track, abducted by the flow of the narrative. Looking back the reader/spectator may come to a re-evaluation of who this virgin with child really is. Thus, the comfortable gaze of the assenting reader may turn into the uneasy glance of the critical reader. We are invited to question our serene vision of the Madonna. Who are we envisioning? What kind of body are we painting mentally? I will return to the matter in

the fourth section. First, I will explore Moore's other clue, the excessive bodily metaphor of the author as an "obese androgyn."

3.2.2 Visualizing the Body II: Luke as an Obese Androgyn

By calling the author of the Third Gospel an "obese androgyn," Moore seems to envision first and foremost the Third Gospel's all-encompassing, all-devouring sensory approach, explaining the "obese" part of it, not the androgynous part (1992: 157). The obese character is connected to the way Moore views the author's painting technique, or photographical technique, as a way of including every onlooker, every reader within the text. Choosing the word "obese," as Moore does, may at first seem far-fetched. On closer inspection, however, the word does justice to the ever increasing authorial volume: everything that is said and written about the author is cumulatively taken up by this author. Like El Greco's painter, the author is envisioning us, inviting us to enter his world.

The androgynous part is probably explained by the attention given in the Third Gospel to women's and men's experiences alike. What is at stake is the implication that, apparently, the author, by devouring the experiences that came before his lens, taking up men's and women's experiences alike, became himself androgynous. If this makes sense, we should indeed stop reading departing from the implied, silent hypothesis of a male author, as the experiences taken up by the author are men's and women's experiences alike: we should simply not give up the text to a male author in advance. Taught by Van Heemskerck's bull, we should rather ask in which direction to look, which story to reembody. Needed, in order to do this, is an act of remembering. Moore takes recourse to metaphorical narrative, as he daringly compares New Testament scholars with a team of restorative surgeons, who try and restore the voice, kept in the text to its "mutilated parent author" in an effort of re/memberment (1992: 103). The interpreter's task is to remember whose bodies belonged to the voices we hear, convinced as we are that the author really is an obese androgyn, that is a body of men's and women's experiences.

3.3 Conclusion

In order to avoid a reading of the text that would be both essentialist and parontocentric, I have pleaded for an embodied reading of the text. Mainly on the basis of Merleau-Ponty and De Beauvoir I have argued that the situated body can be regarded as a source of knowledge.

Research by König on bodily aspects of the Greek and Roman novel helped me to trace elements of embodied speech in Luke 1–2. Moore’s deconstructionist reading of the Third Gospel provided me with the notion of an obese androgynous perspective. Two things at least can be learned from this. First, the gospel draws us as readers into the narrative, making us to authors as well. Second, we should consider the possibility that the text embodies men's and women's situated experiences alike. As readers we must take our own authorship and endeavour to re/member different stories seriously. But then, I have to imagine this one who is not me, to relive experiences that are not mine, situated in the there and then. How would I ever hope to do this? In the next section I will address this hermeneutical question.

4 The Annunciation Reembodied

In the previous section I have argued, to put it in the metaphorical language used by Moore, that it is the interpreter's task to try and re/member experiences embodied by the text. That is, to remember lived experiences that have been taken in by the observant gaze of the author-painter, and to re-embody the dispersed parts of experience to a real body. This may sound pretentious and one may wonder how, say, a modern white male reader would ever hope to re-embody lived experiences of a girl in the countryside of Roman occupied Judea. Nevertheless, in this section I will try to do so, in an approach that is both methodical and cautious. I will take my starting point in the short dialogue between the angel Gabriel and Mary spoken at the annunciation scene:

> εἶπεν δὲ Μαριὰμ πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον· πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω;
> καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῇ·
> πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ
> καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι·
> διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.
> And Mary said to the angel: "how shall this be, since I do not know a man?"
> And answering, the angel said to her:
> "Holy spirit will come upon you,
> and power of the most high will overshadow you;
> therefore also what is to be born, holy it will be called, son of God." (Luke 1:34–35)

The words spoken by the angel have always been understood by mainstream exegesis as describing, either metaphorically or literally, a virginal conception of Jesus through the holy spirit.[121] Mary would become pregnant through the "coming upon her" of the holy spirit and the "overshadowing" by the power of the most high. This way of understanding the angel's words has at times led to fascinating literal representations. I will discuss a couple of such representations in section 4.1. Next, I will follow this track, back to the second-century Christian apologist Justin Martyr. Although Justin suggests that ancient mythology, and the Danae story in

[121] I am aware that I do not take into account the birth narrative in Matthew. Subscribing, however, to the conclusions drawn by Schaberg 1987 and 2005, I trust this will not detract from what I am after, that is, the way a miraculous conception could be read in the text of the Third Gospel. On the Matthean account, in addition to Schaberg, see esp. Fitzmyer 1973; Brown 1977, Luz 1985, and Lincoln 2013.

particular, may have played a role in understanding the angel's words, biblical prophetic voices are far more likely as an early pattern of reading (section 4.2). I would defend that reading the text as the description of a virginal conception is not obvious at all. Rather, we have to look in a different direction. Using modern literature as a heuristic means to read differently, Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (1983) urges me to realise that the dialogue between an angel and a young woman may testify to the experience of so many women, then, and still today, who find themselves in a powerless position (section 4.3). My conclusion is that involved in the text of the Third Gospel is an exodus motive of protection and help in a desperate situation, and the future society that might emerge when the down-trodden are lifted up and the powerful are turned down (section 4.4).

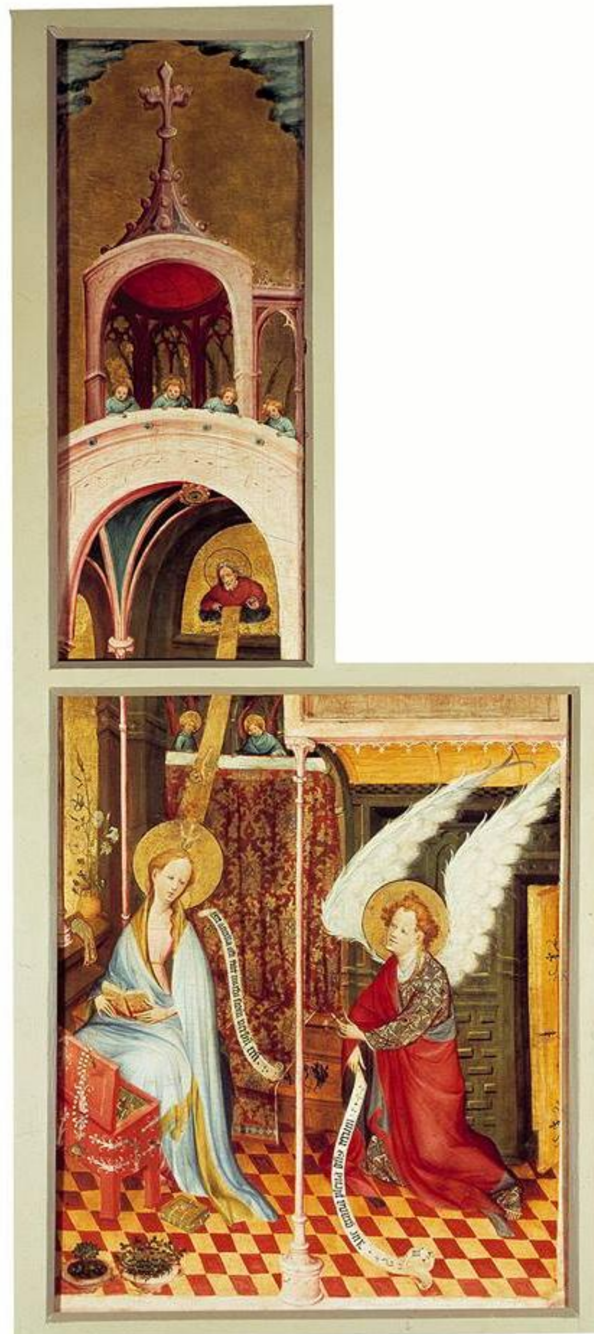
4.1 Reading a Virginal Conception

In the annunciation scene, the angel Gabriel announces to Mary the future conception and birth of Jesus. When Mary hears that she will have a child, she asks πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω, "How shall this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34) This question is usually understood to mean: I cannot have a child because I have no sex.[122] This interpretation seems, at face value, not off topic, as Mary has earlier been called a παρθένος (Luke 1:27), that is a young woman not yet married off by her parents, hence a virgin. Besides, to read the words "to know a man" in a sexual code seems warranted by Hebrew idiom, in which the word stem *ydh* "to know," may also have a sexual meaning (e.g. in the rendering by Gen 4:1 LXX Αδαμ δὲ ἔγνω Ευαν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, "Adam knew his wife Eve"). As a consequence, the angel's response that "holy spirit will come upon you and power of the most high will overshadow you" is incorporated in a sexualised code, although the Greek words ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω are nowhere used in a sexual context.

The sexualised understanding of these words has a long track record. The flow of apocryphal infancy gospels from the second century onwards, most notably the Protevangelium of James and the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, demonstrate that this interpretation had already been developed in an early stage.[123] The general feeling, as Mary Callaway put it, is that "God creates life out of Mary's virginal womb," or as Lucien Legrand has it, that "the Spirit gave life out of the lifelessness of Mary's virginity."[124] To what kind of excesses this way of reading has

[122] See the overview of positions in Fitzmyer 1981a: 348–350.
[123] See especially Schaberg 1994 and the literature cited there.
[124] Callaway 1986: 103–105; Legrand 1962. See the discussion of the virginal conception in Brown 1977: 517–533.

given rise appears, for example, from a number of representations from the late Middle Ages. A nice example is an early fifteenth-century painted triptych, called the "Mid-Rhines Altar" (ill. 7).[125]



Ill. 7
Anon., *Mid-Rhines Altar (Middelrijns Altaar),* God the Father with Angels and The Annunciation, probably Cologne, about 1410, tempera on panel, two parts, 73 x 29,5 and 73 x 60 cm.. Museum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht.

[125] The Mid-Rhines Altar (Middelrijns Altaar), Museum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht; probably Cologne, 1405–1414, panel, two parts, 73x29,5 and 73x60 cm.

Ill. 8
detail of ill. 7

The dialogue between Mary and Gabriel is visualised in two wrappers. Above Mary we see God, visible through an opening in a tower like structure, aided and watched by angels, letting the little Jesus-child-to-be-born slip over a golden slide right into Mary's head, preceded by a bird representing the holy spirit (ill. 8). We have here a very literal illustration of the words of Gabriel, "holy spirit will come upon you," understood as a metonymical signifier of Mary's conception. The conception takes place through Mary's head, showing the bodily effectiveness of the w/Word, implying a "hearing" perceptiveness on the side of Mary. The idea that the conception of Jesus really took place through the ear is even more poignantly illustrated by a tympanum, probably by the famous late medieval sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider, of the "Marienkapelle" in Würzburg, where the child Jesus is blown by God through a winding tube (basically a fatherly birth channel) straight into Mary's ear during the Annunciation (ill. 9 and 10).[126] Even the bulge, where Jesus passes through the tube, can be seen.

Maybe these examples are extreme. Nevertheless, they speak to the general sense of a virginal conception in which God somehow must have played a role. Today, it seems impossible to think of the annunciation scene otherwise than as announcing a virginal conception, with the implication that God or the holy spirit somehow fathered the child to be born. After all, the child to be born "will be called son of God." It remains to be seen whether this son of God really means what we think it does. The term "son of God" could after all simply be taken as a

[126] Tilman Riemenschneider (?), *Annunciation*, 15th c. main portal (north porch), Marienkapelle, Würzburg.

Hebraism, denoting someone who fully lives according to Torah,[127] or even as a reference to Hosea 11:1, where Israel is called the son of God (as it is understood by Matt 2:15).

Ill. 9
Tilman Riemenschneider (?), *Annunciation*, 15th c.
main portal (north porch), Marienkapelle, Würzburg

Ill. 10
detail of ill. 9.

To take the term "son of God" in a literal way would, in my view, be an overstretching of the metaphor. The word καὶ in the angel's response διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ (1:35), should be taken seriously as more than a simple connector coming close to δὲ.

[127] The Hebrew *ben*, meaning in the first place "son" and "member of a people" is also used to denote one's belonging to a group or class, to a certain mood, fate or stage of life and hence one's falling within the reach of God or the divine. Thus, Salomo shall be a son for God (2 Sam 7:14). The people are children of Adonai (e.g., Deut 14:1). *HAL* s.v.; Gesenius 1962, s.v.

Translated as "therefore also what is to be born, holy it will be called, son of God," the suggestion is that what is to be born will also be called son of God, maybe like Israel, as a member of the people of God. Be this as it is, verbs like ἐπέρχομαι, "coming upon," and ἐπισκιάζω, "overshadowing," are apparently too plastic in their imagery as to possibly refer to anything else than a kind of sexual intercourse, be it in a spiritual way. We have to try and find our way back, in order to disconnect traditional presuppositions from the text and allow for the remembrance of different situated experiences.

4.2 Opposing the Sexual Code

The attempt to topple the idea of a virginal conception in this text may seem useless. On the one hand there is the burden of time-hallowed religious authoritative and mythological use of the text, reinforced by church dogma and artistic representation. The text simply seems to be about a virginal conception. On the other hand there is the text, occupied as it is by dictionaries and commentaries that secure and confirm the sexual code by which the text is traditionally read. The fifth edition of the Greek New Testament dictionary by Bauer (1971), for instance, a lexicon used for many years by theologians in Dutch academy, comments on ἐπισκιάζω "als geheimnisvoll verhüllender Ausdruck für das, was Maria befähigt, das göttl. Kind zu gebären." Actually, this description is not less concealing than the word itself, and highly suggestive at that. Equally suggestive is Joseph Fitzmyer, who in his widely acclaimed commentary on Luke remarks that "the phrase [of Luke 1:35] is intended to convey that the child to be born will be a 'gift' of God in a full sense" (1981a: 351). This description is concealing, as the word "gift" is put in quotation marks, and the evasive phrase "in a full sense" leaves much to imagination.[128]

As to ἐπέρχομαι, a context figuring this verb as denoting a kind of insemination seems imaginable, though such a meaning is not attested in Greek literature, nor, in particular, in the LXX.[129] In the New Testament, the word ἐπέρχομαι often occurs in a temporal sense,[130] again without even a remote reference to sexual intercourse.[131] A reference to a kind of insemination cannot be found.[132] In the case of the verb ἐπισκιάζω, however, it seems much more difficult to bypass a sexual code, as a sexual code was already applied in quite an early stage of reception,

[128] Fitzmyer originally was very cautious in claiming a virginal conception for these texts (1973), but he afterwards changed his mind and accepted an extraordinary conception in his "Postscript (1980)" (Fitzmyer 1981c). See also Brown 1977: 299–301.
[129] LEH s.v. ἐπέρχομαι; Lee 1983: 88–89.
[130] See, e.g., Eph 2:7 ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις.
[131] BDAG s.v. ἐπέρχομαι 1.b "of the Holy Spirit 'come upon,' from a superior position."
[132] Cf. Steinmetzer 1938, who discussed and rejected the attempts to trace the virginity of Mary back to the parthenoscult of northern Ionia.

although the code was also opposed to. In this section I will try to trace the source of a sexual code in the verb ἐπισκιάζω. I will argue that, like ἐπέρχομαι, there is no compelling argument to read along a sexual code. In fact, the source of the metaphorical imagery was prophetic.

I will start my search with an illuminating passage from the second-century Christian apologist Justin Martyr. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* we read the following words:

> Καὶ ὁ Τρύφων ἀπεκρίνατο· … Ἐν δὲ τοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων λεγομένοις μύθοις λέλεκται ὅτι Περσεὺς ἐκ Δανάης, παρθένου οὔσης, ἐν χρυσοῦ μορφῇ ῥεύσαντος ἐπ' αὐτὴν τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς Διὸς καλουμένου, γεγέννηται· καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ αὐτὰ ἐκείνοις λέγοντες αἰδεῖσθαι ὀφείλετε, καὶ μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον λέγειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τοῦτον.
> And Trypho answered: " … in what are called the fables of the Greeks, it is said that Perseus from Danae, being a virgin, was born, after the one who was called among them Zeus streamed on her in a form of gold; and when you say the same things as they, you ought to feel ashamed, and rather say that this Jesus was born as a human from humans." (Justin, *Dial.* 67.1–2)[133]

It is clear that Trypho opposes to what he sees as a tendency to adopt pagan elements, such as the idea of a divine conception. Numerous indeed are the stories from ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mythology of the period, relating a miraculous divine conception, such as the Danae story mentioned by Trypho.[134] Could there already in antiquity have been the idea of a divine insemination that might have fuelled Luke's account, as in for instance the Danae story? The Danae story did indeed play a role in Christian tradition (Wirth 1892; Grafton, Most and Settis 2010). Could there be any lexical congeniality that connects the ancient Danae myth with Luke's account? To answer this question, we are in need of a chain of signifiers consisting at least of words denoting "overshadowing" or "shadow," "cloud," "rain," and "becoming pregnant." I will examine a few instances from ancient Greek and Roman mythographers to find an answer.

[133] Bobichon 2003: 365-366; instead of τοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων λεγομένοις μύθοις some versions read τοῖς τῶν λεγομένων Ἑλλήνων μύθοις, "in the fable of who are called Greeks."

[134] One example among many is the account of the conception of the Egyptian Apis. According to Herodotus, "the Egyptians say that a ray of light from heaven descends on the cow (σέλας ἐπὶ τὴν βοῦν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) and that she through this gives birth to Apis" (*Hist*. 3.28.2), a story also related by Plutarch and Aelian (How and Wells 1964a: 263; Rosén 1987: 271; Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 428).

The earliest attested account of the story of Zeus and Danae occurs in the *Histories* of Pherecydes of Athens, a logographer from the fifth century BCE. The account has survived in summarised form in a scholium on Apollonius of Rhodos. Here we read:

> ἐρασθεὶς δὲ Ζεὺς τῆς παιδός, ἐκ τοῦ ὀρόφου χρυσῷ παραπλήσιος ρεῖ, ἡ δὲ ὑποδέχεται τῷ κόλπῳ· καὶ ἐκφήνας αὐτὸν ὁ Ζεὺς τῇ παιδὶ μίγνυται.
> And Zeus, having fallen in love with the girl, streamed from the ceiling like gold, and she received in her lap and while Zeus made himself visible he had intercourse with the girl. (Pherecydes frag. 10)[135]

This scholium has some interesting points. First, the idea of impregnation through a golden stream is present, but the verb ἐπισκιάζω is lacking, as are words denoting a cloud or shadow. Second, there is the use of the word κόλπος, referring to the womb.[136] Finally, the sequel of this scholium tells about Acrisius' interrogation of Danae. When Acrisius demands to know who the child's father is, Danae answers that it is Zeus': ἡ δὲ ἔφη, ἐκ Διός.[137] The idea of a son begotten from (the) God in the womb through a stream of gold is clearly present in Pherecydes. A reference, however, to a cloud, to a kind of shower, or to ἐπισκιάζω is not found.

Reference to a golden shower is made in a fragment of Euripides's *Archelaus,* dated 408/7 BCE. Euripides opened this play with the Argive ancestry of king Archelaus of Macedon in the late fifth century BCE. When arriving at Perseus, Euripides remarks:

> Δανάης δὲ Περσεὺς ἐγένετ᾽ ἐκ χρυσορρύτων σταγόνων
> Perseus was born from Danae from streams of golden drops. (Euripides, *Archelaus* frag. 228a: 9–10)[138]

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[135] Fowler 2000: 279–280, l. 8–10; Jacoby 1968: 61, l. 13–15 (*FGrHist* I, 3 F10) ex. schol. Ap.Rhod. 4.1091; Karamanou 2012: 2–3. For a commentary on frag. 10, cf. Fowler 2013: 248–250. On the identity of Pherecydes, cf. Fowler 1999. A survey of the development of the Perseus myth from Pherecydes to Pseudo-Apollodorus and John Tzetzes gives Kenens 2012. A recent English translation of the Pherecydes fragment is offered by Trzaskoma, Smith and Brunet 2004: 354.

[136] LSJ s.v. κόλπος 2; Fowler 2013: 250 n. 36.

[137] Fowler 2000: 280 l. 5.

[138] Kannicht 2004: 316–319; frag. 2a: 9–10 (Harder 1985: 155). On background and contents of the play, cf. Harder 1985: 125–139. On the date, cf. Harder 1985: 125–126. For a commentary, cf. Harder 1985: 177–183, 190–206, esp. 195–196 on lines 9–10.

Here we have "streams of golden drops," of which the word σταγόνων is ambiguous, meaning both "(rain)drops" and "seed."[139] The idea that through these drops an impregnation takes place is not explicitly stated, although it is implied. Annette Harder emphasised that Danae being the one parent, "ἐκ χρυσορρύτων / σταγόνων indicates the other parent (here only represented by the seed)" (1985: 195). But again, and like Pherecydes, no mention is made of a cloud or of ἐπισκιάζω.

Pseudo-Apollodorus, a Greek mythographer from the first or second century CE, apparently drawing on Pherecydes, also gives an account of the Danae story, in his *Library*:[140]

> ὡς δὲ ἔνιοί φασι, Ζεὺς μεταμορφωθεὶς εἰς χρυσὸν καὶ διὰ τῆς ὀροφῆς εἰς τοὺς Δανάης εἰσρυεὶς κόλπους συνῆλθεν.
> But some say that Zeus had intercourse with her in the shape of a stream of gold which poured through the roof into Danae's lap. (Apollodorus 2.4.1 [2.34])[141]

Here, we find a form of the verb συνέρχομαι, which is indeed often used to denote sexual intercourse, combined with the κόλπος. But again the cloud is missing, as is the verb ἐπισκιάζω. Instead, Ps.-Apollodorus has μεταμορφωθεὶς εἰς χρυσὸν, translated by Frazer (1921: 155) as "the shape of a stream of gold," the word "stream" probably added from the verb εἰσρυεὶς, which literally means "streamed into." Here too, we do have "streaming gold," but the idea of a (raining) cloud is lacking.

More examples of Zeus and Danae in Greek literature could be mentioned,[142] but, as Harder remarks, "the expressions used are all reminiscent of each other" (1985: 195–196). It will suffice to limit myself to two Latin mythographical works. In Hyginus' *Fabulae* we read:

> Iovis autem in imbrem aureum conversus cum Danae concubuit
> Jupiter, however, changed into a golden rain, laid with Danae (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 63),[143]

while Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, relates:

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[139] cf. Harder (1985: 196) who gives other examples of (rain/water)drops and dew denoting seed.

[140] Critical edition by Wagner 1926^2. Other editions by Frazer 1921 (based mainly on Wagner, with English translation), Dräger 2005 (equally based on Wagner, but slightly revised; with German translation and commentary) and Fowler 2013. Theories on the sources of Ps.-Apollodorus and the use made of Pherecydes, see Dräger 2005: 459, Kenens 2011 (focusing on the myth of the Danaids in *Library* 2.11–23), Kenens 2012, and Fowler 2013: 248.

[141] Transl. Frazer 1921: 154–155. English translation in Smith and Trzaskoma 2007.

[142] Cf. Harder 1985: 196, Dräger 2005: 459, and Karamanou 2012: 3–4 n. 9, for a survey of instances.

[143] Latin text in Peter Marshall 2002; English translation in Smith and Trzaskoma 2007.

neque enim Iovis esse putabat [sc. Acrisius]
Persea, quem pluvio Danae conceperat auro
And neither did [Acrisius] belief that he was a son of Jupiter,
Perseus, whom Danae had received through rainy gold. (Ovid, *Met.* 4.610–611)[144]

Both Hyginus and Ovid use a word for "rain," be it different words (the substantive *imber* with *aureus* as an adjective and the adjective *pluvius* with the substantive *aurum*). Here, too, a word denoting "cloud" is missing. In both cases the rain is a golden rain, effectuating sexual intercourse (Hyginus) and pregnancy (Ovid). The only other place in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where Danae is mentioned is in the ekphrasis of Arachne's tapestry, where Jupiter's misuses of women are summed up. Thus we read:

aureus ut Danaen, Asopida luserit ignis
how he [sc. Jupiter], as a golden (rain) (cheated on) Danae,
(how he) on the Asopid cheated as a fire (Ovid, *Met.* 6.113)

In this chiastic sentence, with its shared verb *luserit* (cheated), the word *pluvius* (rain) is clearly elliptic and may be added from *Met* 4.611. Intriguing is the word *luserit*, denoting primarily some playful activity, with the connotation of cheating on someone, even misleading her. The Asopid is of course the nymph Aegina. In these lines, as in the preceding and following lines, Jupiter's various guises are summed up. Apparently, in view of the ellipsis, it is the golden appearance that matters, not the rain or, for that matter, a cloud.

My conclusion is that the Danae story, as it has been treated in Greco-Roman literature, does not provide a parallel to the annunciation scene, nor does it provide the lexical congeniality needed to establish a sexual code in the annunciation scene. The Pherecydes fragment stands out through its mentioning of a son of God, but cloud and shower are absent. The recurrence of gold as an attribute of the god is remarkable, but we do not find this element in the Third Gospel*,* (although it reoccurs as a creative reception in the Mid-Rhines Altar). The possibility must be considered, that a signifying chain consisting of pregnancy, insemination, golden ray/rain, and overshadowing was somehow on the mind of early Christian exegetes, so as to enable Justin to include the comparison as an argument in the mouth of his fictive opponent Trypho. In view of the fact that Augustine already in the early fifth century in his *City of God* (2.7)

[144] Tarrant 2004.

does not seem to be aware of the potential explosive connotation of the name of Danae in a Christian context, I find it more probable that the critique voiced by Trypho and cited by Justin is a kind of slander, put forward by a non-Christian audience, that was well aware of the content of the Danae story, but not of the text as it was written in the Third Gospel. There is, then, no lexical evidence that allows us to read the verb ἐπισκιάζω within a sexual code, as a kind of impregnating presence.

Although I cannot find a clue to an early Christian understanding of the "overshadowing" in the mythographers’ rendering of the Danae story, a clue may be found through early Christian liturgy, as there is at least from the fourth century a versicle derived from the prophet Isaiah:

> *Rorate caeli desuper et nubes pluant iustum*
> Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above
> and let the clouds rain the just. (Isa 45:8 Vulgate)

Here we find, in one verse, both the *nubes* and the dew, elements also considered characteristics of the Danae motive. The Isaiah verse found its way into liturgical books from late antiquity onwards, connected with scriptural lectures during the Advent taken from, among others, the annunciation scene.[145] The prophecy from Isaiah 7:24 about the virgin who will conceive and bring forth a son, already quoted by Mat 1:23, has equally found its way into liturgy. This is the text we often find in the book of hours, opened before Mary, in medieval representations of the annunciation scene. In fact, it is precisely this prophecy that Trypho starts his objections with, when he teaches his Christian interlocutor a lesson in good biblical criticism,

> καὶ ὁ Τρύφων ἀπεκρίνατο· Ἡ γραφὴ οὐκ ἔχει· *Ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ λήψεται καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, ἀλλ' Ἰδοὺ ἡ νεᾶνις ἐν γαστρὶ λήψεται καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,*
> And Trypho answered: "Scripture has not, `Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,' but, `Behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son'" (Justin, *Dial.* 67.1).[146]

[145] Henry 1912; Hollaardt 1968; Hauk-Rakos 2006. Isa 45:8 LXX does not use the verbs ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω, as the verse reads εὐφρανθήτω ὁ οὐρανὸς ἄνωθεν, καὶ αἱ νεφέλαι ῥανάτωσαν δικαιοσύνην. The words from the Song of Moses in Deut 32:2 LXX also may have played a role: προσδοκάσθω ὡς ὑετὸς τὸ ἀπόφθεγμά μου, / καὶ καταβήτω ὡς δρόσος τὰ ῥήματά μου, / ὡσεὶ ὄμβρος ἐπ᾽ ἄγρωστιν / καὶ ὡσεὶ νιφετὸς ἐπὶ χόρτον ("Let my teaching drop as the rain, / My speech distill as the dew, / As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the grass.").
[146] Bobichon 2003: 365-366.

It seems probable that through prophetic texts especially from Isaiah, that found their way into early liturgy, the idea of a virginal conception gained ground in the early church, ultimately leading to the vey literal representations of late medieval times, and from thereon further into the mainstream exegesis we are familiar with. When the Danae myth eventually enters the field in iconographic terms that are similar to representations of the annunciation to Mary, we are already in early Renaissance, when classical motives obtain renewed interest. A persistent connection between Renaissance Danae imagery and early Christian exegesis cannot be proven. My conclusion is, then, that there is no compelling reason, neither from ancient mythological thought nor from lexical congeniality, to read the angel's words as the signal of a virginal conception and a kind of divine agency with it. Rather, we have to do with prophetic remembrance, in particular from Isaiah, of the young woman who will have a child.

4.3 Trying to Imagine: The Color Purple

Now I have cleared the area, so to say, from the debris of centuries of sexualised interpretation, and found my way to an alternative code of prophetic imagery, the question is how to proceed. How could I remember an author embodied in such a way that a prophetic code would make sense? After all, horizons of embodied understanding differ considerably. What would I know of the experiences of a young woman with a child conceived out of wedlock, living in Roman occupied Judea? How could I imagine the yet unknown (that is, unknown to me)? Martha Nussbaum (1986, 1990) among others, has pleaded for the use of literature to extend one's horizon, as an epistemological means to see and understand what would otherwise have passed unnoticed. Reading instances of modern feminist or womanist literature may help to meet the bodies of the text, letting close encounters happen, that will make cracks in my experience, so as to invite me to dwell on the surplus of meaning, as Ricoeur has it. Such a thing happened to me when I first read *The Color Purple*, an epistolary novel written by Alice Walker and published in 1983. In this novel, Walker tells of the lives of black women in the 1930s in the south of the United States. It is a time of unmerciful segregation and harsh living conditions for black people. The position of women is even worse as there is much (sexual) violence against them. The main character is a young woman named Celie, who relates her experiences in her letters to God. In the beginning, fourteen-year-old Celie lives with her mother and younger sister. There is also a stepfather who repeatedly rapes Celie. Immediately in her first letter, Celie writes to God that she has been raped by her stepfather, as a result of which she is pregnant (Walker 1983: 3).

When her dying mother asks Celie “Whose it is?” Celie answers “God’s. I don’t know no other man or what else to say” (4). Then the mother dies, screaming and cursing at Celie.

Reading this passage for the first time, I was stunned. Calling a child from rape “God’s child” seemed altogether inappropriate; especially since the term “God’s child” is traditionally invested with pious biblical meanings. But here, in *The Color Purple,* the term was used to outrun the real answer that the man responsible for Celie’s pregnancy was her own stepfather and that she had been raped by him. Could this letter to God be brought to bear on the dialogue between Mary and the angel in the Third Gospel? The comparison may seem unlikely, but there are, after all, similarities. Mary, like Celie, must have been only a girl. In both cases, there is a pregnancy that is unacceptable to society. In Celie's case, this is because it is a child from incest. In Mary’s case we do not know what happened, but we have to understand that she lived in a society regulated by honour and shame, in which a child outside marriage, with an uncertain father, was equally unacceptable. Mary ran the risk of being excluded from family and community life, provided she was not stoned to death, just as the woman taken in adultery, as narrated by John 7:53–8:11.[147] Thus, when the angel says to Mary, not yet married, that she will have a child, Mary's answer suddenly sounds perfectly understandable: πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω; "how shall this be, since I do know no man" (1:34). The angel's answer, just like Celie's answer, avoids the sexual code: "it is God's," maybe because she does "not know no other man or what else to say."[148] Finally, as Celie is a black girl in a segregated society, the comparison may remind us that Mary lived in Roman occupied Judea and that in the eyes of elite Romans, people living on the border of the empire, non Romans and subjugated people, were all regarded as less human (I will return to this in my second chapter).

To read Celie's answer to her mother as if the words spoken by the angel to Mary were mirrored in it, is in my view not altogether improbable. The novel time and again comments on the way the Bible is used. For instance, when Celie is pregnant she asks for a sign: "Dear God ... Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (3), which may remind us of Mary's question "how shall this be." After Celie is cursed, beaten, deprived of her children, and married off to "Mister," the novel introduces the letters of her sister Nettie who went as a

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[147] Cf. Schaberg 1987 and Schaberg 2012b: 77–80. Chariton of Aphrodisias’s *Callirhoe*, a Greek novel probably written mid-first century CE, contains a passage on a pregnant woman, Callirhoe, who is about to marry a wealthy Ionian, Dionysius, in order to avoid the shame of giving birth to a child "without father or country, and a slave" (ὀρφανὲ καὶ ἄπολι καὶ δοῦλε, Char. 2.8.7). Chariton, *Callirhoe* 2.8–11 (Goold 1995). In ancient novels this is, however, a unique remark (Holzberg 1995: 44). Maintenance of chastity is not unusual in ancient novels (König 2008: 130–131); Chariton, however, seems to convey concerns of local elites in Aphrodisias and in the Greek East (Edwards 1991; 1998: 32–33).

[148] I find it remarkable that in the Pherecydes fragment exactly the same dialogue takes place. When king Acrisius demands to know who the child’s father is, Danae answers simply that it is Zeus’: ἡ δὲ ἔφη, ἐκ Διός.

missionary to Africa, commenting explicitly on the Bible as an authoritative book in white hands, and on the way God is represented as a white man, "only bigger" (166). Ultimately, the black women protagonists and their relatives find a kind of redemption, not in Africa with Nettie, not even in the faith, but in peaceful living together as respecting and respected humans. These elements underscore the general impression that traditional patterns of theological interpretation are criticised in this novel, which makes the suggestion that the annunciation scene actually is involved quite probable. But even so, the responsibility for juxtaposing these two texts, *The Color Purple* and the Third Gospel, is entirely my own, and questions of probability are only of additional weight. The main point is that the novel helps me to reconsider ancient words of which the meaning has almost fossilised in our culture. It is my task as an interpreter to put up a line of argument based on the ancient texts themselves to substantiate my intuition.

For clarity's sake I would like to say that I am aware that there is an old tradition that Jesus would have been fathered illegitimately, perhaps by a soldier, during the time Mary was betrothed to Joseph.[149] This tradition, however, does not play a role in my argument, for to follow the idea of the illegitimacy of Jesus would come down to a continuation of the sexual code, which I want to avoid in the first place. Celie's answer, as I read it, would mean simply this: don't talk about "how" (which would be too painful anyway), it is just the way it is. To put it differently, bypassing the question for an explanation (involving the sexual code), the novel turns to the question for meaning. My question would be, then, whether such a reading would also apply to the Lukan narrative. Would it be possible to read the angel's words in such a way as if they would be saying, "Who cares about a man, who cares about how it happened? The real question is how you can live with this." Much depends on the meaning of the verbs ἐπέρχομαι, "coming upon," and ἐπισκιάζω, "overshadowing." I will turn to these verbs in the next section.

4.4 Remembering Divine Presence and Protection

In this section, I will argue that the words ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω, used in Luke 1:35, should be read within a LXX worded exodus code, with the connotation of divine protection for afflicted and downtrodden people.

[149] On the virginal conception of Jesus as a reaction to the illegitimacy of Jesus, see Schaberg 1987; 2005; 2012b; 2012c; 2012c. Crossan (2005), however, argues quite the other way round, that the virginity claim was first, only to be followed by an illegitimacy tradition that was evoked precisely by the virginity claim. The right sequence is of little consequence to my argument.

πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ

καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι·

διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ. (Luke 1:35)

This verse consists of two sentences placed in a *parallelismus membrorum*, typical for Hebrew poetry and the way the Hebrew is rendered in LXX. The words πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ correspond with καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι. It seems allowed, therefore, to take ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω here as more or less synonymous verbs. In the Third Gospel the verb ἐπέρχομαι occurs only once, here in 1:35. The use of the verb in this verse is most probably a Septuagintism, derived from Isa 32:15, again with the spirit as subject: ἕως ἂν ἐπέλθῃ ἐφ ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ἀφ' ὑψηλοῦ, "until the spirit will come upon you from on high," addressing the return of fertility and justice in the land. As the Isaiah passage bears on the beginning of a time of justice that will eventually bring peace (Isa 32:18a), the coming of the spirit in Luke 1:35 should be taken in a metonymical sense, signifying the return of peace.[150] The verb ἐπέρχομαι probably conveys a sense of peace and justice due to the coming of the holy spirit.

The basic meaning of the verb ἐπισκιάζω is "overshadowing." As such, the verb occurs in Greek literature as the casting of a shadow over the land, as well as the protection or dominion that may follow from this. The verb may also indicate the effects of putting someone or something in the shadow, that is, concealing and obscuring.[151] An example of the second meaning, concealing and obscuring, can be found in a tragedy by the Athenian writer Sophocles, in the fifth century BCE. In his *Women of Trachis*, a play on the death of Heracles, the nurse explains that she saw her mistress Deianeira running into the bedroom, being desperate after inadvertently having brought her husband Heracles on the brink of dying of unbearable pains. The nurse decides to go after her mistress and hides herself to watch her mistresses' actions: κἀγὼ λαθραῖον ὄμμ᾽ ἐπεσκιασμένη φρούρουν, "and I, after having overshadowed [or: put in the shadow] my hidden eye, was watching her" (Soph. *Trach*. 914–915).[152] What the nurse sees is the suicide of Deienaira, who is unable to cope with the impending gruesome death of Heracles. It goes without saying that this part of the semantic field of ἐπισκιάζω does not help to understand the words of Gabriel.

[150] On the role of the Holy Spirit, cf. Schaberg 2012b: 80–82.

[151] LSJ s.v. ἐπισκιάζω.

[152] The Greek is somewhat condensed, with the perfect tense medial form for "overshadowing," thus meaning literally "after having placed for myself in the shadow," with the object "(my) hidden eye," in which "hidden" proleptically denotes the effect of her hiding ("after I concealed my eye in the shadow so that it remained hidden"). The "eye" itself is obviously used metonymically, to refer to her observing gaze. I like the rendering of this line by Richard Jebb (1892): "I hid in the shadows to keep my observation secret and was watching over her."

The first meaning of the verb, a shadow that is cast over the land and the resulting dominion, seems to be more appropriate in the context of Luke 1:35. An instructive example of this use of the verb is found in the dream of Cyrus, related by the Greek historian Herodotus (fifth century BCE). According to Herodotus, King Cyrus, about to wage his war against the Massagetae at his northern border, has a dream in which he sees the eldest son of his distant relative Hystaspes, Darius, with a pair of wings on his shoulders, the one wing overshadowing (ἐπισκιάζειν) Asia, and the other Europe.[153] The dream proves to be visionary, as Darius eventually, and contrary to expectation, succeeds to the Persian throne. The wings clearly, though somewhat hyperbolically, indicate the reach of Darius's future power, while the overshadowing refers to the impact of his power on the people both in Asia and Europe. Herodotus only seems to pass on the story, without being fully aware of its real meaning in the light of contemporary Persian religion. From a religious phenomenological perspective, it is highly probably that we have here an instance of the Faravahar, the winged appearance of the Persian creator god Ahura Mazda, a symbol of divine protection.[154] The verb ἐπισκιάζω, "to overshadow," must be taken, therefore, not only as an indication of the future reign of Darius over Asia and Europe, but also, and primarily, as a metaphor for the protection extended by the future king as representative of Ahura Mazda.

The idea of divine protection is also found in LXX. Here the verb ἐπισκιάζω is used to denote divine presence and protection, similar to Herodotus. Thus, the word occurs twice in the Psalms. In Psalm 90 LXX we read:

ἐν τοῖς μεταφρένοις[155]αὐτοῦ ἐπισκιάσει σοι,
καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπιεῖς˙
ὅπλῳ κυκλώσει σε ἡ ἀλήθεια αὐτοῦ. (Psalm 90:4 LXX)
He will envelop you in his wings
and under his wings you will abide;
with a shield his truth will surround you.

[153] ἐδόκεε ὁ Κῦρος ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ ὁρᾶν τῶν Ὑστάσπεος παίδων τὸν πρεσβύτατον ἔχοντα ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων πτέρυγας καὶ τουτέων τῇ μὲν τὴν Ἀσίην, τῇ δὲ τὴν Εὐρώπην ἐπισκιάζειν. (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.209.1, repeated 1.209.4; Rosén 1987: 131–132).

[154] On the winged solar disk, see esp. Eiβfeldt 1963; Dohmen 1983 and the literature cited on pp. 511–512 n. 59 and 60; Keel 1997. On the winged Darius, see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 215 and the literature cited there, and Wiesehöfer 2009: 88–90. For examples of the Faravahar, see the tomb at Murghab (How and Wells 1964a: 154), the Bisitun Inscription (authored by Darius I the Great), and the Darian cylinder seals.

[155] τοῖς μεταφρένοις, lit. "the things behind his back," clearly a metonymy for wings, as in Palm 91:4 (Hebrew Bible).

In this example, the verb ἐπισκιάζω is used in the sense of being enveloped in shadow, that is, the shadow cast by God's wings. Through these wings, a metaphorical connection is made with divine protection. The connection between shadow and wings is also present in Psalm 16:8 LXX: ἐν σκέπῃ τῶν πτερύγων σου σκεπάσεις με, "in the shelter of your wings you will shelter me." The wings may refer to the Cherubs on the ark of the covenant (Exod 25:18–20), and as such may come close to the Faravahar of Persian religion. The wings, however, may also relate to the protecting mother bird as a metaphor for the protection offered by God (Deut 32:11; Isa 31:5). In both cases, the basic idea is the same: divine protection, and even care, metaphorically expressed by the shadow cast by a pair of wings. The other place in the Psalter where we find the verb is Psalm 139:

> κύριε κύριε δύναμις τῆς σωτηρίας μου,
> ἐπεσκίασας ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλήν μου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ πολέμου. (Psalm 139:8 LXX)
> Lord, Lord, power of my salvation
> You will overshadow my head on the day of war.

In this instance, again, the denotation of protection is evident, though not explicitly through a pair of wings, but like a shield against violence. The Hebrew text reads "your shield" at this place (Psalm 140:8). Interestingly, the verb is paired with the word δύναμις, as in Luke 1:35 an expression for God's presence.[156]

Turning to other sections of the New Testament, we find the verb ἐπισκιάζω in the common literal sense of "throwing a shadow upon" in Acts 5:15, where the sick are gathered in the hope that the apostle Peter, when he passes by, will throw his shadow upon them (ἵνα ἐρχομένου Πέτρου κἂν ἡ σκιὰ ἐπισκιάσῃ τινὶ αὐτῶν), so that they will be cured by it, a usage obviously with a magical connotation.[157] The word is also found in the synoptic transfiguration narratives, the scene in which Jesus ascends the mountain, followed by three of his disciples, and where the cloud of God's presence overshadows the disciples (Mark 9:7; Matt 17:5; Luke 9:34). Several meanings seem to coincide in this passage: the literal sense of casting a shadow over someone, the notion of being hidden or concealed in the shadow (expressed by the misunderstanding of the disciples), and the idea of divine presence and protection. In view of the third meaning, it is imaginable that the cloud (νεφέλη) is a reference to the cloud in Exod 40:35 LXX, where God's presence overshadows the desert tabernacle (ἐπεσκίαζεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτην ἡ

[156] The notion of divine protection in Num 14:9, Lament 4:20, and passim.
[157] On Peter's shadow, see Van der Horst 1976; 1979.

νεφέλη καὶ δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή).[158] Maybe even the νεφέλη, the cloud that marks by day the divine guidance when the people of Israel go through the desert, is resounding here.[159] Read in this way, the verb ἐπισκιάζω in particular evokes an exodus motive, reinforcing the meaning of divine presence and protection.

The idea of protection could be reinforced by imagery such as in Psalm 67:6 LXX where God is called τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὀρφανῶν, "(of) the father of the fatherless." A reference like this might equally account for the words "son of God." For when the angel Gabriel says that διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ, and we take the word καὶ into special account (as I have argued earlier), the conclusion lies at hand that "what is to be born" will also be under the protection as a son of this father of the fatherless.

It is clear, then, that the verb ἐπισκιάζω in its literal meaning conveys the idea of being enveloped in shadows, whether this means to be hidden, or to be protected. By extension, metonymically, overshadowing means divine presence and protection, the meaning I earlier singled out as a prophetic overtone. This meaning may be connected to religious ideas of a winged divinity, or to the idea of God as a mother-bird. More in particular, overshadowing when caused by a cloud may metaphorically evoke an exodus motive. Turning to Luke 1:35, I would say that the idea of divine presence is clear.[160] The traditional idea of a divine intercourse, insemination or infusion is by no means warranted on a lexical basis.[161]

4.5 Conclusion

It is understandable that the verbs ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω used in Luke 1:35 came to be used in a sexual context. Mary's question, πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω, "how shall this be, since I do not know a man," may already have set the tone. The semantic field of the verb γινώσκω includes a sexual connotation, especially as LXX uses the word to render the Hebrew *ydh*. The reference to the stories in Tanak where barren women receive through divine intervention has also played a role (Brenner 1986; Brenner and Van Dijk-Hemmes 1993).

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[158] Cf. Le Boulluec 1989: 377.

[159] Exod 13:21–22 LXX; Num 14:14 LXX; Neh 9:12, 19 LXX.

[160] "Here the verb has to be understood in a figurative sense, denoting God's presence to Mary."(Fitzmyer 1981a: 351)

[161] New Testament dictionaries tend to be more explicit on the subject. The old "Bauer" (1971), for instance, says s.v. ἐπισκιάζω 3 "als geheimnisvoll verhüllender Ausdruck für das, was Maria befähigt, dat göttl. Lind zu gebären." The recent edition of "Bauer," BDAG s.v. ἐπισκιάζω 2 *is more cautious:* "to cause a darkening, cover … mostly used in our lit. for ref. to divine activity such as a cloud that indicates the presence of God … this perspective is present in the account of Mary's unique conception." Despite these cautious words, BDAG takes for granted that we have a story of a conception. LSJ s.v. ἐπισκιάζω 3 still stands out through neutral formulation: "of the Divine presence, overshadow for protection."

Nevertheless, the verbs ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω, do not in itself represent a semantic field that warrants the application of a sexual code. Perhaps it would be allowed, adopting Moore's metaphor, to conclude that the verbs ἐπέρχομαι and ἐπισκιάζω are swallowed up by the obese word γινώσκω, thereby changing in connotation.

The text of Luke 1:35 employs LXX language evoking elements from the Psalms and Exodus, but also from Isaiah, offering divine protection to the people of Israel. This would make sense when we are prepared to imagine what a young woman living in the countryside of Roman occupied Judea would have gone through, in a situation where honour and shame dictated social behaviour and being with child for a young woman out of wedlock must have led to her chasing away, if not worse, being stoned to death. In the context of an *euanggelion*, and of the Third Gospel in particular, extending divine protection to the most vulnerable people in society, and accepting "what is to be born" as a son of God, like those addressed in their distress by the prophets and evoking exodus imagery, seems far more probable, at least in my eyes, than concern for procreative technologies, although remote references to matriarchal stories in Tanak may not be excluded.

With my conclusion, I would like to subscribe to the conclusion already reached by Jane Schaberg (1987). Schaberg's point of departure is the old tradition of the illegitimacy of Jesus. Her focus is on the way Mary speaks in the Magnificat of her own state of ταπείνωσις, her "humble state," or "humiliation" (Luke 1:48). Schaberg argued that the verb ταπεινόω in the LXX is often used for the sexual humiliation of a woman, through seduction or rape (1987: 101). According to her, the story reflects the experience of being a single woman parent in Greco-Roman Judea.[162] Informed by Celie's experience, I agree with Schaberg that the idea of seduction or rape may be present. The idea, however, is not needed in my reading. If my reading makes sense, the point is precisely that sexuality as an interpretive code is pushed aside. Even if Mary's question is understood along a sexual code, the angel's answer is clear: the notion of sexuality is bypassed in favour of a prophetically styled exodus code. This being said, I wholeheartedly follow the way Schaberg wished to remember Mary. In Mary she recognised the many very young women in her hometown Detroit, single teen mothers abandoned by society. I bet these young women (mostly black and vulnerable to all kinds of harassment) are quite close to Celie. Whoever the author(s) of the Third Gospel may have been, it seems very probable that lived experiences of young women situated "in the there and then" have found their way through the pencil of someone who was able to hear and understand.

[162] Concerning historical women of the time, see e.g. Kraemer 1991a, 2012; Wegner 1991; Lieber 2012.

5. Conclusion

Athalya Brenner (1986) tried to make a case for women's authorship of narratives representing the "Birth of the Hero Paradigm," including Luke 1. In these narratives, as she says, women are

> seen as strong and constant characters; and the male role is kept to a skeletal minimum. Proving female authorship for all three stories which belong to this category—Exodus 2, Ruth, and Luke 1–2:7—would have been quite to my personal taste. However, this is not warranted by any further evidence of the texts themselves; and here we should let the matter rest, and regrettably so. (Brenner 1986: 273)

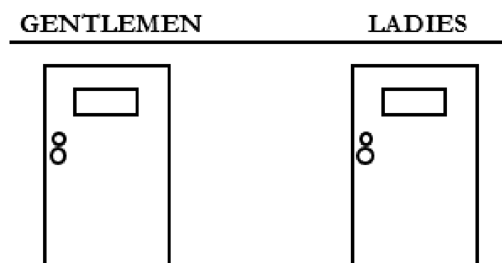
I have earlier tried not to let the matter rest. Working further on the track suggested by Brenner, by comparing Ruth and Luke 1–2, I tried to make a case for the presence of women's voices in the Third Gospel (Troost 1996). Now, so many years later, I have to conclude that it is, indeed, not possible to decide with certainty on women's authorship of anonymous or pseudonymous texts, such as we find in the Bible. This is not as much because women's or men's authorship is not warranted by any further evidence of the texts themselves, but rather because we cannot know for sure what it would have been "to live a fe/male body" situated "there and then." Besides, we should not project modern notions of gender back into ancient times. It seems possible, however, to imagine what it would have been like to live a situated body, accounting for differences. To do so, I have proposed five hermeneutical steps.

First, you should become aware of your presuppositions regarding gender. We are inevitably and most often unwittingly responding to who we see or who we read. The silent hypothesis that the books of the Bible were authored by men leads us to read the text accordingly, and even to establish an author precisely on the basis of such prejudices. Second, there should be an epistemological openness. This is a willful, deliberate decision. Your are trying to read differently because you do not want to go the easy way with the epistemological status quo, that is, you want to accept your responsibility. The third step includes a heuristic reading against all odds. The mere suggestion of a different author (different, that is, from what we are traditionally taught) may already be of heuristic value to unsettle the preset notions on gender, race, and class that could be (and most probably are) harmful to those who are not part of your own symbolic order (and consequently also harmful to yourself, although you may not know it). The fourth step is to be aware of the looming danger of gender essentialism. We

cannot know for sure how a woman or a man (rich or poor, deformed or beautiful, Roman or foreign, etc.) "there and then" would have written. The best we can do is to imagine what it would have been to live a specific body in a specific time and place. Finally, then, you have to imagine the one "who is not you." Undoubtedly my modern white male privilege is standing in the way. Nevertheless I have to try, for otherwise I would silently choose for the status quo, which is both in critical and in personal respect detrimental.

Trying to read this way, I have argued that there is no need and no proof to read the words spoken during the annunciation scene in Luke 1:34-35 through a sexual code. To read a virginal conception in these verses is a misreading both in semantic and in narrative respect. It is understandable that these words came to be read this way, as if they conveyed a virginal conception. After all, especially the references to stories in Tanak concerning barren women who got pregnant through divine intervention seem to suggest that the same would be the case in Luke's narrative. Closer study, however, shows that we have to do with an exodus motive with prophetic overtones, promising divine protection as part of the people of God, to those who are humiliated, downtrodden, and vulnerable to (sexual) harassment. Such a reading, in which the experience of a humiliated young woman takes central position, would be in line with the overall Lukan programme of a reversal of power structures, as voiced in, especially, the Magnificat. Remains the observation that the Third Gospel somehow seems to tolerate the sexual code. This is an observation that I would like to attribute, hypothetically at this stage, to the particular character of the Third Gospel as a text that seems to swallow up (referring to Moore's metaphor) all kinds of interpretations. This is a peculiarity of the Third Gospel that has a strong gendered aspect. In the next chapter I will explore what is actually happening in the text of Luke 1–2 with respect to the construction of gender.

Chapter 2
The Construction of Gender in Luke 1–2



Ill. 11

A train arrives at a station. A little boy and a little girl, brother and sister, are seated across from each other in a compartment next to the outside window that provides a view of the station platform buildings going by as the train comes to a stop. "Look," says the brother, "we're at Ladies!" "Imbecile!" replies his sister, "Don't you see we're at Gentlemen."

Jacques Lacan, Écrits (1966)[163]

This chapter is about the way gender is constructed in the text of Luke 1–2. In the previous chapter, my question was whether it would make sense to ask for the gender of the author of an ancient text such as Luke 1–2, a text of whose author nothing is known with reasonable certainty. I have argued that the question matters, first, because we apply to the text our own gender expectations regarding its author, and tend to read the text accordingly, and second, because our readerly identity is in turn influenced by who we read, thus leaving us with an almost closed circle in which the author is created after our own likeness. In response, I proposed an embodied reading, imagining what it would have been to live a specific body in a specific time and place.

The problem I intend to address in the present chapter is the theoretical pitfall implied in my proposal. It may be fine to imagine what it would have been like to live a gendered body, or

[163] Originally written and published in French in 1957, and included in the *Écrits* 1966: 493–528, as "L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud." The drawing and the dialogue between the boy and the girl are in this French edition on pp. 499–500. I have taken the drawing and the dialogue from the English translation of this essay in Lacan 2002: 413–441, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud." In the English edition the drawing is on p. 416, the dialogue on p. 417.

a classed body, a raced or a disabled body, etc., but how can we know how a specific person's body was perceived and responded to in that time? A certain parontocentrism is looming. Were gender and body in antiquity really perceived in a way similar to the way we do today? To put it a bit sweepingly, gender research in antiquity seems to come down this question: "how to recognise a wo/man when you see one?"[164] Should we not look for a completely different gender paradigm? But then, how would we be able to understand a different gender paradigm when the defining characteristic of a paradigm is that it covers a *coherent* set of assumptions as part of an interpretive tradition?[165]

Much research has already been done on the subject of gender and body in antiquity. I will discuss this research in the first section of this chapter. Trying to bring the results of this research to bear on the text of Luke 1–2, I have the strong impression that we are missing something. Somehow, the Third Gospel seems to resist the models proposed by gender research on ancient texts.[166] I have chosen the Lacan quotation as a motto to this chapter, because it exemplifies in a humorous way exactly the problem we are faced with when we study the Third Gospel from the perspective of gender. On their arrival the two children see two doors, obviously quite the same, the only difference being the signs above the doors. The funny thing is that the two children do not recognise the signs as referring to the toilets, but as place name signs (which would be, after all, the most obvious thing to expect on your arrival at a railway station): "Look," says the brother, "we're at Ladies!" "Imbecile!" replies his sister, "Don't you see we're at Gentlemen." These words can be applied as well to the current state of Lukan gender research. The remarkable attention paid by the Third Gospel to women and men alike, especially when compared with the other gospels, has led some scholars to say with due enthusiasm, "Look, we're at Ladies!" while others critically replied, "You imbecile, can't you see we're (still) at Gentlemen." This is the status quo of modern gender research in the Third Gospel: on the one hand there is the idea that here at least is an evangelist trying to pay attention to men and women alike, while on the other hand it seems clear that the idea of women's participation or authorship does not make the text less androcentric—as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983: 61) already warned us. Or as Turid Seim put it,

> Is Luke within the Christian Testament corpus a rare friend of women reflecting the equality and a radical revision of the role of the women in the

[164] This is of course intended as a pun on Stanley Fish' famous essay "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One?" (Fish 1980: 322–337).
[165] On my use of the term "paradigm," see my introduction, section 2.2.
[166] On my use of the term "models," see my introduction, section 2.2.

> early church? Or is his major contribution to impose "the Lukan silence," representing a programmatic androcentrism that pleads the subordination of women in a more subtle and indirect manner than the direct parenetic enforcement of the [pastoral] letters? These are the extreme positions of an ambiguity that seems to be intrinsic to the Lukan construction in itself. (Seim 1994a: 728)

This ambiguity has led Seim (1994b) to conclude that there is a double message. Although I readily agree with Seim's analysis, I have my doubts as far as the double message is concerned. I think that there is not really a double message in the Third Gospel. Maybe there is a double message at face value, but on closer inspection this observation will not stand. The problem lies in the gender models with which we approach the text. The double message is first and foremost caused by our modern gender paradigm (the body related approach, discussed in my introduction). In order to understand what is going on in the Third Gospel, we have to imagine a fully different gender paradigm, closer to the way in which gender and body were perceived, understood, and represented in antiquity.

Research on gender and body in antiquity has resulted in the view that the perception, understanding, and representation of body and gender were embedded in a way of thinking that was guided by a distinct ideal of perfect manliness. This ideal was based on a mixture of ancient medical and philosophical-anthropological ideas in which both body and gender were experienced as instable factors. What was needed in order to get the body in shape, was clear virtuous martial and/or moral behaviour. The extent to which you succeeded determined the way you were perceived by others as a manly person. The models that have been proposed on the basis of these insights, however, fall short in accounting for, to quote once again the words by Seim, the "ambiguity that seems to be intrinsic to the Lukan construction in itself." I suggest that this ambiguity is not only intrinsic to the Lukan construction, but in fact to many ancient texts, and that the reason why the proposed models fail, is that they are still based on a modern binary gradual scale between masculine and feminine. In order to deal with this problem I will propose a more nuanced model as a descriptive and heuristic device to map the gendered representations of the body, especially in the Third Gospel.[167]

The hypothesis I will seek to substantiate is threefold. (1) The Third Gospel participates in an elite Roman gender paradigm that came *en vogue* during early imperial rue, in which both men and women were able to, and indeed did, strive towards a virtuous behaviour that

[167] On the metaphor of the map in "mapping gender," see Burrus 2007.

envisaged a high moral manliness of a sublime, disembodied type that can be characterised as beyond-manliness. (2) This elite Roman paradigm converged with a Hellenistic Judaic paradigm of Law-abiding virtue, in which this high manliness tended to get even divine proportions. (3) The way the body is perceived, understood, and represented follows from behaviour: Christian understanding led to a type of behaviour that perceived a new body, though again of a beyond-manly type.

In the first section, I will present a concise survey of research on the subject of body and gender in antiquity. Who responded to the criteria that entitled you to be a man or a woman? Does the man/woman binary, and the idea of gender with it, really apply? In short, what are the outlines of the ancient gender paradigm? In the second section I will propose a new, more nuanced model, which will allow us to better understand what is happening in the text when it comes to body and gender. From the third section onwards, I will examine a couple of passages from Luke 1–2, trying to understand the construction of gender by means of my proposed model (sections 3–8), followed by the conclusion (section 9).

1. Gender and Behaviour in Ancient Representation

In the first section of this chapter I will give a concise survey of research on body and gender in ancient representations (sections 1.1 and 1.2), and in Hellenistic Judaic and New Testament contexts (section 1.3), followed by an evaluation of the model used so far (section 1.4), and a conclusion (section 1.5).

1.1 Body and Gender in Antiquity

In the last decades, there has been a growing awareness that body and gender in the ancient world were perceived, understood, and represented in a way that differs considerably from the modern concepts we are used to (see my introductory chapter for a brief explanation of the modern concept of gender). Research on the subject includes in classical studies the groundbreaking work by Thomas Walter Laqueur (1990), while Myles McDonnell (2003, 2006) described an important shift during Roman late Republic. In biblical and related studies, an important survey of the field is offered through the introduction by Burrus in the volume edited by Penner and Vander Stichele (2007), while in New Testament studies in particular there is the volume edited by Moore and Anderson (2003) with a focus on masculinities, and the studies by Mayordomo (2006) and Colleen Conway (2008). This inventory is by no means exhaustive; in my view the literature cited here does mark some important shifts and critical insights.[168] Given my subject, the construction of gender in the Third Gospel, I will focus on the period of early imperial rule and the first century CE.

As I have explained in my introductory chapter, gender in the ancient world was defined, not so much by biological sex, but first and foremost by behaviour. Contrary to our modern concept of gender, according to which expected behaviour is inferred from the body, male or female, in antiquity it was behaviour as a man or as a woman that determined whether you were perceived, understood, and represented as a man, as a woman, or as an ambiguous person. The ideal, based on Aristotle, was a man striving towards perfection and completeness, by Laqueur described as a one-sex model. Perfect manliness, as an ideal prevalent in higher and

[168] In addition to the studies referred to in the main text, the following works on body and gender in antiquity should in particular be mentioned: Dover 1978; Winkler 1990; Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin 1990; Gleason 1995; Hallett and Skinner 1997; Foxhall and Salmon 1998a; Foxhall and Salmon 1998b; Bassi 1998; Gleason 1999; Montserrat 1999; Parker 2001; Kuefler 2001; Rosen and Sluiter 2003; Roisman 2005; Skinner 2005; Langlands 2006; Holmes 2012; Foxhall 2013; Hubbard 2014; Masterson, Rabinowitz and Robson 2015. Recently, focusing on the issues of public voice, power, and gender in the ancient world, there is the manifesto written for a wide audience by Beard (2017b, which includes Beard 2014 and 2017a).

elite circles, was set off against all those who did not conform to this norm, such as less fortunate men, deformed or physically disabled people, lower class people, slaves, children, women, eunuchs, inhabitants of border regions, foreigners, etc. It should be emphasised that we are talking about elite men and women, that is, freeborn families, generally wealthy, and able to participate for instance in the *cursus honorum* or the military. Due to a lack of sources we do not know how merchants, lower classes such as artisans or fishermen, and slavery would have responded to gender behaviour patterns. Sources are almost exclusively limited to elite circles.[169]

It may be objected that the body still was there, and that the body was recognised as a woman or a man. The body was, however, considered not so much to differ in kind (that is, a man's body, or a woman's body), as in degree (that is, a body on its way to manliness, or a body on its way to womanliness). Based on a mix of what we would now call philosophical-anthropological and medical assumptions, the perfect body was considered male, the female body only differing as it was thought to be inverted mainly in view of reproductive organs. The male/female body could easily lapse, through a change in body fluids and warmth, towards the female/male side. It was necessary, therefore, to take care that the right behaviour to keep the body (literally) in shape was developed.[170] The instability of the body meant that you could never be sure, when you were talking to a person with a male or female body, whether you were really talking to a man or a woman. Appearances could be deceitful. A literary work such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (written during the reign of Augustus) must be seen in this context. This work does not merely offer entertaining stories testifying to the author's literary skills, but it offers an illustration of the basic idea of instability, and the way the body could adapt itself (or be adapted) to changing circumstances due to inappropriate behaviour. (Whether we would like to call this behaviour really inappropriate is in many cases doubtful, the point with Ovid is that Augustan imperial rule set a norm to keep the bodies in shape and that deviant moral behaviour had dire consequences; the intuition that imperial rule itself is in a way deviant belongs to the critical substratum of the *Metamorphoses* (see the discussion in Volk 2010).

[169] Laqueur 1990: 19; Gleason 1995: 58–60; Knust 2016: 30–31.

[170] On ancient medical views on the body and gender, see e.g. Gleason 1999: 70–75; Parsons 2006. Martin 1995 investigates Greco-Roman medical views on the body in Paul's Corinthian letters, while Martin 2001 examines the role of sexual intercourse in defining the male, and the role of menstruation in defining the female. He considers in particular the case of so-called menstruating men, that is, men with various kinds of corporeal bleeding who were considered inadequately male. Burrus (2007: 28–29) discusses the Greek "one-sex" medical model, especially the model derived from the Hippocratic corpus, as it was received by the Romans.

In order to judge someone's true (gendered!) character from his/her outward appearance, face and gesture, the art of physiognomy was developed.[171] It is precisely in ancient physiognomics, that the categories of male and female cease to be mere bodily characteristics as we are used to understand it, and shift towards to domain of gender, understood as a culturally and societally defined discourse. It belongs to the field of physiognomics to conclude, for instance, that a person who is physically deformed must also be morally defective. In this respect, the remark in the Third Gospel concerning the chief tax collector Zacchaeus should be understood (Luke 19:2–3). As Zacchaeus was small in stature (ὅτι τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς ἦν), he was unable to see Jesus because of the crowd. His smallness underscores his moral depravity as someone who collaborated with the Roman occupying forces.[172]

As being a man or being a woman in bodily respect did not mean that you were automatically perceived as a man or as a woman in view of your virtue, you had to comply with specific patterns of behaviour (called "protocols" by Ivarsson 2008a; the term gender scripts is also used). In general, typically manly behaviour consisted in the first place in self-control (or self-restraint, ἐγκράτεια, *continentia*), that is control of your own body, your sexuality and your passions. You also had to command the corollary of self-control: dominance, that is, mastery over others.[173] Women, especially elite women such as the Roman *matronae*, were equally called to exercise self-control and mastery, in which case they entered the domain of manliness. It contributes to the difficult position they were in, that they were called to exercise power, and at the same time were always under control of a man as tutor. Lower-class men and women could only fail in self-control, just because they were lower-class. Loss of self-control (ἀκρασία) was always looming through all kinds of excessive behaviour, not only violence, but also cruelty, passion, lust, or greed.

An illustrative example of the very thin line between virtuous behaviour and excessive behaviour is found in a letter by the Roman writer Pliny the Younger (61–c. 113 CE). Pliny tells about his friend Fundanus, who is beyond himself because of the death of his daughter. In his grief Fundanus has lost all forms of virtue. This may be bad enough as a sign of his loss of self-

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[171] *Physiognomica* of pseudo-Aristotle, third century BCE, and the second-century CE *Physiognomy* of Polemo of Laodicea. Cf. Gleason 2003: 235–264. A survey of ancient physiognomic authors gives Parsons 2006: 17–37. Physiognomy was also to some degree present in Hellenistic and early Roman Judaism, cf. Parsons 2006: 39–65; and Popović 2007. On Polemo, see also Gleason 1995, Mayordomo 2006, and Swain 2007. There is in particular heightened interest in the physical appearance of the Homeric heroes, as we can see from Philostratus's *Heroikos* (Gleason 2003: 325 n. 1). Certain physical properties were seen as indications of a higher or lesser degree of manliness, see Smit 2012: 15 n. 34; Mayordomo 2006: 3–8 and the literature cited there.

[172] See on the subject especially also Parsons 2001 and Parsons 2006.

[173] On mastery as a marker of masculinity in the ancient world, see esp. Gleason 1999; Mayordomo 2006: 4–7; Ivarsson 2007: 165–166; Ivarsson 2008a: 186–187.

control, but Pliny assures his reader that it is acceptable because Fundanus has retained this one top virtue, *pietas* (respect, devotion), in this case for his daughter. Besides, Pliny continues subtly, "you will forgive him if you realise that she resembled him in behaviour as well as in the physics of her face."[174] That is, Fundanus is really mourning his alter ego; the girl's outward appearance reflected his own outward appearance, as her manly virtue equalled his own virtue.

Loss of self-control could make you vulnerable to all kinds of physical maltreatment and abuse; it could also make your senses weak so as to make you prone to sexual submissiveness. The utter loss of masculinity would be being penetrated either sexually or (as a metonymy) by being beaten, stabbed, or pierced.[175] Numerous are the instances, e.g. in the epigrams of Martial or the satires of Juvenal (both late first, early second century CE), where men are accused of womanly submission to other men or even to women (an element of sexual slander as a means to establish gender is certainly involved, cf. Knust 2006). A well-known example from historiography can be found in Livy's rendering of the speech by the consul Postumius, concerning the Bacchanalia. Postumius notices that, though women make up for a large part of the cultic extravagancies, there are also men involved (*mares*, Livy carefully avoids the word *viri*) who are much like women, as others have shameful intercourse with them, and they in their turn have fornication with others.[176] Context mattered of course, as the Roman historiographer Tacitus (ca. 56–117 CE) makes clear in his rendering of the speech of Agricola to his soldiers: death in battle, potentially an instance of penetration, could be interpreted as either a heroic deed for the fatherland (laudable), or as the result of a foolish lack of strategic insight (not a real man).[177]

These are only some very broad outlines of the basic ancient gender paradigm. I have already indicated that we do not know how ordinary people, that is, all those who did not belong to the Roman (and Greek) writing elite responded to body and gender. It is also questionable whether there has been only one gender paradigm. Differences in time and place must be allowed for. I have, for instance, not discussed the way body and gender was dealt with in classical Greece, as this would be outside my scope, the formative years of early Christian

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[174] Sed nunc omnia, quae audiit saepe quae dixit, aspernatur expulsisque virtutibus aliis pietatis est totus. Ignosces, laudabis etiam, si cogitaveris quid amiserit. Amisit enim filiam, quae non minus mores eius quam os vultumque referebat, totumque patrem mira similitudine exscripserat. (Pliny, *Ep.* 5.16; Mynors 1963).

[175] Walters (1997) discusses active penetration, both in sexual respect and in the form of beatings, as a marker of power-relations between free men and people lesser down the scale, such as women, children, or slaves. See also Williams 1999, and the discussions in Ivarsson 2008a: 185–186 and Van den Hengel 2009: 164–179. I am aware that I am bypassing sexuality as a topic *sui generis*. In the frame of my research, it suffices to accept that sexuality during the emergence of early imperial rule is an aspect of behaviour, and as such is a moral category that contributes to the definition of manliness.

[176] "Primum igitur mulierum magna pars est, et is fons mali huiusce fuit; deinde simillimi femini mares, stuprati et constupratores" (Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 39.15.9; Walsh 1999).

[177] Tacitus, *Agr*. 33; Ogilvie and Richmond 1967.

gospel writing during the first century of Roman imperial rule.[178] An important shift in the development of Roman gender paradigm, however, must be mentioned, as we have here the source for an ambiguity that is still there in the period under consideration. I will discuss this shift in the next section (section 1.2).

1.2 A Shift to High Moral Virtue

In the previous section I have tried to briefly sketch the outlines of a gender paradigm as it was valid during the first century of Roman imperial rule. Actually, however, the picture is less coherent than I suggested. There were at least two types of ideal manliness during this period. The reason for this must be sought in developments in the Roman late republican times. Maud Gleason (1995), Carlin Barton (2001) and McDonnell (2003; 2006) described a shift during Roman late republic times from martial manliness to moral virtuous manliness. As I expect that both patterns will be visible in the New Testament, I will discuss this shift here.

During Roman republic times manly behaviour had a strong martial flavour, based on bodily control, military exercise—the so-called *tirocinium*—and military service, concentrated on honour. Towards early imperial rule, however, with the military increasingly moving towards the extended border regions and senatorial ranks gradually being excluded from active service, the *tirocinium* moved towards literary exercise and philosophical moral performance, the performance of *virtus*. During early imperial rule, virtuous behaviour became decisive for manliness, with such strong markers as the discipline to read and study, the ability to devote time to writing, and first and foremost the skills required to speak well and commandingly in public, thus setting for others an *exemplum* of the virtuous life.[179] The history of Rome, written by Livy during the transition from late Republic to early imperial rule, testifies to this development through the many *exempla*, both of military prowess and of verbal skill. Livy underlines for instance, when he introduces King Evander who is in a sense a precursor of Augustus, that the miracle of his writing makes him a *venerabilis vir*, a respectable man.[180] Towards the end of the first century CE, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian could say: neque enim

[178] On body and gender in classical Greece, see especially the essays collected in Rosen and Sluiter 2003.

[179] On the importance of speaking in public and educated language as key markers of Greco-Roman manliness, cf. Gleason 1999: 79–82. The public voice as the main constituent of being a man, has been discussed for a wide audience by Beard 2014, and resumed in Beard 2017b (a manifesto that juxtaposes ancient patterns of silencing women and modern similar patterns).

[180] Underscored by the alliteration: "Evander … venerabilis vir miraculo litterarum" (Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 1.7.8; Ogilvie 1974).

esse oratorem nisi bonum virum iudico, "for I believe that you cannot be a good speaker unless you are a good man," in which *bonum* must be taken in a moral sense.[181]

An important role in establishing the ideal of virtuous manliness was played by Octavian, the later Augustus, who sought to restore Roman morals, first through the revival of Roman religious practices, then through restoration of Roman *virtus*—in particular *pietas*—and extensive building projects, and finally through legislation.[182] Looking back on his own achievements in his *Res gestae*, Augustus accentuates that he was praised by the senate for his *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas.*[183] The enumeration of the three virtues of *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas* is very telling. Augustus came to be known as someone who possessed one of the main characteristics of manliness: he showed self-control and he was in control of the world. As it turned out when he was about to exercise his power, the risk with exercising power over others is that you could easily slip to cruelty (after all, he had, still as Octavian, butchered the inhabitants of Perusia in 40 BC), which is, in itself, a severe lack of self-control and as such an act of unmanliness. *Clementia*, "mildness," therefore, was needed to prevent you from exercising savagery or cruelty upon others.[184] In the hands of the emperors, the right exercise of *clementia* was a top virtue, demarcating the line between a virtuous ruler and a tyrant, as the Roman philosopher and statesman Seneca kept reminding the young emperor Nero, half a century later.[185] *Iustitia* points to the balanced judgment, another example of self-continence, while *pietas* means your loyalty towards respectively, the gods, the republic, parents, and family. *Pietas* is, then, what motivates self-continence.

During early imperial rule manliness became increasingly a social and public performance.[186] The paradoxical situation arose, however, that with the rise of centralised governance in the system of the principate, the possibilities and freedom to exercise this virtuous performance became ever more limited. You had to look continuously for opportunities to behave virtuously. An illuminating example is found in Seneca's treatise *De tranquillitate animi* (4–5), from 61 or 62 CE. In this work, Seneca argues that you will never be so hampered in your behaviour as not to be able to perform some or other virtuous activity. Are public offices closed off to you? Try speaking in public as an orator. Are you forbidden to speak in public? Then try to be of service in a silent way. Is it too dangerous to appear even in public? Then try the

[181] Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.2.3; Winterbottom 1970.
[182] On the role played by visual communication in Augustus' cultural programme, see Zanker 1988: 101–166.
[183] Res gest. divi Aug. 34.2; Brunt and Moore 1967: 34–37.
[184] *Clementia* is a complicated virtue, as it has many layers and underwent a development during early imperial rule, cf. Bauman 2000.
[185] Seneca, *De clementia*, written about 55–56 CE.; Braund 2009.
[186] Gleason 1999: 68.

good work at home. Are you banned from Rome? You will find the whole world as your working area. This example is illuminating, first because we find here a clear hierarchy of virtuous behaviour during the first century of imperial rule. The top of the bill is joining the *cursus honorum*, but second best is advocacy. Further down the scale we find the *patronus* who exercises mastery through silent support; or the patrician who performs his studies when he is forced to retire from public life, like Seneca himself did and Cicero before him. Finally you could always join the military and related civil service in the border regions (in which we may recognise the late republican ideal).

Seneca's example is also illuminating because of his line of argument: a virtuous man should always deploy himself for the best, for otherwise, if he accepts that he has no possibilities left, he would cease to be a real man.[187] A real man is always free to act. The aversion of Tacitus to the Roman emperors was motivated precisely by this, that they prevented the patricians from fully displaying their virtuous potential. In his description of the life of his father-in-law Agricola, Tacitus follows the track set out by Seneca. Agricola, in order to avoid the emperor Domitian's jealousy, voluntarily seeks a more domestic way of life, until precisely this virtuous behaviour brings him to the top of public glory.[188]

There is still a third reason why Seneca's example is highly illuminating. When you, as a man, are not allowed to join public office or to speak in public, the possibilities left to you are in the first place to be of service silently or to do the good work at home. Basically, however, this is also the small margin that is allowed to elite or high-ranking women. Speaking in public was not expected of women. If a woman did venture to speak publicly, she was liable to be understood as a man, as the example related by Valerius Maximus (early first century CE) makes clear. This anthologist tells of the woman Maesia of the Umbrian city of Sentinum, who defended her case in court. Her speaking in public was apparently virtuous, as it was done *diligenter* (with courage) and *fortiter* (with rhetorical virtuosity) which made her win her case. As a result, however, as she wore a manly *animus* under the impression of a woman, she was called "androgyn."[189] That is, a woman who actually did speak in public was liable to be understood (to some degree) as a man (or as on her way to becoming a man), while reversely a man who was unable to speak (or act)

[187] Ille vir fuerit … qui non alliserit virtutem ("He will be a man ... who will not endanger virtue," Seneca, *Tranq.*, 5.4; Basore 1965; Reynolds 1977).

[188] Sic Agricola simul suis virtutibus, simul vitiis aliorum in ipsam gloriam praeceps agebatur, "Thus Agricola, because of his own virtuous behaviour, and because of the faults of other, was driven straight to precisely the public glory [he sought to avoid], Tacitus, *Agr*. 41; cf. also Tacitus, *Agr*. 1–4. 6. 39. 41; Ogilvie and Richmond 1967.

[189] Quam, quia sub specie feminae virilem animum gerebat, Androgynen appellabant, "And her, because she wore under the impression of a woman a manly *animus*, they called Angrogyn." (Val. Max. 8.3.1; Kempf 1888). See Anthony Marshall 1990; Beard 2014; 2017b.

publicly found himself in a woman's position. It is interesting that, according to Seneca, a man in such a situation still had the possibility to continue on the older republican track of joining the military or civil service in the newly conquered regions.

Precisely as women could be understood as being manly (or on their way to manliness) when they showed a manly virtuous performance, we should be careful in evaluating the general absence of women in public speech. Perhaps women did speak more in public than we know, although the traces are hard to rediscover, due to gendered representation. It is true that there are many often sad or gruesome stories in which women are silenced, for instance in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but the recurrent theme could very well indicate that women actually were not so silent, otherwise Ovid's stories would lose much of their effect.[190] The fact that Ovid relates stories involving the silencing of women, might imply that the speaking in public of women did happen and that it was considered an infringement of early imperial order. But at the same time Ovid himself was effectively silenced by Augustus, which indicates he himself was ultimately sentenced precisely because he would have threatened imperial order by writing in an exaggerated manner.[191]

A story of man who is silenced is found in *Lucius or the Ass*, traditionally ascribed to Lucian of Samosata, but probably a summary of Lucian's original work by an author called Pseudo-Lucian, dated between 100 and 150 CE. In this story, we find a young man of excellent birth, who shows the unvirtuous desire to give in to his curiosity for witchcraft. Curiosity leads him to behave in a way that jeopardises his elite standing: he travels to a country that is known to be infested with witches, he engages in a love relationship with a woman servant, he secretly observes the mistress of the house undressing herself, and finally injudiciously applies a magical unction on himself. Having changed, as a result, into a donkey, and uttering a donkey's braying, Lucius observes:

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[190] See for example Daphne, who had been transformed into a laurel tree so that she could only rustle with her leaves (*Met*. 1.452–576); Io, who had changed into a cow so that she could only moo (Ovidius, *Met*. 1.568–746); Echo who could only repeat the words of others (*Met*. 3.339–510); Philomela who had her tongue cut out, but sent a "textile" message (*Met*. 6.424–674, esp. 555–557); Tarrant 2004.

[191] The question of the public voice of women has been addressed by Beard 2014, and again in her manifesto of Beard 2017b. Although I have some doubts as to the effectiveness of the real silencing of women, I fully subscribe to her remark that the muteness of women should not simply be regarded as a reflection of women's general disempowerment; the real point is that women's voices were a threat to the state. Beard notices that the only two circumstances in which it was deemed acceptable for women to speak in public were to either testify as a victim or in defence of others (family, women). But then, I would add that in these two instances the point seems that they were allowed to speak *as women*, and not as women in the role of men.

> ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ὄνος ἤμην, τὰς δὲ φρένας καὶ τὸν νοῦν ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὁ Λούκιος, δίχα τῆς φωνῆς (*Lucius sive asinus*, 15; Macleod 1974: 284)
>
> With regard to the other [parts of my body] I was a donkey; as to my mind and understanding, however, I was that [same] Lucius, except for my voice.

Apparently the voice is part of his mind and understanding. As his manly understanding has failed, through the persistent uncontrolled desire to fulfil his curiosity, the voice, as a metonymical token of this understanding, has changed with the rest of the body, into a donkey. The loss of human voice, therefore, can be interpreted as a failure to respond with due manly composure.

There is no real difference between body and behaviour. The body is there, but what counts is the way the body is perceived, understood, and represented. Moral behaviour is quintessential to get and keep your body in shape. An illuminating example is, again, offered by Seneca, when he opposes the saying that *virtus* is more graceful when it arises from a beautiful body, by recalling the example of Claranus.[192] Claranus is a man who has conquered his physical deformity with a fresh and strong mind in such a way, that his body appears to Seneca as beautiful and straight up as does his mind. What Seneca's example makes clear is, that whether Claranus' body was really changed is not the issue. What matters is that the perception of the body is adapted to his moral behaviour. When perception, and hence understanding and representation, takes prevalence, you can never be sure whether someone's representation (at least since early imperial rule), is what we would call realistic or trustworthy. Representation reflects behaviour, because behaviour shapes the body. There is a parallel with Roman sculpture. In republican times we find a stunning drive to represent especially the deceased forefathers as realistically as possible, with their pimples and folds. Although this realistic style continued under imperial rule, the style is joined by a dominant idealizing approach, in which the representation of someone's virtues is more important than realism.[193]

Despite the shift from late republican martial manliness to early imperial virtuous manliness, Mathew Kuefler (2001) rightly insists that martial manliness was never fully superseded and that it managed to survive alongside virtuous manliness for a considerable time (as we may have guessed from sculptural evidence). As we have seen it was still there in Seneca's *De tranquillitate animi*. This would mean that we have at least two coexisting patterns of manliness: one of the republican type, starring the martial man, and one of the early imperial

[192] Seneca, *Ep*. 66.2; Reynolds 1965.
[193] See on the subject Zanker 1988; Ramage and Ramage 1995; van den Hengel 2009; Kleiner 2010.

type, featuring the virtuous man, with the addition that this virtuous man could actually also be a woman (while the woman could also be a man). Things become, however, still more complicated, when Diana Swancutt (2007) and Virginia Burrus (2007) localise the main emphasis in the experience of the Roman/foreign and citizen/non-citizen oppositions. Likewise, Jennifer Knust (2016: 28–30) argued that the way we evaluate the construction of gender during early imperial rule must take into account concomitant patterns of power and status. Recently, Mary Beard (2017a; 2017b) again asked attention for the role played by power. And indeed, the distance between Roman men and women was considerably smaller than between Roman women and, say, Greek women (especially so because of the general distrust in traditional Roman elite of Greek refinements, see Gleason 1999). This in turn would mean that what we nowadays would call gender, is not the pertinent category we would like it to be. "Man" and "woman" were perceived in their relation to the state (republic, empire), and understood in terms of moral virtuousness.

Livy's *venerabilis vir* coincided, metaphorically spoken, with the empire itself. As excellent virtuous behaviour could renew even the deformed body (as in the case of Claranus, mentioned by Seneca), the empire was renovated through excellent virtuous behaviour championed by the *princeps* himself. Like the *vir*, the state was basically instable. Moral behaviour at all levels had to keep the state in good shape. Hence there is a convergence in Augustus' moral revival programme of manly morals, morals of the family, and morals of the state. This would mean, again, that foreigners, powerless people, non-citizens, disabled people and the like were basically regarded, as Lacan would have it, under the signifier of Ladies, while citizens, men and women alike of Roman birth, the powerful, men and women of letters, and generally people of the high virtuous type, were called to try and enter the door under the signifier of Gentlemen. The concept of gender itself, therefore, is less useful to understand the way the body was responded to. Citizenship, state, power, and moral virtue are more relevant categories. In the light of these categories it is even not sure whether, in ancient representation, a woman is really a woman, and a man really a man. The question is, indeed, how to recognise a wo/man when you see one?

To resume, the shift noticed for early imperial rule leaves us (1) at least with two patterns of gender ("the martial man" and "the virtuous wo/man"), and (2) with the observation that gender is not really a useful concept, as what it is really about is "the Roman body of the state" versus "the foreign body," in which foreign is virtually everything that is not Roman, including the disorderly, the deviant, and the defective. Needless to say that the position of a Roman virtuous woman was an awkward one, as she was the ultimate field where the values of

virtuous manliness and the inferior other collided. Nevertheless, as representation followed behaviour, and behaviour shaped the body, we have good reason to believe that in a sense the difference between elite women and men could be really small. How would this be in a Hellenistic Jewish context and in the formative period of the gospels?

1.3. Hellenistic Jewish Context and New Testament

How would people have responded to this gender paradigm in a Hellenistic Jewish context and during the formative years of the gospels? As a preliminary remark, I would like to underscore that I regard the early formation of what we now call the New Testament as a development that originally took place within the varied and dialogical Jewish tradition of the time, as sketched by Bernadette Brooten (1982a; 1982b; 1985). There is no need to assume a kind of watershed between Jesus and early Jesus followers on the one hand and a Jewish "context" on the other, neither is there the need to distinguish between Jewish and Hellenistic, especially not where gender scripts for women and men are concerned. Without meaning to obliterate the differences between the Jesus movement and other Jewish schools and groups, and not to forget the differences within the early Jesus movement itself, I believe that the more obvious tension is between Roman occupied people and territories on the one hand and the weight of imperial Roman moral virtuousness on the other. We should not take on a more or less coherent "Jewish context" and/or "Christian context" over a "Roman world" or a "Hellenistic world." The real point seems to be how people responded to the colonizing forces of imperial state virtue. In the following, therefore, I have to be very careful in sketching just a very rough outline of the field, presenting a few markers that seem to indicate where traces of gender may be found.[194]

The Hebrew Esther Scroll, from the fourth century BCE, or the LXX Books of Esther and Judith, from roughly the first century BCE, to mention only a few examples, suggest that a critical

[194] On women in the Hebrew Bible, in the diaspora of late antiquity and in classical rabbinic Judaism, see e.g. the essays collected by Baskin 1998. On manly and womanly virtue in the Hebrew Bible, and in Hellenistic Jewish literature, see Creangă 2010; Smit 2012; Creangă and Smit 2014. On gender in Philo of Alexandria, see esp. D'Angelo 2007 (who discusses Jewish piety in relation to early imperial family values) and Colleen Conway 2008. On the construction of masculinities in antiquity and early Christianity, see the survey by Moore 2003 and the bibliography offered by Anderson, Moore and Kim 2003; see esp. Kuefler 2001 (late antiquity); Martin 2001; D'Angelo 2003; Økland 2004 (gender discourse in Paul); Martin 2006; Knust 2006 (on sexual slander); Mayordomo 2006; Ivarsson 2007 and 2008a (masculinity and vicious behaviour in 1 Cor), Ivarsson 2008b; Moxnes 2008 (gender discourse in Paul, and slave bodies and the beaten body of Christ in 1 Peter); Colleen Conway 2008 (Divus Augustus, Philo's *Moses*, Philostratus, and in the canonical gospels and Revelation); Smit 2012 (manly virtue in Rom 5:6, esp. in view of weakness, justification, and ἀνδρεία); Van Klinken and Smit 2013; Wilson 2014a, 2014b, and 2015 (masculinities in Luke-Acts); Visser 2015 (the rhetoric of masculinity in 1 Peter); Visser 2017 (perfect masculinity and James 1 on being τέλειος).

and playful reflection on what we would want to call gender roles was already present in Jewish tradition; interestingly both the Esther and the Judith discourses have a strong flavour of resistance literature.[195] John Barton (2014: 157–184) has demonstrated that, from the Second Temple period onwards, and especially in the Hellenistic age, notions of a virtuous life are developed in Jewish literature, partly reflecting Hellenistic virtuousness, but not necessarily reducible to it. Peter-Ben Smit (2012: 4–9) has shown by means of the case of 4 Maccabees (another instance of resistance literature) that, connected to the virtuous life, a comparable way to construct gender has been developed. The way the Maccabean martyrs kept to their faith, instead of resulting in an unvirtuous death, testified to their ἀνδρεία, their "virtue." Especially keeping to the commandments of the Law was seen as an expression of pious reasoning, and therefore as a well-understood act of self-control. In the same way, Jewish women, such as the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, could appear manly, even more manly than their (gentile) male opponents.

It has been argued by Colleen Conway (2008), in her discussion of the construction of gender in the account of Divus Augustus, in Philo's *On the Life of Moses*, in Philostratus, as well as in the canonical gospels and Revelation, that especially in Philo of Alexandria, an author from the first century CE, the ideal manliness as it is represented by Moses comes quite close to divinity. Maren Niehoff (2001: 45–158) already noticed that Jewish identity and Roman early imperial virtuousness are intertwined in Philo. Drawing on Niehoff, Mary Rose D'Angelo has argued, in response to claims that Jewish piety would account for fits of misogyny in Philo, that Philo "represents the moral demands of Judaism as meeting, and indeed, exceeding, those of the imperial order" (D'Angelo 2007: 65). This converges with Colleen Conway's thesis that there is a tendency, equally present in the canonical gospels, to be even more perfect than imperial manliness prescribes, that is: that there is a "hypermasculinity" (Conway 2008: 125). The question is how this hypermasculinity should be understood. Is it an attempt to be more perfect in terms of Roman values? In that case we would have an instance of the oppressed trying to be competitive and thereby overstressing their case. Or is it an attempt at resistance, and if so, how? After all, as the Roman military was an occupying force in Judea, it seems possible that the Roman gender ideal, that was basically about Roman citizenship versus everything foreign, was responded to with a similar opposition in which "Roman" was seen as "foreign." As far as the New Testament is concerned, Paul Duff (2017: 214) has argued that the context of the New Testament was indeed experienced as an alien and foreign environment. But then, what kind of

[195] On humour in the Hebrew Bible, see esp. Brenner and Radday 1990 (on Esther in this volume, Radday 295–313). On Esther and gender roles, see esp. Brenner 1989; Brenner 1995.

self-identity, clothed or not in terms of gender, was set up against this foreign Roman state-manliness?

From a Roman perspective, the Jewish refusal to accept foreign gods may have been perceived as a lack of piety, and as a dangerous contempt of the state, although this perceived contempt was countered by a Jewish morally high standing Law abiding attitude that was valued by Romans who were willing to lead a virtuous life themselves but were not at such a level in society that they were able to participate in Roman high virtuousness. When, however, even the Law is not all important, such as Christian teaching seemed to imply, things could become more awkward. When the family was not safe either, as some Christian teachings seemed to say, there must have been the reproach of impiety. Becoming a Jesus follower must have implied severing the ties with the Roman raison d'état, though it seems also clear that the people who converted to Christianity did not have much to expect from the Roman state in the first place. These considerations seem to point to a dilemma where the perception of gender is concerned. On the one hand, I readily assume that Hellenistic Jewish and, together with it, early Christian circles, responded to a virtuous Roman paradigm that showed a distinct overlap with their own biblical virtues, although both patterns may have been differently motivated. On the other hand, there must have been distance, animosity and even enmity, that would have led Jewish and Christian circles to do more than just trying to be the better. Despite the idea of hypermasculinity (closely connected to the idea of divinity), the New Testament makes a point of incarnation, which would mean that one way or another the body must have obtained a new meaning, in such a way that it would make sense in a situation of enmity.

If we take a look at Jesus as a narrative character, we see many elements that simply run counter to Roman virtuous masculinity. Although a man, for all we know, Jesus time and again entered houses, even to visit women. His attention is given to precisely those people who fail in the perspective of moral virtuousness. Unlike, for instance Apollonius, Jesus has given his body to let it be humiliated, beaten, and ultimately penetrated through crucifixion. Although competent in speech and in knowledge, Jesus chose to remain as good as silent when interrogated. On closer inspection, however, a new type of masculinity emerges, as Jesus has given himself voluntarily, in pious obedience to his divine father, in order to save his friends. Especially in the Gospel of John, the friends are put in close relation to the divine Father (John 15), while the shame of being bound, beaten, crucified, and penetrated is bent towards *honor* and *virtus* (Ripley 2015). In addition, Jesus' competence in understanding the meaning of Scripture, takes shape in his person. The narrative of the resurrection shows that the body is revived or renewed, recognizable through its wounds, despite early imperial emphasis on the

perfect and idealised body. It is most likely, therefore, that with Jesus a new type of manliness becomes visible, in which the meaning of the body is renegotiated, or reinterpreted in terms of a new body, in which the bodies of individual Christians take part. What kind of body this would be, remains to be seen.

1.4 Understanding Ancient Body and Gender

So far I have described two patterns of gender within a larger Roman gender paradigm: one featuring a martial type masculinity prevalent during the late republican period, and another featuring a moral type virtuous masculinity that came en vogue during the transition from late Republic to early imperial rule. As Kuefler has argued, both types probably coexisted for a long time. On closer examination gender is not really the pertinent category to describe this paradigm, as especially the virtuous kind is basically about a metaphorical coincidence of an ideal type of masculine behaviour with the Roman state. It is behaviour that shapes the body, while representation follows behaviour. This should make us critical where men and women are represented in ancient texts (and ancient representation at large). How to recognise a wo/man when you see one? Comparison with the construction of gender in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity does make things even more complicated. It is imaginable that there was a way of adapting to Roman patterns, due to a certain overlap in ideals of virtuousness. It seems, however, more obvious to presuppose a kind of resistance in which again the body was referred to. What kind of body was envisioned over Roman state-manliness? This must be subject to further research.

Before we can proceed, a methodological problem must be identified. The problem has to do with the heuristic tools we use. The ancient gender paradigm as it has been described so far, is usually put in a binary gradual scale, ranging—simplified—from femininity to masculinity. This model of a gender gradient falls short because it is not clear how we could recognise a wo/man when we see one. Following the republican ideal, manliness is represented by the martial man, but in early imperial times this position is conceded to morally competent men and women. Men could slip to the female side, while women could rise to high manliness, such as the virtuous *matrona*, who showed dignity, self-control, and authority. But then, who should we imagine on the female side? As the gradual scale basically ranges between "Roman/citizen/state/order" on the one hand and "foreign/disorderly/deviant/defective" on the other, we must accept that gender is basically constituted as a moral position vis-à-vis the state. What we call gender is really the field where the definition of Roman identity is established,

together with citizenship, class, place of origin, etc. This may explain why gender, read with modern eyes, in an ancient text like the Third Gospel appears ambiguous: even if (or perhaps better: precisely because) the text represents women and men in such a way that we, as modern readers, would like to call it an instance of gender equality, our findings are immediately "disturbed" by what we call an inherent androcentrism. In order to deal with this, we are in need of a different model, that allows for the ambiguities in manly and womanly embodied positions. To sketch such a model is the aim of the next section.

1.5 Conclusion

Gender research on the text of the Third Gospel seems to have stalled in the observation that there is a double message. On the one hand there are elements of what we would want to call somewhat anachronistically a gender equality. On the other hand the text seems to remain androcentric to the core. But is there really a double message? Could it not be that our modern concepts of body and gender are parontocentric and do not apply to an ancient text like the Third Gospel? In order to answer this question, I started with a survey of research on body and gender in the first century CE. Due to the instability of the body, high importance was attributed to appropriate behaviour to keep the body in shape. Right behaviour determined to which degree you were perceived, understood, and represented as a man or as a woman. Still a binary opposition or a gender gradient between men and women would again be a parontocentric device, as the real opposition seems to oscillate between Romanness (citizen, state, manly morality) versus foreign (non-citizen, disorderly, deviant, defective, ambguity). This gradient of Roman manly morality implies that the gradient between men and women is intersected time and again. Coexisting with this gradient of Roman manly morality is an older model pertaining to martial manliness. Even more complicating where Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian texts are concerned, is that these texts are liable to bring their own patterns of gender with them. Where patterns overlap, it is fairly difficult to say whether Hellenistic Jewish and Christian circles are trying to adapt or are offering resistance.

At this stage I would like to draw the following conclusions (1) Gender is not really a helpful concept; what counts is moral behaviour that circles around what I would call "being Roman." (2) A binary gradient ranging from masculine to feminine does not apply to ancient reflection on the body and merely serves to continue in a parontocentric way as a modern gender binary. (3) A gradual scale ranging from virtuous manliness to womanliness should be used with the utmost care, as manly and womanly positions do not correspond to male and

female embodied characters: behaviour shapes the body, representation follows behaviour. (4) Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian literature leaves us with an unresolved paradox: the body seems to disappear behind divinity and hypermasculinity, while especially in New Testament texts the body reappears, which suggests the possibility that we are dealing with a kind of resistance. In short, we are in need of a more nuanced model, that bypasses the idea of a gender gradient. The search for such a model is the outset of the next section.

2. Mapping Gender with Vitruvius' Architectural Body

In this section, I will try to sketch the outlines of a more nuanced model to account for the way body and gender were perceived during the first century CE. I will argue that the Roman architect Vitruvius in his late-first-century BCE treatise *De architectura* offers a clue to such a model.[196] Although this work is admittedly about architecture, it is not a how-to manual for architects.[197] The aim of Vitruvius' work is to incorporate all things technical in the great classicist revival programme started by the emperor Augustus.[198] Vitruvius demonstrates the *virtus* of technical skills, within an overall re-evaluation of Roman values. The human body plays a distinct role in this work, not only in the way the ideal measurements of the golden ratio are related to the human body, but also in those cases where his descriptions give way to metaphor, involving the human body, bodily appearance, and appropriate behaviour.[199] Moreover, Vitruvius himself thought of his ten-volume work as a body, for which he, rather unconventionally at the time, used the word *corpus*.[200] It is especially in the bodily metaphor that gender is an important constituent of meaning. In the first section (2.1) I will describe Vitruvius' art of bodybuilding and propose a model that will be helpful as a descriptive and heuristic device. This section will be followed by three shorter sections in which I will relate my Vitruvian model to surrounding discourse: the rhetoric of Demetrius, *On Style* ("Body Talk,"

[196] Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (ca. 85–20 BCE), a Roman architect writing during the early reign of Augustus, to whom he dedicated his work. The work was probably delivered in several redactions between 35 and 25 BCE (Fleury 1990: xvi–xxiv), the largest part perhaps between 28 and 23 BCE (Wilson Jones 2000: 34). A recent assessment of scholarly opinions concerning Vitruvius and *De architectura* is offered by MwEwen 2003: 1–11. On the date of writing, see esp. McEwen 2003: 305 n. 2. I have used the recent textual edition in the Budé series, in particular Fleury 1990 (book 1), Gros 1990 (book 3), Gros 1992 (book 4), Liou and Zuinghedau 1995 (book 7), and Soubiran 1969 (book 9), in addition to the old edition by Choisy (1909). Though translations of smaller sections are mine, I have chosen to offer larger sections in the translation by Rowland (1999). General interpretations of Vitruvius, incorporated in my work, are offered by Wilson Jones 1990; Pavlos 2000; McEwen 2003; Milnor 2005; Williams 2016 (who responds to Milnor). A textual tool is is Callebat and Fleury 1995.

[197] Wilson Jones 2000: 38 and the literature cited in n. 24. In addition Reitz 2012: 315.

[198] As has been argued by Milnor 2005.

[199] On the body in Vitruvius, see, e.g., *Arch.* 3.1.1–4 where the compositional symmetry of the temple is related to the human body (Gros 1990: 5–8). Although Vitruvius' ideas about the proportions of the human body were read and discussed in the Middle Ages (Fleury 1990: xlix), they were made famous through the interpretation offered by Leonardo da Vinci (Gros 1990:67–69). On the body metaphor in *De architectura*, see especially McEwen 2003, who distinguishes four body types: the angelic body (the book in its corporeal identity, with reference to Mercurius/Hermes as the divine herald), the Herculean body (representing the Herculean task of bringing civilisation), the body beautiful (on the connection between architecture and the human body), and the body of the king (considering the building programme of Augustus).

[200] A *corpus emendatum architecturae* (*Arch*. 9.18.15, Soubiran 1969). On *De architectura* as a body and Vitruvius' use of the word *corpus*, see McEwen 2003: 9–11.

section 2.2), contemporary early imperial sculpture ("Show Body," section 2.3), and Statius' Achilleis ("Trans Body," section 2.4).

2.1 Vitruvius: The Art of Bodybuilding

The way Vitruvius works the metaphor of the body into his manual provides us with valuable insights concerning the body and expected behaviour during early imperial rule. In this respect, reference is often made to the section of the fourth book of *De architectura*, on the architectural orders, where Vitruvius explains that the Doric order represents manly measurements, the Ionic order is of womanly proportion, whereas the Corinthian style reflects girlish slenderness:

> Ita dorica columna virilis corporis proportionem et firmitatem et venustatem in aedificiis praestare coepit … Ita duobus discriminibus columnarum inventionem, unam virili sine ornatu, nudam speciem, alteram muliebri subtilitate et ornatu symmetriaque sunt mutuati … Tertium vero, quod corinthium dicitur, virginalis habet gracilitatis imitationem, quod virgines propter aetatis teneritatem gracilioribus membris figuratae effectus recipiunt in ornatu venustiores. (*Arch.* 4.1.6–8; Gros 1992: 66–68.).[201]

> Thus the Doric column came to exhibit the proportion, soundness, and attractiveness of the male body … Thus they derived the invention of columns from two sets of criteria: one manly, without ornament, and plain in appearance, the other [Ionic a.t.] of womanly slenderness, ornament, and proportion … Now the third type, which is called Corinthian, imitates the slenderness of a young girl, because young girls, on account of the tenderness of their age, can be seen to have even more slender limbs and obtain even more charming effects when they adorn themselves. (Translation Rowland 1999: 55)

The characterisation of architectural orders in terms of manly and womanly, offered by Vitruvius in this section, is in the first place based on measurable proportions, inferred from the average ratio of a man's footprint compared with his height. In the case of the Ionic order, however, this ratio, when applied to a woman's body, does not seem to fit well. This may be the reason that

[201] All quotations from *Arch.* are taken from the critical edition in the Budé series: Fleury 1990 (book 1), Gros 1990 and 1992 (books 3 and 4), and Liou and Zuinghedau (book 7).

Vitruvius at this point shifts from mathematic proportion to bodily metaphor, when he explains that the Ionic style more resembles a woman's appearance.[202] Doing so, in *De architectura* 4.1.7, Vitruvius inserts a gendered code based on analogy, arguing that the volutes of the Ionic capital are added to imitate the curls and tresses of a woman, and the fluting of the column to imitate the folds of a *stola* of a woman, *matronali more*, "in a matronly manner." This metaphoric shift is remarkable, as an argument based on the way Roman matrons used to dress in order to explain the appearance of the Ionic column type is a clear case of anachronism, even in Vitruvius' days. One would have expected a reference to the folds of the Greek *korai* dresses. After all, these *korai* dresses were known to Vitruvius, as he described the Erechtheion caryatids as *korai* statues, used as columns to support the entablature with their curls going over in a Ionic capital.[203] I will return to the matron reference in due course.

In the case of the Corinthian order, described in *De architectura* 4.1.8–10, mathematic ratio is even further away, as Vitruvius now focuses solely on the *teneritas*, the "youthful slenderness," characteristic according to him of young women. Now, the simple metaphor of the *discrimen,* "difference," between manly and womanly of section 4.1.7 gives way to narrative, as Vitruvius relates an aetiological story of how the Corinthian capital originated. The well-known story of a young woman's untimely death, after which an acanthus on her grave grew around the basket with her favourite things, all covered by a roof tile, such as to give the architect Callimachus the idea of a new capital, has at least this very characteristic element, often neglected, that the young woman was about to marry, as she was *iam matura nuptiis*, "of marriageable age." In the anthropomorphic axiology applied by Vitruvius, this very Roman remark is precisely the point of the Corinthian order, in that it represents girls or young women of marriageable age, but not yet married.

The move from mathematic ratio based on the body (manly proportion, Doric) via bodily metaphor (matronly dress, Ionic) to bodily narrative (girl of marriageable age, Corinthian) is in itself interesting enough. It is the anachronistic element that should make us wonder what is actually happening here. Before continuing, the question must be addressed whether Vitruvius could be regarded as representative for his age. Should we infer that he is a Roman conservative with a Greek Hellenistic twist and by no means representative for his time?[204] It must be remembered that the great developments in architecture, set in motion during Augustus' reign,

[202] On the difficulties arising from Vitruvius' shift from rational to metaphoric argument in the words *isdem vestigiis* (*Arch*. 4.1.7)*,* see the commentary by Gros 1992: 66–67. Cf. also Wilson Jones 2000: 136–137.
[203] In *Arch.* 1.1.5. The unexpected reference to Roman matronly dress has been noticed by Gros 1992: 70–71. Cf. also Fleury 1990: 74–80, McEwen 2003: 30–31.
[204] On Vitruvius' Greek Hellenistic outlook and his attitude towards developments in Roman architecture, see Robertson 1971: 3; Fleury 1990: xlii–xlvi; Wilson Jones 200: 34.

were not yet known to him, although through his classicist approach he seems to have been part of the Augustan revival that was just set in motion. The way he rejects developments such as the new style in mural painting, may suggest a certain reactionary attitude, but it seems more probable that he simply wanted to set a norm for what he deemed morally proper.[205] It seems best, therefore, to decide, with Philippe Fleury (1990: xliii–xliv), on the middle position that Vitruvius was neither a conservative, nor an *avant garde* and that he just wanted to take a normative stance in contemporary developments.[206] It is tempting to explain his metaphor of the matron's dress and his narrative of the girl of marriageable age, at a pair with Augustus' family morals. Besides, within Roman gender logic, building and constructing in general were definitely martial manly activities (a part of *De architectura* is devoted to technical skills used in warfare). While subjugation (of foreigners, non Romans, insurgents etc.) all too often came down to destruction (with the risk of a loss of self-control), reconstruction or new construction, for instance of city walls and new buildings, went hand in hand with giving laws and establishing order, as described in Virgil's *Aeneid* (e.g. 1.264; 6.1151–1154), which is in itself a highly virtuous undertaking and the pivot of Augustus' exemplary performance. It seems, therefore, allowed to regard Vitruvius' work as a document testifying to moral developments set in motion throughout early Augustan classicism.

With these remarks in mind, I would now like to draw attention to another passage in Vitruvius' work, one that has attracted less attention, that is, from the perspective of body and (gendered) behaviour.[207] I believe this section to be of the highest importance, especially when juxtaposed to the section discussed above, in order to find an alternative to the bipolar virtuous gender gradient used so far in classical and biblical gender studies. The passage is right at the beginning of the treatise, in *Arch*. 1.2.5, where the basic principles are set out. Here, Vitruvius touches for the first time on the three orders of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, though he does not yet explicitly use the predicates of manly, womanly, or girlish.

> Decor autem est emendatus operis aspectus probatis rebus conpositi cum auctoritate. Is perficitur statione, quod graece θεματισμῷ dicitur, seu

[205] See his complaints about the *iniqui mores* (the "depraved taste") and the *novi mores* ("this new fashion," translation Rowland 1999: 91) of the new decorative conventions coming into vogue at the moment (the so-called Third Style mural painting), in *Arch.* 7.5.3–4 (Liou and Zuinghedau 1995: 23–24), discussed by Cam (in Liou and Zuinghedau 1995: 139, 144) and Clarke (2005: 267–268) as a moral verdict, while Wilson Jones (2000: 36) sees in these remarks the reactionary pose of a frustrated professional.

[206] Cf. McEwen (2003: 3–4), who defends the comparable position that the work is motivated by the desire for rational systematisation.

[207] The passage has been discussed actually from a gender perspective by Williams (2016), in his response to Milnor (2005). I believe, however, that Williams fails to understand the pervasiveness of the gender paradox described by Milnor for the Augustan age.

consuetudine aut natura. Statione cum Iovi Fulguri et Caelo et Soli et Lunae aedificia sub divo hypaethraque constituentur; horum enim deorum et species et effectus in aperto mundo atque lucenti praesentes videmus. Minervae et Marti et Herculi aedes doricae fient; his enim diis propter virtutem sine deliciis aedificia constitui decet. Veneri, Florae, Proserpinae, fontium nymphis corinthio genere constitutae aptas videbuntur habere proprietates quod his diis propter teneritatem graciliora et florida foliisque et volutis ornata opera facta augere videbuntur iustum decorem. Iunoni, Dianae, Libero Patri ceterisque diis qui eadem sunt similitudine, si aedes ionicae construentur, habita erit ratio mediocritatis quod et ab severo more doricorum et ab teneritate corinthiorum temperabitur earum institutio proprietatis. (*Arch*. 1.2.5; Fleury 1990: 16–17)

Next, correctness (*decor*) is the refined appearance of a project that has been composed of proven elements and with authority. It is achieved with respect to function**,** which is called *thematismos* in Greek, or tradition**,** or nature**.** Correctness of function occurs when temples dedicated to Jupiter the Thunderer and Heaven or the Sun and Moon are made open-air shrines, beneath their patron deity, because we see the appearance and effect of these divinities in the light of the outdoor world. Temples of Minerva, Mars, and Hercules will be Doric, because temples for these gods, on account of their courage in battle, should be set up without a trace of embellishment. Temples done in the Corinthian style for Venus, Proserpina, or the Fountain Spirits (nymphs) are those that will seem to possess the most fitting qualities, because, given the delicacy of these goddesses, the works executed in their honour seem best to augment a suitable quality of correctness when they are made more slender, ornamental, and are decorated with leaves and volutes. If temples are constructed in the Ionic style for Juno, Diana, Father Liber, and other gods of this type, the principle of the "mean" will apply, because their particular disposition will strike a balance between the stern lines of the Doric and the delicacy of the Corinthian. (*Arch.* 1.2.5; transl. Rowland 1999: 25)

In this section, Vitruvius addresses the concept of *decor,* "correctness" or "propriety," in a building. As he explains, the form of a building should be appropriate to its function and

location, and the details of the building should be appropriate to its total form.[208] *Decor* is achieved through status (*statio,* θεματισμός), through tradition (*consuetudo*, further discussed by Vitruvius in 1.2.6), or through nature (*natura,* discussed in 1.2.7). In the section cited above (1.2.5), Vitruvius argues that, with regard to status (also translated as "rule" or "function"), there should be an agreement between who a temple is built for and the type of structure.[209] He explains this by referring to four groups of gods and the type of building that is deemed most appropriate to each of them. In surveying these four groups, we will immediately find a connection between body and patterns of (gendered) behaviour.

The first group mentioned by Vitruvius is constituted by the gods *Iupiter Fulgur* (Jupiter the Thunderer), *Caelus* (Heaven), *Sol* (*Sun*), and *Luna* (Moon). Their temples are *sub divo hypaethraque,* "under the open sky/under the god, and in open air/without a roof," because we see their appearance and effect *in aperto mundo atque lucenti,* "in the light of the outdoor world." That is, the correctness of temples dedicated to gods and goddesses connected to celestial phenomena, such as thunder, sun, moon, and the sky itself, lies in their being partly open-roofed. Vitruvius uses the term *hypaethros* as an architectural term to denote those temples that, instead of a roofed *cella,* feature an open roofed inner court. As he explains elsewhere, discussing the hypaethros: *medium autem sub divo est sine tecto,* "the middle, however, is under the open sky, without a roof," (3.2.8; Gros 1990: 13).[210]

The expression *sub divo*, both in the passage under scrutiny here, and in Vitruvius' discussion of the hypaethros temple in book three, is somewhat ambiguous. The common translation is "under the open sky," in which *divo* is derived from the noun *divum*, a parallel to *dium*, which means "the open sky."[211] It seems possible, however, to trace the expression back to *divus*, which means "a god."[212] Thus, *sub divo* could be understood as "under the god," the god, that is, to whom the temple is dedicated. In this sense I understand Rowland's translation

[208] Choisy (1909: 20) translates *decor* with "convenance." Callebat and Fleury (1995: 65 s.v. *decor*) translate "beauté fonctionelle, convenance." An interpretation of the concept of *decor* as "appropriate to its social and physical contexts," that is, "its social, religious, and economic status," is proposed by Wilson Jones 1990: 40–44. A discussion of various interpretations of *decor* is offered by Lefas 2000: 193–194. I take *decor* to be the equivalent of Greek τὸ πρέπον.

[209] LSJ s.v. θεματισμός offers the translation "conventional arrangement" for this passage, while Fleury (1990: 16) translates: "On l'obtient en suivant un règle, qui se dit en grec θεματισμῷ, l'habitude ou la nature." Rowland (1999: 25) translates "function." Lefas (2000: 194) proposes to translate with "status": "I do not understand the term as following some rules or prescriptions, but as the acknowledgement of something's unchallenged status and the responses to it."

[210] On the term ὕπαιθρος, from the adjective ὑπαίθριος, which originally meant "in the open air" see LSJ s.v. ὑπαίθριος I and II, 4; *OLD* s.v. *hypaethros*. Cf. Gros 1990: 94; Callebat and Fleury 1995: 157 s.v. *hypaethros*. On the hypaethral temple structure, see Choisy 1909: 164–165; Robertson 1971: 385; Gros 1992: 94–96.

[211] *OLD* s.v. *divum* and *dium*. Probably *sub divo* is a rendering of *subdiu*, synonymous to *hypaethros* (Callebat and Fleury 1995: 157 s.v. *hypaethros*).

[212] *OLD* s.v. *divus* 1(a).

"beneath their patron deity."[213] Considered this way, the words *sub divo hypaethraque* mark precisely the point, that the god to whom the temple is dedicated does not appear *in cella*, represented by a huge statue, because his/her presence is, so to say, real life, high above the temple, visible from the temple's inner court. This description of the hypaethral temple is most remarkable in three respects. First, as far as we know Roman architecture was not acquainted with the open-roofed temple type. At least we do not know of original Roman temple structures of this type. Second, even in Greek architecture a hypaethral temple is scarcely found. The temple of Jupiter Olympius in Athens was at the time not yet finished. The temple of Apollo at Didyma was said to be open-roofed, but according to the late first-century BCE geographer Strabo this was because the vastness of the cella.[214] Strabo does not mention a statue.[215] We must conclude that, for one or other reason, Vitruvius inserts a temple type that is for a good deal only hypothetical: this type most probably simply did not exist the way it was theorised by Vitruvius. Third, Vitruvius does not say what architectural style this temple type should be. Having an open roof does not say anything about a specific style such as Doric, Ionic or Corinthian. The hypaethral temple, then, apparently independent from any specific architectural style, and largely hypothetical the way it is described by Vitruvius, is basically a metonymical structure, referring to the god or goddess who, in a sense, rises above his or her building, or, I feel tempted to say, escapes the building.

The gods for whom the hypaethral temple would be most appropriate, according to Vitruvius, are either male (Iupiter, Caelus, Sol) or female (Luna).[216] The composition of this group is especially striking, as Caelus, otherwise not known as a god with a cult in Rome, does appear, flanked by Sol and Luna, prominently at the top of the breast cuirass of the famous Prima Porta statue of Augustus.[217] As this statue, the original of which is probably contemporary with the completion of Vitruvius' work, clearly served an ideological purpose, and the work of Vitruvius, dedicated to this same emperor, shows a certain moral vision, the list of celestial gods offered

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[213] Though Rowland is inconsistent: *sub divo*, "à l'air libre" (*Arch.* 1.2.5; Gros 1992: 17), "beneath their patron deity" (*Arch.* 1.2.5, Rowland 1999: 25), "à ciel ouvert" (*Arch*. 3.2.8; Gros 1990: 13), "open to the heavens" (*Arch*. 3.2.8; Rowland 1999: 49).

[214] διέμεινε δὲ χωρὶς ὀροφῆς διὰ τὸ μέγεθος, "remained without a roof due to its vastness (Strabo, *Geogr*. 14.1.5; Jones 1929).

[215] It is interesting to notice that Vitruvius does not mention cult statue in the hypaethral *cella*, something already noticed by Choisy 1909: 165, who suggested that somewhere there must have been an *aedicula* with a cult statue. For Sol and Luna as visible gods (that is, as representations of Jupiter and Hera), see, e.g., Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 77.1 (Babbitt 1962); on the Moon as a visible god, sovereign over life and death, cf. Plutarch, *Fac.* 26.1 (Cherniss and Helmbold 1957) .

[216] As the name of a god, both the masculine Caelus and the neuter Caelum occur, cf. *OLD* s.v. *caelum*[2] gender, and 4(a); Grimal 1996: 83–84.

[217] Caelus not a Roman deity, cf. Grimal 1996: 83–84. According to Varro, however, a writer contemporary with Vitruvius, Jupiter was to be understood as the sky (Varro, *Antiquitates*, *apud* Augustine, *Civ*. 7.28; Walsh 2010).

by Vitruvius must be of ideological importance.[218] This suggestion is reinforced by the reference to *Iupiter Fulgur*, an uncommon expression, probably referring to *Iupiter Tonans*, whose temple was dedicated by Augustus in 22 CE, in recognition of the fact that he was spared a lightning strike.[219]

In the second group we find Minerva, Mars, and Hercules, who *propter virtutem,* "because of their virtuousness," are appropriately housed in the Doric order, *sine deliciis,* "without embellishments." Although Vitruvius in his fourth book (4.1.6) argues that the Doric order represents a manly character, we find in this second group again, like the first group, both male and female gods. Minerva, however, could in the light of what I have explained about body and behaviour, hardly have been perceived as female. Mary Daly (1978: 37–72) has called her a male-identified goddess as Athena/Minerva was born from the head of Jupiter. Besides, as Beard (2017a; 2017b) emphasises, she is a warrior, which is definitely a masculine role; as a virgin she renounces the conventional female role.[220] As the goddess who precedes in battle (Athena Promachos) and commands (military) prudence and strategy, she is rightly on par with Mars, the god of warfare, and with Hercules, who in the context of the reform of Augustus could be considered a god of victory.[221] If we look at what these three deities have in common, their *virtus* must be understood in terms of their display of (warlike) power. Pierre Gros, therefore, comments that we have to do with "masculine and/or warlike gods."[222] Rowland (1999: 25) translates *propter virtutem* with "on account of their courage in battle," which seems an appropriate rendering, provided that the word stem of *virtus* is taken into account, that is, the courage of a *vir*, male virtue.[223] The Doric order, therefore, has clear manly overtones due to the behaviour of its participants. Curiously enough, the god Apollo, mentioned by Vitruvius in the

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[218] On the imagery of the cuirass as part of Augustan visual communication, see Zanker 1988: 189–192; Van den Hengel 2009: 135–195. As Ramage and Ramage (1995: 95) remark concerning the breastplate, "the cosmic forces and passage of time are also included in this grand vision of Augustan peace." The statue is probably carved after Augustus' death; the bronze original, however, must have been produced shortly after Augustus returned from negotiations with the Parthians in 20 BC, when Vitruvius' work was just finished (Ramage and Ramage 1995: 95). The elaborate ornament on the breastplate may not have been part of the original, though the imagery featuring the Parthians' "defeat" does suggest an Augustan date (Kleiner 2010: 68). On the cuirass from the perspective of the construction of gender, see Lopez 2007: 123–142 and the literature cited p. 124 n. 26, and Van den Hengel.

[219] According to Fleury (1990: 116–117). On Augustus and the lightning strike, see Suetonius, *Aug*. 29 (Kaster 2016). Jupiter Tonans, cf. Res gest. divi Aug. 19.5 (Brunt and Moore 1967).

[220] For a discussion of the "male-identified" character of the goddess Athena, cf. Daly 1978: 37–72.

[221] "Hercule, dieu de la victoire," Fleury 1990: 191 n. 10, commenting on *Arch.* 1.7.1.

[222] Gros (1992: 63), in his commentary on *Arch*. 4.1.6, explains that the "'virilité' du dorique explique son adéquation aux divinités masculine et/ou guerrières, Minerve, Mars et Hercule, d'après 1.2.5." The typology suggested by Gros consists basically of the primary denotations in *OLD* s.v. virtus 1(a) "the qualities typical of a true man" and 1(b) "esp. as displayed in war and other contests."

[223] According to Varro, Minerva represents the "ideas" (Varro, *Antiquitates, apud* Augustine, *Civ*. 7.28; Walsh 2010).

fourth book (4.1.6) as the god *par excellence* representing the Doric order, is missing here in the first book. As, however, Apollo is usually equated with the sun, it is probable that Apollo in the section under discussion should be aligned with the gods who are venerated *sub aethra*, the hypaethral gods Jupiter, Sol, and Luna.

The third group mentioned by Vitruvius is apparently all female, for this group is constituted by Venus, Flora, Proserpina, and the *fontium nymphae*, "the nymphs of the fountains," who deserve the more slender and flowering Corinthian order with its foliage and volutes, *propter teneritatem*, "because of their tenderness." What precisely could be meant by *teneritas*? Is it just their marriageable age, the *matura nuptiis* of book four? In view of the goddesses Venus and Proserpina, this could hardly be the case. Both goddesses are, according to myth, married, Venus to Mars, and Proserpina to Pluto. They are, however, involved in youthfulness and fertility, while Flora was celebrated at the yearly *Floralia*, a festival in which sexual elements were involved. It seems that what unites these four, Venus, Flora, Proserpina, and the nymphs of the fountains, is fertility, versatility, and youthfulness at the brink of being called to matronhood. The words, chosen by Vitruvius, seem to indicate so: *graciliora et florida foliisque et volutis ornata,* "more slender, ornamental, and … decorated with leaves and volutes." It should be noticed that the acanthus leaves, so characteristic for the Corinthian capital, obtained during the Augustan age the connotation both of ordered growth and of the healing of wounds; the idea of a renewal seems at hand.[224]

Finally, Vitruvius recognises a fourth group, *ratio mediocritatis,* "a medium one," appropriately represented by the Ionic order, with gods such as Juno, Diana, and Liber Pater (Bacchus) and *ceterisque diis qui eadem sunt similitudine,* "other similar gods," who participate in both the *severo more,* "severity," of the Doric order and the *teneritate,* "tenderness," of the Corinthian. Here gods are mentioned, again both male and female, who through their behaviour continuously transgress the boundaries assigned to them in view of their body. The most famous gender bender is Liber Pater, who—as Bacchus—gladly dresses as a woman and prefers to be in women's company.[225] Besides, Liber Pater—again as Bacchus—represents through his preference for imitation, theatrical play, and assimilation, blurring the preset and societally accepted boundaries between male and female, between human and divine, between self-composure and uncontrolled ecstasy, exactly the opposite of the well-composed virtuous life propagated by the philosophically informed conservative Roman elite. Hence the forceful repression of the Dionysian cult, so vividly related during the Augustan classicist and moral

[224] As explained by Wilson Jones 2000: 139.
[225] On Liber Pater as Bacchus/Dionysus, and the Dionysian iconography transposed to Liber Pater, see Foucher 1981.

revival by the Roman historiographer Livy.[226] Finally, it is Bacchus who, in Euripides' *Bacchae*, incites the Theban king Pentheus to dress as a woman, and to spy unnoticed—as he hopes—on the women followers of Bacchus. Especially in the *Bacchae*, Dionysus appears as a god full of paradoxes and ambiguities.[227]

The goddess Diana as a representative of the Ionic order is also mentioned in book four (4.1.7). The presence of Diana alongside Liber Pater does not surprise, as she is known from mythology as a woman who detests men and loathes the boundaries set for women. Instead, she prefers to live the free life of a hunter herself, mostly accompanied by a band of women followers or nymphs, to whom intercourse with men was equally strictly forbidden. The story of the nymph Callisto, related by the Roman poet Ovid, is a telling example of this.[228] As to the reversal of gender roles in the case of Diana, an excellent example is the story of Actaeon, also related by Ovid.[229] Actaeon was a hunter who accidentally gazed at the naked goddess taking her bath in a fountain, and was punished for this by being transformed into a deer himself, after which his dogs unwittingly catch hold of him, sinking their teeth into his flesh and tearing him almost to pieces. The story illustrates metaphorically the role reversal of the man penetrating the hidden parts of the wood, that is, gazing at the naked goddess, and is now in his turn penetrated himself. There certainly is a parallel with King Pentheus, who equally spied on women and was, as a result, hunted down by these women and torn to pieces. Becoming prey is an emasculating experience.[230] Being torn to pieces, and less dramatically, penetration as a loss of bodily autonomy was, in the Roman virtuous mindset, something that should be avoided at all costs. Like Liber Pater, Diana seems to convey ambiguity in the field of gender roles, in particular in the way masculinity is jeopardised by the own inner desire to look upon women and the risk of losing bodily integrity.

The presence of the goddess Juno in this group may come as a surprise, as she is usually regarded as the epitome of the virtuous Roman *matrona,* and as *Pronuba* (the matron who leads the wedding ceremony) the guardian of matrimony. Ambiguity seems far away in her case. We have already seen, however, that Vitruvius in the fourth book rather anachronistically uses the words *matronali more* to describe the folds of a woman's dress represented by the fluting of the

[226] Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 39.8–19; Walsh 1999. The events described by Livy, the way the *senatusconsultum de bacchanalibus* came to pass, had taken place in 186 BCE in Rome, but his description also reflects contemporary attitude towards a strange and foreign cult.
[227] Euripides, *Bacch.,* in Diggle 1994, in particular *Bacch*. 822–46, 912–48.
[228] Ovid, *Metam.* 2.401–507, esp. 441–465 (Tarrant 2004).
[229] Ovid, *Metam*. 3.138–252 ((Tarrant 2004).
[230] On becoming prey as emasculating experience, see especially Seneca's *Thyestes*, discussed by Littlewood 2008, esp. p. 248.

Ionic column.[231] There is, indeed, ambiguity in the idea of the Roman *matrona*. As Swancutt (2007: 34–37) explained, during early imperial rule the notions of "foreign" and "Greek" became more important within the complex set of gendered values. As a result, the Roman *matrona* stood really close to the Roman *vir*, hence her behaviour had to respond to the narrow confinements of *pietas* and *pudicitia*.[232] In view of gender instability, especially the *matrona's* position was time and again jeopardised. The goddess Juno makes a good example, as she is, in view of her husband's extra-marital behaviour, that is Jupiter Thunderer, always in a position where she has to safeguard and restore her marital honour, while on the other hand, she is *vis-à-vis* all others, in an authoritative and almost male gendered position, the female counterpart of an all-virtuous life.

I find it remarkable that the Ionic order, described in book 4 as womanly, and even matronly, because of its proportions, is here in terms of correctness both male and female. Apparently, the word *mediocritas* should be taken literally, not only in the sense of a medium between Doric and Corinthian, but also as a medium between man and woman, that is, as signifying ambiguity.

Trying to visualise the fourfold division in groups of gods and goddesses, as described by Vitruvius, I would suggest the following model (or map).

[231] It is curious that Vitruvius, in his seventh book, should have called the Heraion of Samos a Doric temple (*Arch*. 7.*praef*.12, in Liou and Zuinghedau 1995: 6). In reality, this temple was a Ionic building, which corresponds to Vitruvius' classification of Hera as representative of the Ionic order. Did Vitruvius just made a mistake, as Gros argues, commenting on 4.1.6, even calling Vitruvius' remark in book seven a "blunder" (Gros 1992: 63–64)? My suggestion would be that the *virtus* of the Roman *matrona* has led Vitruvius, perhaps unconsciously, to think of Hera somehow within a Doric frame.

[232] On the ambiguous position of the Roman *matrona*, see also Skinner 2005. According to Varro, Juno has to be understood as the earth. Together with Jupiter (sky) and Minerva (ideas), these are the three gods (known as the trias Capitolina) by who *quasi cuncta complexus est* (Varro, *Antiquitates*, *apud* Augustine, *Civ*. 7.28; Walsh 2010). On the virtuousness of Roman matrons in the Augustan reforms, see D'Angelo 2007: 66–70.

	① open to the sky hypaethra **sub divo** **in aperto mundo atque lucenti** *Jupiter Fulgur, Coelus,* *Sol et Luna*	
② Doric **virtus, sine deliciis** **severitas** *Minerva, Mars, Hercules*		③ Corinthian **teneritas** **ornata opera** *Venus, Flora,Proserpina,* *Nymphae Fontium*
	④ Ionic **mediocritas** **ab severo more et teneritate** *Juno, Diana, Liber Pater*	

Vitruvian gender positions

Evaluating this model, I would like to make two observations. First, this chart basically consists of two axes: a horizontal axis between the Doric and the Corinthian position, and a vertical axis between the hypaethral and the Ionic position. Each axis connects related positions. Second, both axes offer a gradual scale on which to locate aspects of body and gendered behaviour, though they each take into account different categories. Let me explain these observations.

The first observation is that there are two axes, each one connecting related positions. The horizontal axis connects the Doric and the Corinthian position. This axis can be understood as a gradual scale between martial masculinity and femininity, and can be taken as representing the late republican gender spectrum. Masculinity represented in the Doric position is characterised by a brand of military and power. On the other side of this scale we find the Corinthian position representing values of vitality, youthfulness, blossoming, living water, and versatility. I would suggest that we find on this horizontal axis men and women in their bodily presence. The opposition between Mars and Venus reminds me of the importance of these two divine ancestors of Augustus, represented as they were in the *Forum Augusti*. The idea of salutary fertility, propagated in Augustan revival, must be understood here.[233]

[233] On Venus and Mars, see Zanker 1988: 195–201.

The vertical axis connects the hypaethral position and the Ionic position. The Ionic position represents the ambiguity of male and female, an ambiguity that has to do with behaviour. The gods and goddesses mentioned in this position show a body type that is perceived as ambiguous due to their ambiguous behaviour. The hypaethral position, on the other hand, seems to be disembodied. As Colleen Conway put it, "it is actually incorporeity that was viewed as the ultimate in masculine achievement."[234] Here bodily representation has actually vanished, as the representation (the statue *in cella*) is not there. Instead, the god or goddess appears in an abstract way high above, as sun, moon, thunder or sky. Tellingly, there is no appropriate architectural order associated with this hypaethral position (it is really a non-order), while this temple type as such hardly ever existed (and insofar as it did exist, certainly not motivated by the reasons suggested by Vitruvius!). The first position is a largely theoretical, an evasive presence based on metonymy. The vertical axis, therefore, connects two positions in which the body recedes behind behaviour. On the one hand there is the ambiguous body of fe/male behaviour (which is the Ionic position), on the other there is the evasive body, where the body disappears through the roof, leaving behind only its effects of thunder or light (which is the hypaethral position).

Although it cannot directly be inferred from the examples given by Vitruvius, I strongly suspect that, contrary to the Ionic body, the hypaethral body is void of ambiguity. Or, to say it differently, and probably more correct, I suspect that it is the desire for disambiguity (that is, the desire for stable imperial order) that constitutes the hypaethral body as an elusive body, without a distinct order, without a statue *in cella*, open-roofed, directly under the sky where the non-anthropomorphic gods are visible as light, sky, and thunder, just as they were represented on the upper part of the cuirass of Prima Porta, only to be topped by the idealised head of the emperor Augustus himself.[235] In short, I would not be surprised to find that the hypaethral body is primarily signified by means of *ratio,* in the way Pavlos Lefas explains:

> Vitruvius places greatest emphasis on Reason in general … I believe that it is in Order that "pure" Reason, *free of all material constraints*, is primarily manifested: rank order is the cornerstone of well-structured wholes, governed by Reason." (Lefas 2000: 195, emphasis added).

[234] Conway 2008: 16, cf. also Foxhall and Salmon 1998b. Van den Hengel (2009: 158), too, defines the denial of physicality ("de ontkenning van de lichamelijkheid") as a characteristic of Roman emperor portraits.

[235] Compare the conclusion drawn by Van den Hengel (2009: 179–193) on the incorporeal body of Augustus ("het onlichamelijke lichaam van Augustus"). As Van den Hengel notices, "as the embodiment of masculinity, the Augustus of Prima Porta must constantly deny its own materiality" (189; my translation).

I think that Lefas is right, as Vitruvius' book is not a technical how-to manual for technical labourers, but rather an assessment of what noble and virtuous building should be, effectuated through appropriate technical skills. Vitruvius' task is to make the technical arts part of the classicist moral and ideological course set out during the reign of Augustus, to whom the book was tellingly dedicated.[236] I propose, therefore, to recognise in the vertical axis the new scale of virtuous behaviour, started in the late republic and promoted during early imperial rule. The hypaethral body, then, is an elusive body, that transcends even the ideal of virtuous manliness itself. Although the term "hypermasculinity" has been suggested, for instance by Colleen Conway, I would prefer to call it, tentatively, rather a beyond-male position, or a supra-manly position, because this type of masculinity recedes behind a kind of moral manliness in which the term manliness basically refers to a cluster of moral values comprising high understanding, raison d'état, education, elite standing, and generally what I called Romanness.

My conclusion regarding the vertical axis seems to be supported by the analysis made by Kristina Milnor of Vitruvius' description of the Roman house (*Arch*. 6). Milnor observes that the Roman house is remarkably devoid of gender, so as to leave a space that seems "to speak to and about men alone" (Milnor 2005: 110). This observation is embedded in her analysis that

> among Romans, all places—including the domestic spaces traditionally associated with women—are simply pieces of a larger imperial space, meant to display masculine virtues and values (Milnor 2005: 97).

This leads Milnor to speak of a "hypermasculine space." I believe that Milnor is right in her analysis that gender is hidden by, or subsumed in, the real issue: empire. Craig Williams (2016) criticises Milnor's analysis (though he acknowledges the implicit male body in Vitruvius), as he explains the absence of explicit masculine rhetoricity in terms of a conscious "low rhetoricity of gender" (238–239, 242). This low rhetoricity is, according to Williams, an expression of Vitruvius' ideal of *mediocritas* (245–249). I fear that Williams misses the point here. Rather than a *mediocritas* between male and female (which would be the ambiguous position), Vitruvius promotes a higher manliness (this is, disambiguity), that tends to subsume what we generally recognise as male and female (hence our feeling that it is male and female, or ambiguous, or a double message), but is basically an evasive beyond-male (in which is neither male nor female,

[236] As Lefas (2000: 195) concludes: "Vitruvius created a properly constituted, clearly articulated system of values that needed to be present in a technical work for it to cross the borders from handicraft, from *techne* in the ancient sense of the word, to become *Architecture*."

but indeed just this: beyond-male or supra-manly). The gods and goddess assembled in the hypaethral position, so prominently mirrored in the ideologically motivated cuirass of the Prima Porta statue of Augustus, represent a new high transcending virtuousness, represented by the idealised Augustus, calling Roman elite men and women alike to turn to these high virtues and values. The hypaethral temple simply did not exist that way; its architectural style is not given as it does not matter; Caelus was not venerated in such a way. Augustus himself is the metonymical reference to the sky and the idealised and elusive body of virtue.

Turning to my second observation, that here we have to do with two gradual scales, I have to be cautious. My intention is not to say that a person should be either on the horizontal or on the vertical axis. As representation of the body was based, not on what the body actually looked like, but on the way the body was perceived and understood because of the person's behaviour, the variety in gendered representations in antiquity is actually enormous. I would suggest that both axes could be seen as X and Y axes crossing, thus offering as it were the coordinates for a multitude of fluctuating gendered positions on the chart. Most probably persons could be all over the chart, on their way to become embodied and to stay in shape as real men or real women, meanwhile displaying (or failing in) various kinds of virtuous behaviour. This would make my proposed model both a descriptive and a heuristic model.

Let me finish with just a few words on the probability of my "Vitruvian model." I find it remarkable that Vitruvius should start with a lengthy plea for education, urging the architect-reader to be at home in many branches of study and varied kinds of learning.[237] Apparently, Vitruvius had in mind "to guide [his] audience in their judgement, and … to raise the status of architects and the tone of architectural discourse," as Wilson Jones has suggested (1990: 38).[238] Could it be that Vitruvius' work is, perhaps, itself already an act of positioning those who are involved in building works in the hypaethral position of high morals, of elitist learning and understanding propagated during Augustan rule? Could we understand building in the way prescribed by Vitruvius as building in good virtuous order, and thus as building the empire in good and stable order? If this makes sense, my use of a heuristic model based on Vitruvius would not be the unlikely application of a Roman technical manual on an early eastern Mediterranean Jewish-Christian text. Rather, it would be based on the hypothesis that there is a shared space of elite thought, in which both Vitruvius and the Third Gospel, and probably many

[237] *Architecti est scientia pluribus disciplinis et variis eruditionibus ornata cuius iudicio probantur omnia quae ab ceteris artibus perficiuntur opera.* (*Arch.* 1.1.1; Fleury 1990: 4) "The architect's expertise is enhanced by many disciplines and various sorts of specialised knowledge; all the works executed using these other skills are evaluated by his seasoned judgment." (Rowland 1999: 21)

[238] See also Wilson Jones' discussion of Vitruvius' remarks on the education of the architect (*De arch* 1.1.1–18), which he calls "a lengthy *homily* on education" (Wilson Jones 1990: 39–40, emphasis added).

more authors, participate. To be more precise, as Loveday Alexander concluded from her comparison of the prefaces in Luke-Acts with ancient scientific prefaces such as written by Vitruvius:

> We are moving on from the observation that Luke-Acts and the scientific treatises studied belong to the same socio-cultural stratum of Greco-Roman society to the proposal that Luke is writing from within a Christian social context which is in significant respects like that of the hellenistic schools themselves. (Alexander 1993: 211)

In section 3 I will argue that the preface to the Third Gospel works in a way similar to Vitruvius' introduction. Like Vitruvius, the Third Gospel guides its readership in their judgment and enhances their understanding, the author him/herself remaining elusive. Instead of stable imperial rule based on virtuous morals, we encounter a trustworthy divine rule based on very similar virtuous morals in which gender is basically an evasive notion. Before I continue with Luke-Acts, I would first like to present three examples. The aim of these examples is to underpin my argument and to demonstrate, as a kind of exercise, how my Vitruvian model can be put to use. The first example is a contemporary theoretical rhetorical text, Demetrius, *On Style*. Here I find a fourfold division quite similar to the one I described for Vitruvius (section 2.2). The second example is a couple of statues from the first century CE that can be classified by means of my Vitruvian model (section 2.3). The third example is taken from first-century literature, a section from the *Achilleis* by the Roman poet Statius (section 2.3). The reader who has by now seen enough classical theory and wants to proceed with the text of the Third Gospel, may safely skip the three examples, as they are not an indispensable part of my line of argument, and jump to section 3.

2.2 Body Talk: Demetrius, On Style

A treatise that offers a theoretical frame comparable to the model I described for Vitruvius, is *On Style* (*De elocutione*, Περὶ ἑρμηνείας), a rhetorical work attributed to "Demetrius," of uncertain date, but probably from the second half of the first century CE.[239] Like Vitruvius' work, which

[239] Textual edition and translation by Doreen Innes, in Halliwell, Russell and Innes 1995 (based on the translation by Rhys Roberts 1965). On the date, see Innes in Halliwell, Russell and Innes 1995: 312–321. Cf. Schenkeveld 1964; Hunter 2009; Worman 2015: 259–262; Porter 2016: 246–282. I would like to thank Casper de Jonge, Leiden University, who drew my attention to Demetrius, *On Style*.

offers a summa of technical skills within a grand moral frame, Demetrius, *On Style* "vacillates between a primer in the conventions of rhetoric" and "a manual in aesthetics" (Porter 2016: 248). Remarkable in Demetrius, *On Style* is, that contrary to the common division into three styles of oratory, this work offers four styles (χαρακτῆρες): elevated (μεγαλοπρεπής), elegant (γλαφυρός), plain (ἰσχνός), and forceful (δεινός).[240] It is tempting to recognise a fourfold division comparable to Vitruvius here, and to equate the elegant and the forceful styles with Vitruvius' Corinthian and Doric positions respectively, the elevated and the plain style with the hypaethral and the Ionic style. At least, as Demetrius explains, the elevated and the plain style are opposites (*Eloc*. 191), as are the forceful and the elegant style (*Eloc*. 258).

If we take a closer look at the examples given by Demetrius, the subject matter appropriate to the elegant (charming or lovely) style is ἔρως, "love," (*Eloc*. 132, 163). This style is aptly expressed by Sappho, especially through erotic and garden imagery, and sensual pleasures (*Eloc*. 166).[241] Here we find the χάρις, "grace, wit, elegance, charm," (*Eloc*. 136; cf. the Latin *venustas* of Vitruvius), associated with a flowering and fluidity, and the Nymphs. We may recognise here the flowery metaphor of the Corinthian style, together with fluid versatility.[242] The forceful or forcible style stands out through shortness and the exchange of blows, which compares to the martial aspect of the Doric position. Thus, the elegant and the forceful style are similar to Vitruvius' Corinthian and Doric positions. The elegant and the plain styles, however, are more problematic. The elevated or grand style is appropriate to themes such as battle, heroic deeds, and cosmic events (*Eloc*. 75); its preferred trope is metaphor, with its inherent ambiguities (*Eloc*. 78).[243] It seems obvious to compare this elevated style with Vitruvius' hypaethral position, but the emphasis on the richness and ambiguity of the style would seem to evoke the Ionic position, especially so as the elevated style seems to evoke an emotional response.[244]

The plain or slender style, on the other hand, stands out through the lack of ambiguity (*Eloc*. 196). This style is characterised by lucidity and clarity, while the accumulation of precise detail contributes to ἐνάργεια, "vividness," (*Eloc*. 209) and τὸ πιθανόν, "credibility," (*Eloc*. 221–222).[245] Referring to Theophrastus, Demetrius explains that instead of pointing everything out, the plain style leaves it to the hearer to understand what has been left unsaid, which leads the hearer to transcend his position as a receptive hearer and to become a witness instead (*Eloc*.

[240] On the English translation of the Greek terms, see Porter 2016: 249 n. 187.
[241] Hunter 2009: 30; Worman 2015: 260–261.
[242] Worman 2015: 261–262.
[243] Hunter 2009: 32.
[244] Hunter 2009: 158; Halliwell 2011: 332–333; Porter 2016: 246–282.
[245] Hunter 2009: 157–158.

222).[246] This description of the plain style does evoke, in my view, Vitruvius' hypaethral position, rather than the Ionic style. Especially the plain style's call for understanding on the hearer's behalf, making the reader to a witness, reminds me of the preface of the Third Gospel, where the reader/hearer is invited to join with the eyewitnesses' account and subscribe to the credibility of what has been related.

Demetrius' division in four χαρακτῆρες is of course schematic. As Porter (2016) has explained, "the styles are theoretical abstractions which in practice nowhere appear in a pure form" (255). The same holds true for Vitruvius' fourfold division, as the temples described by him in his introduction do not appear in the pure form suggested by the text. Demetrius' text reinforces my impression that we have to do with texts that share the space of a moral re-evaluation current in early imperial rule, to which—this will be my hypothesis, joining the conclusion drawn by Alexander (1993: 211)—Luke-Acts responds. Understanding what Luke-Acts is about will constitute you, as a reader, in the position of a literary competent person who is on the road towards a hypaethral position. Let me first turn, however, to a couple of statues from the Augustan era, to see whether my Vitruvian model works well in this case.

2.3 Show Body: Early Imperial Imagery

When we turn to contemporary fine arts, examples of the earlier mentioned Vitruvian positions may be easily detected. I will give a few examples taken mainly from early Roman imperial rule. These examples can easily be supplemented by others.[247] When we take for instance the statue of Mars Ultor, we find the bodily representation of a man with an elaborate musculature and a serious beard (ill. 12).[248] The statue, from Nerva's *Forum Transitorium*, is an early second-century copy of an Augustan-era original (in its turn based on a Hellenistic Greek model from the fourth century BCE), maybe from the *Forum Augustum*.[249] This type is an apt illustration of Vitruvius' Doric position, a stereotyped martial performance.

[246] Nünlist 2009: 166–167.
[247] See Van den Hengel 2009.
[248] Zanker 1988: 198–200.
[249] On the Forum Augustum and the significant position of the statues, see esp. Van den Hengel 2009: 254–295.

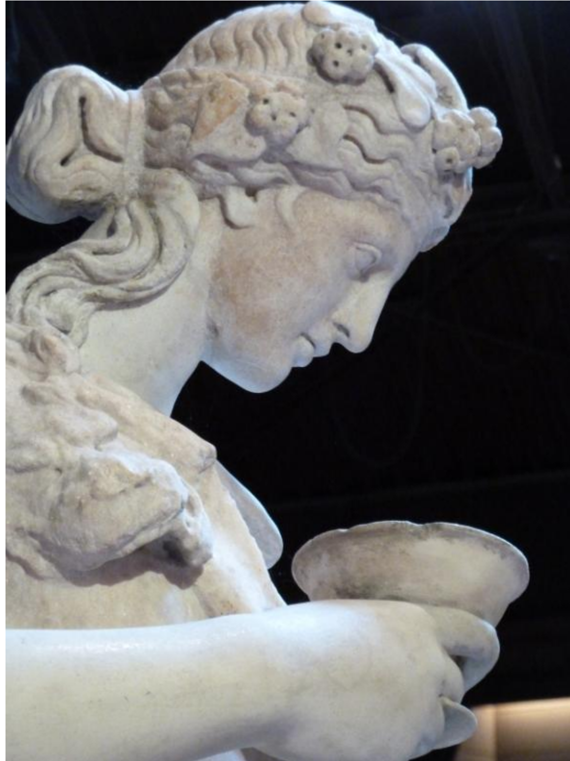
Ill. 12
Statue of Mars Ultor from the Forum Transitorium, Rome. Early second-century copy of an Augustan-era original (after a Hellenistic Greek model fourth century BCE). Rome, Capitoline Musea.

The marble statue of a priestess, dated first half of the second century, illustrates the ambiguous position of an elite Roman woman (ill. 13). Although a bit late, the type may easily be traced back to the matron style established by Livia, the wife of Augustus. The folds of her gown resemble the fluted Ionic column, as described by Vitruvius. Her appearance is of an authoritative integrity, the emblem of *pudicitia* and *pietas*. As Gleason says, “this statue of an ideal woman [ca 125 CE], found at Pozzuoli, reveals many of the same characteristics representative of the ideal man: dignity, authority, and self-control” (1999: 71). This statue is probably the closest a woman could come to incorporate high manliness, on the road to the hypaethral position.

Ill. 13
Priestess burning incense. Roman, imperial period, about 125–130 CE, marble from Paros, discovered 1902, Pozzuoli, Italy. From the Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA

Another example, testifying to the ambiguity of the Ionic position, is the representation of the god Dionysus. During Augustan times, with its emphasis on classical Greek idealised representation, Dionysus was represented in a traditional archaic Greek way (Zanker 1988). The archaic way (that is, the bearded god) was a relatively safe manner to bypass the ambiguity inherent in later Dionysian representations. A century later, his statue participates in the realm of ambiguity (ill. 14 and 15). We see the god with his hair done in a womanly way, his body not really in the martial or athletic poses known from the period. We have here an instance of the *mediocritas* mentioned by Vitruvius.

Ill. 14
Statue of Dionysos with allegory of the vine. Marble, Roman, Second half 2nd c. CE. Discovered La Storta, Rome. British Museum, London. Exposition Martigny 2014. Photo Ari Troost.



Ill. 15
Statue of Dionysos with allegory of the vine. Detail of ill. 4. Photo Ari Troost.

Turning towards the Corinthian side, the other end of the horizontal axis and the opposite of the martial field, we find the goddess Venus represented on a relief, again originating from the Forum Augustum (ill. 16).[250] Venus, in her appearance as Venus Genetrix, is depicted together with the little Cupid, Mars Ultor and Divus Julius. Venus is not represented *matronali more*, as you would expect from a goddess from whom Augustus claimed to descend, but rather in her marriageable position (Vitruvius' Corinthian position), together with Mars in his martial appearance, together making up for Augustus' ancestry. An argument that Venus is represented in her marriageable position provides the little Cupid, who hands over the sword taken from Mars to Venus. The sword may be taken as a metonymical reference to the virility of Mars, while at the same time the way Venus is positioned does not exactly match the preferred Roman ideal of matronhood (shortly afterwards, the Roman elite public would prefer statues of the nude Aphrodite of Cnidos type). We may read, therefore, the relief as a narrative, reading from left to right, telling us how Divus Julius was generated. Thus, we have here a representation on a sculptural narrative level of the horizontal axis of sexuality and procreation.

Ill. 16
Relief showing the cult group in the temple of Mars Ultor, Rome. Augustan copy, Algiers Archeological Museum. Source: Zanker 1988: 197.

I find it remarkable, that the god Apollo is not mentioned in Vitruvius' introductory words on *decor*. It may be possible to equate him with Sol. On the other hand, the representation of Apollo is of a particular intricacy. His gender is beyond doubt, as he is known to shoot the arrow that never fails, as his Homeric epithet says. Initially, at the beginning of the Augustan transition,

[250] Discussed by Zanker 1988: 197 and Van den Hengel 2009: 269–270.

he is represented in Greek archaic modus, but soon afterwards, we find him depicted in quite soft bodily tones (ill. 17), without a beard, his hair done in the womanly way. That is, the representation of Apollo just follows the track described for Dionysus. There is, indeed, a certain ambiguity involved in Apollo's performance. He is often associated with women, both positively in playing the lyre and making music connected to the Muses, and negatively in hunting down young women like Daphne or courting boys like Hyacinthus, and quite often failing in this. This in itself would locate him undoubtedly somewhere in the middle position on the vertical axis, but being a god of the sky, often identified with Sol himself, he must belong to the upper hypaethral position. This representation of Apollo suggests that the hypaethral position may still contain some ambiguity.

Ill. 17
Apollo with omphalos. H:1.12m. Between 50–350 CE. Leyden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden.

These examples teach me to be very careful. Positions are not fixed; they may shift from one position to the other, depending on the type of behaviour, virtue or vice, that is taken into account. This may be less obvious in a statue (though it is possible to put several statues in a row and describe their development), but in a narrative setting it may be worthwhile to trace a development from one gender position to another. My third example is derived from Statius'

Achilleis. Here we find a particular illuminating example of trans-gender traffic in a narrative, involving all four positions of my Vitruvian model.

2.4 Trans Body: Statius' Achilleid

The epic poem *Achilleis* by the Roman poet Statius (ca. 40–ca. 96 CE), written during the Flavian period, demonstrates how a narrative character may "travel" along various gender positions.[251] In the poem young Achilles is hidden by his mother Thetis on the isle of Skyros, dressed as a girl, amidst the girls at the court of the king of Skyros, in order to withhold him from the impending Trojan war. Achilles, a rough boy living in the woodlands with animals as companions and a centaur as preceptor, shows himself reluctant but consents after having seen Deidamia, the king's daughter. Realizing that he has a means to approach the girl, Achilles tries and does his best to act and perform as a girl. Actually, Achilles performs his role quite well, to such an extent even, that, like his literary predecessor King Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, he seems to revel in being a woman and shows himself al too eager to be a woman outward and inward. Finally, however, considering that it is about time to reclaim his manhood, Achilles goes over to rape Deidamia. The remarkable thing is that, though one might expect as a modern reader that Achilles by now has made his point and sufficiently established his masculinity (however much we would call it a caricature), the narrative makes clear that far from being a man Achilles continues to perform his female role. Brutal sexual transgression apparently does not make him a man. It is only after Odysseus has cunningly exposed Achilles' real identity—Achilles turning to the weapons to defend those who belong to him—that he returns to his male performance.

Trying to understand this narrative with the aid of my Vitruvian model, it seems to me that Achilles travels the whole chart. He starts in the second position, the Doric position, as an example of sheer untamed male energy, metaphorically expressed by his life in the *silvae*. The word *silva* may denote, in the first place, "an area of woodland," hence "a forest," but its connotation is here obvious "a mass of (raw) material." This connotation is used in relation to the construction of poetical work; Achilles lives in a still uncultivated, but yet under construction area.[252] From here, Achilles is transported by his mother to the fourth position, that of the ambiguous *mediocritas*. In this position, however, he plays his role so well, that he quickly moves

[251] This brief summary and interpretation of Statius' *Achilleid* is based on an unpublished paper submitted to the department of Classical Languages and Cultures of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Netherlands (Troost 2013). A discussion of the *Achilleid* fron the perspective of gender and genre, with special attention to a Lacanian psychoanalytic turn, offers Heslin 2005. See also Delarue 2000 and Ripoll and Soubiran 2008.

[252] *OLD* s.v. *silva* 1(a) and 5(b). On the *silvae* in Statius' *Silvae*, esp. where the building of the temple of Hercules (!) is concerned, see Reitz 2013: 163–170.

to the third position, being girlish-like female through behaviour. Trying to escape, and adopting to this end exaggerated aggressive male behaviour (the opposite on the horizontal scale), he jumps to his original second position, only to find that he cannot succeed. Becoming manly implies, paradoxically, to become less "male." To become a man he has to accept his sublimated role: the hero who fights for others in order to gain honour for the whole. The point is that becoming a man is not dependant on aggressive sexual intercourse, which is only a loss of self-control and a submission to lust and passion, but on his honour as a (future) warrior on behalf of his friends. A man, indeed, who has lost himself, leaving his island, never to return home, sailing away under the open sky.

This example teaches me, that Vitruvius is right to use the adjective *apertus*. Openness, to the sky and to the world, is really both a vocation and a risk of the first, hypaethral position. Openness implies being accessible to others. Tellingly, in this respect, Statius says that all the Greek men wanted Achilles, they longed for him, a remark with a homo-erotic overtone. Openness means a struggle for stability.

2.5 Conclusion

In the first section I argued that models used so far in ancient gender research fall short in three respects. First, they presuppose gender as a pertinent category, where Romanness would have been more to the point. Second, they assume a gender binary, although positions seem to be rather fluid and shifting. Third, they do not distinguish various intersecting scales, such as the martial scale or the moral scale. In order to counter these objections, I have proposed a more nuanced model, based on my reading of the theoretical introduction to Vitruvius' *De architectura*, that accounts (in a metaphorical way) for various types of behaviour as constitutive for how the body was perceived. Prominent positions on the map are martial manliness (the Doric position) corresponding with the youthful girlish womanliness (the Corinthian position), and the ambiguous man/woman (the Ionic position) corresponding with an elusive high virtuous beyond-manliness that is virtually disembodied and idealised (the hypaethral position). This model seems probable in view of the larger classical revival project Vitruvius was involved in. The model seems also probable in view of various discourses that developed in the same period and shortly after. As it has already been argued that Luke-Acts is acquainted with a world in which moral theoretical introductions, such as the one produced by Vitruvius, were known and understood, and that Luke-Acts has its own position within Hellenistic discourse, it would be

worthwhile to put the Vitruvian model to the test, that is, to the text of Luke-Acts. I will do so in the remaining sections of this chapter.

3. The Hypaethral Body: The Preface (Luke 1:1–4)

The Third Gospel starts with a preface (Luke 1:1–4).[253] Within New Testament literature, this preface is remarkable. The only other preface in the New Testament is found in the Third Gospel's counterpart, the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1). In classical literature a preface is not uncommon. The preface to the Third Gospel has therefore been interpreted in the light of the different types of prefaces existing in Greco-Roman literature.[254] It is not my intention to take sides in the discussion on the generic value of the Third Gospel's preface. I would rather like to examine how in this passage virtuous (gendered) behaviour is enacted. I will argue that this preface is about understanding the word/Word (that happens; that is seen and heard, spoken and written), and thus presents in a nutshell the theme of the Third Gospel as a whole.[255] In order to make my point, I will briefly discuss the following elements of the preface: the shift, between verses 4 and 5, from a primary level of narration to a secondary level (section 3.1), the subject matter of the events that have come to fulfilment, mentioned in verse 1 (section 3.2), the eyewitnesses of verse 2 (section 3.3), and finally the invitation to the reader in verses 3–4 to understand (section 3.4). I will conclude that the narrator represents a hypaethral beyond-manly understanding, and that the reader is called to reach for this same type of understanding (section 3.5).

[253] Luke 1:1–4 is often referred to as prologue, e.g. Earle Ellis 1966; Fitzmyer 1981a; Laurentin 1982b; Tannehill 1986; D'Angelo 2003. The term prologue is also used to refer to Luke 1–2 as a whole, e.g., Minear 1966: 119; I. Howard Marshall 1978: 46; Tyson 1990. The term "preface" is used for Luke 1:1–4, e.g. by Creed 1930; Evans 1990 Alexander 1986, 1993; Robbins 1999. Some scholars incidentally call 1:1–4 prooemium (Klostermann 1975), incipit (Aletti 1989) or introduction (Tyson 1990). Following the comprehensive study on the genre by Alexander 1993, I will use the term preface.

[254] The preface has been understood as part of historiography, biography, and novel (see esp. the overview by Alexander 1986, 1993, 1999; Robbins 1999) and literature in the field of medicine, astronomy, and architecture (Alexander 1996). Robbins 1999 gives an assessment of the position taken by Alexander 1996 and tries to pave new ways by exploring ancient *Progymnasmata*, in particular of Theon and Hermogenes of Tarsus.

[255] The New Testament is of course for a large part about understanding. Darr 1992 has already argued that in particular Luke-Acts moulds its readers to ideal witnesses of the events related, responding to the words of the preface of Luke 1:1-4 (cf. also Darr 1993) and the examples set by the characters on the secondary level of narration. As a sequel to this track of research, Darr 1994 examined Jesus' speech through which the reader is instructed "where or how to look and listen" (88). I will not repeat Darr's arguments, but in many cases I will build forth on them, especially pondering how the analysis of the way in which understanding is enacted in Luke 1–2 could be brought to bear on the representation of the body.

3.1 Levels of Narration

The narrator of the preface is an internal narrator, only visible through the word κἀμοὶ, "to me also" (1:3).[256] This narrator is a character on the primary level of narration, in a narrative sequence consisting of verifying and transmitting the testimony of the αὐτόπται, the "eyewitnesses" (1:2) περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, "with regard to the events that have come to fulfilment among us" (1:1). The aim of the narrator is γράψαι, "to write down" (1:3), ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, "in order that you may understand the reliability of the words you have been taught (1:4). The narratee is κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, "the most esteemed Theophilus" (1:3), of whom nothing is known, except that the title κράτιστε suggests an imperial official, as the title is used three times in the Acts of the Apostles to address the Roman procurators Felix and Festus.[257]

From verse 5 onwards the narrative goes into the secondary level of narration, about the events that have come to fulfilment, featuring (some of) the eyewitnesses and their accounts. Although the first level narrator now becomes invisible (the hypaethral "no-body"), the narrator is still there as an omniscient narrator. The narrator's bodily faculties remain, partly visible in narratorial comments,[258] and partly re-embodied in the narrative characters on the secondary level of narration through a really astonishing variety of terms denoting all kinds of dealing with the word. We find terms denoting speaking, talking, calling, starting or continuing to speak, proclaiming, remaining silent, beckoning, being mute, considering, exclaiming, nodding, praising (four synonyms), asking, prophesying, shouting loudly, calling happy, communicating by divine inspiration, asking questions, contradicting.[259] Added to these are a few terms denoting the

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[256] On the concept of narrator and other narratological concepts, I rely on Bal 1997.

[257] In Acts 23:26 with a formal letter of the tribune Claudius Lysias to the proconsul Felix of Judea, in Acts 24:3 in a formal address by the lawyer Tertullus to the same procurator Felix, and in 26:25 where Paul appearing in court addresses Felix's successor, the procurator Porcius Festus.

[258] One may think of the well-known Lukan "narrative asides," defined by Sheeley who holds that the Third Gospel's narrative throughout is “interrupted by asides, directly addressed to the reader. These range from translations of words to explanations of the narrative and the actions of those who inhabit the world of the narrative (Sheeley 1992:12–13). These asides are already noticed by Fitzmyer (1981a; 1985) for the Third Gospel, and by Haenchen (1971) for the Acts of the Apostles*,* but as Sheeley argues, these authors do not display much interest in the literary function of the narrative asides in Luke–Acts (Sheeley 1992: 26–27).

[259] Speaking: εἶπον, 17 times (18 times including the *varia lectio* in 2:15); λέγω, 5 times; τὸ εἰρημένον, once, 2:24; ῥῆμα, 9 times (cf. Moore 1992: 118). Talking: λαλέω, 14 times including 2:15, of which 2 times `not being able to speak', 1:20, 22. Calling: καλέω, 14 times. Starting or continuing to speak: literally `responding', ἀποκρίνομαι, 3 times, 1:19, 35, 60. Proclaiming: εὐαγγελίζω, 2 times, 1:19; 2:10. Remaining silent: σιωπάω, once, 1:20. Beckoning: διανεύω, once, 1:22. Being mute: κωφός, once, 1:22. Considering: διαλογίζομαι, once, 1:29. Exclaiming: ἀναφωνέω, once, 1:42, *hapax* in the NT; variant ἀναβοάω, in the NT further only in Matt 27:46. Nodding: ἐννεύω, once, 1:62, *hapax* in the NT. Praising: four synonyms (a) εὐλογέω, 6 times (7 times with variant 1:28); (b) αἰνέω, 2 times, 2:13, 20; (c) δοξάζω, once, 2:20; (d)

written word: writing, issuing a decree and registering.[260] Words denoting response to speech and writing are again many: speech is said to be possible, it takes place, according to, is much talked of, is made known, kept, considered and understood.[261] The word that is spoken elicits belief, disbelief and confusion.[262] Speeches and wonderful things are heard, while what is heard is taken to heart, and Zachariah's prayer is heard.[263] What is written elicits surprise; it takes place either as word of Scripture or as decree of Caesar.[264] In short, the narrative sequence of the primary narrative level—on the competent dealing with "what has happened" through seeing, speaking, writing, and understanding—is reflected on the secondary level narrative by this extraordinary variety in terms denoting speech or non-speech. It would therefore not be too much to call Luke 1:5–2 an illustration of its own subject, as announced in the preface.[265]

The narrative on the secondary level of narration is an illustration of competences in dealing with the word, be it spoken, written, happening, or still otherwise. Meanwhile, the narrator's invisible body is ubiquitous. For instance, the narrator can see and hear what no one except Zachariah himself can see and hear, namely his vision in the temple and the words of the angel (1:12–20). Another instance is the scene of the visitation of Mary to Elisabeth, where the narrator appears to know what only Elisabeth herself can feel, namely that her child kicked within her womb on hearing the voice of Mary (1:41).

In short, the preface offers the frame for the following passage of Luke 1:5–2. The Third Gospel from verse 5 onwards can be read as a grand illustration of what is announced in the preface. There is a hypaethral narrator who offers a sample card of competences in dealing with the word. The question is, what could this mean? As John Darr (1994: 87) has remarked,

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ἀνθομολογέομαι, once, 2:38, *hapax* in the NT (literally `make a mutual agreement or covenant' or `confess freely and openly', hence `admit', `agree' and also `return thanks to God' as in LXX Ps 78 [79].13 and Luke 2:38 [LSJ s.v. ἀνθομολογέομαι]. Asking: αἰτέω, once, 1:63. Prophesying: προφητεύω, once, 1:67. Shouting loudly: κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ, once, 1:42; variant φωνή μεγάλη in 1:44. Calling happy: μακαρίζω, once, 1:48, in the NT further only in Jas 5:11. Communicating by divine inspiration: χρηματίζω, once, 2:26. Asking questions: ἐπερωτάω, once, 2:46. Contradicting: ἀντιλεγόμενον, 2:34; see Derrett 1993.

[260] Writing: γράφω, 3 times, 1:3, 63; 2:23. Issuing a decree: ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα, once, 2:1. Registering: ἀπογράφομαι, 3 times, 2:1, 3, 5; in NT further only in Heb 12:23.

[261] ῥῆμα, 9 times: οὐκ ἀδυνατήσει 1:37; γίγνομαι, 1:38; 2:15; κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά 1:38; 2:29; διαλαλέω, 1:65, in NT further only in Luke 6:11; γνωρίζω, 2 times, 2:15, 17; συντηρέω, 2:19 and διατηρέω, 2:51, in NT further only in Acts 15:29; συμβάλλω, once, 2:19, in NT only in Luke–Acts; συνίημι, 2:50.

[262] λόγος, 4 times, 1:2, 4, 20, 29: πιστεύω, 1:45; οὐκ ἐπίστευσας, 1:20; διαταράττω, 1:29, *hapax* in NT.

[263] ακούω, 7 times; ἔθεντο πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν, once, 1:66; εἰσακούω, once, 1:13.

[264] All are surprised (ἐθαύμασαν, 1:63); it happens as written/said in the Law (2:23–24) and according to Caesar's decree (ἐγένετο, 2:1–5).

[265] Interestingly, perception, as Darr (1994 88) notices, includes "seeing, hearing, looking, listening, eyes, ears, sight, sound and so forth," but leaves aside the main focus to learn to speak well yourself, or to write well for that matter.

> Luke's rhetoric of perception is so ubiquitous, various and nuanced that it cannot be adequately treated in a single study or through a single approach. One is forced, therefore, to get it bit by bit, topic by topic, passage by passage, as critics have begun to do.[266]

I will defend that this rhetoric of perception is exactly what the ideal of virtuous understanding is about: it creates a (beyond-)manly body.

3.2 "The Events that Have Come to Fulfilment Among Us"

To understand what all these competences refer to, we should turn to the sentence that describes the subject matter, as it is περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, "about the events that have come to fulfilment among us" (1:1). This expression may seem relatively simple at face value. Actually, however, a whole world of biblical narrative is opened to us through these very words. In LXX the word πρᾶγμα, "event," is commonly used as the translation of the Hebrew *dbr*, the word stem denoting the intersection between "word" and "event." The connotation in Tanak is often the word of God that has come to pass. The narrative from Luke 1:5 onwards sets out in precisely this semantic field of what happens, with its repeated ἐγένετο, "it happened."[267] This Septuagintal narrative formula, rendering of Hebrew *wajehi,* works to put the competent reader on the track of biblical narrative, in which God's word happens in history.[268] In other words, right from the start the gospel is presented as part of a larger continuing story of divine speech that comes to fulfilment. The words/events have come to fulfilment among us, says the first level preface, continued by the secondary level narrative with "it happened." I accept, therefore, the conclusion already drawn by Fitzmyer, based on observations very similar to mine, that "Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts as the continuation of the history of God's dealings with his people" (1992: 309).

In short, the word that is responded to is really the Word of God. This is the real object of the virtuous understanding called for in the preface. This Word is seen, spoken, written, and related in order that you may understand. This leaves me with at least two questions. What is

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[266] Darr refers here to Dillon 1978. See also Hamm 1986; Hamm 1990.

[267] Ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις, 1:5; 2:1; ἐγένετο δὲ, 1:8, 23, 41, 59; 2:6, 15, 46.

[268] See esp. Jeremias 1980: 25–27, and Fitzmyer 1981a: 119. "Während Lukas im Evangelium seinen Lesern das für griechische Ohren sehr harte, aus der LXX stammende periphrastische ἐγένετο mit Verbum fin. als feierliche "Sprache Kanaans" zumutet, nimmt er in der Apostelgeschichte auf griechisches Stilempfinden Rücksicht." (Jeremias 1980: 26).

there to be seen about the Word? And what does it mean to understand? Let me first turn to the question what is there to been seen about the Word.

3.3 The Eyewitnesses

The narrator traces the account back to eyewitnesses. Luke 1:5–2 in particular presents a couple of eyewitnesses, and gives considerable attention to the act of seeing. One prominent example is the scene with the shepherds, who exhort themselves to visit the newborn child Jesus with the words ἴδωμεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο τὸ γεγονὸς, "les us see the word that has happened" (2:15). Another example is the scene where Jesus is brought to the temple and Simeon sings his Song, known as the Nunc Dimittis (2:29–32), solemnly declaring ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου, "that my eyes have seen your salvation" (2:30). "Seeing" is a virtuous quality in ancient literature. In a biblical context, however, it is also a dangerous quality that requires a competent hypaethral position. I will first turn to "seeing" in ancient historiography, and then turn to "seeing" in a biblical context.

In the context of ancient historiography the emphasis on "seeing" does not surprise. In a very general way it reflects the common Thucydidean view of the historian's task, a view still prevalent in the days of early Christian literature, as we find this priority allotted to the eyewitness also in Flavius Josephus and, almost a century later, still in Lucian, who, though not a historiographer in the full sense of the word, presents a common historiographic attitude.[269] Even if we are not prepared to interpret the narrative of the Third Gospel within a historiographic frame, the priority of seeing over hearing may still reflect a common topos in antiquity. Already Heraclitus, a philosopher from the fifth century BCE, would have remarked that ὀφθαλμοὶ [τῶν] ὤτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες, "the eyes are surer witnesses than ears."[270] A remark that seems to be reflected in Herodotus, when King Kandaules says to Gyges that ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισιν ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν, "it happens that the ears of people are more untrustworthy than the eyes."[271] The Roman playwright Plautus also seems to prioritise

[269] On different views on historiography in antiquity, cf. Hartog and Casevitz 1999. On Thucydides, *Historia* 1.1–23, esp. 1.22.2–3; Stuart Jones 1963; cf. Hartog and Casevitz 1999: 100–105. On Flavius Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1–11, esp. 9 [47]), ed. Naber 1888–1896, Reinach and Blum 1972, cf. Hartog and Casevitz 1999: 266–268. On Lucian, *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 41–51, 61–63, esp. 50–51, ed. Bompaire 1993, cf. Barry Baldwin 1973; Hartog and Casevitz 1999: 236–237. See especially Alexander 1993 on the preface and historiography.

[270] Attributed to Heraclitus of Ephesus by Polybius, *Hist.* 12.27 (Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 82; Paton, Walbank and Habicht 2011).

[271] Herodotus, *Hist*. 1.8.2; Rosén 1987: 6–7. How and Wells (1964a: 58) reject the idea of a reference by Herodotus to Heraclitus, as "the sentiment is a common one (cf. 'seeing is believing') and the verbal resemblance nil. The gnomic character of the story is obvious."

the eye's witness, when he writes *pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem*, "one eyewitness is worth more than ten from hearsay."[272] Likewise, in the New Testament we find the apostle Thomas, who wants to see and even feel the wounds of Jesus, ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω ... οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω, "when I do not see ... I will not believe" (John 20:25).

In a biblical context, however, "seeing" is closely related to understanding the divine. Moses, a hypaethral man the way he is portrayed by Philo,[273] was very close to see God, but he was ordered to warn the people not to get closer to God and "understand" (μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοῆσαι, Ex. 19:21 LXX), lest they would die. Likewise in Luke 2:29, Simeon, when he confesses that his eyes have seen salvation, says that he is now prepared to die. Apparently, "seeing" equals "understanding" and therefore represents in a sense mastery of reality, to such a degree even that you may step towards incorporeity. "Seeing" as insight is a hypaethral virtue. It is this "seeing" that the reader of the preface is called to. The "seeing" refers to the Word that comes to fulfilment, as it were τὸν ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν, "as seeing the One who is invisible" (Hebr. 11:27).

An example is the story of the travellers to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35).[274] These travellers are walking with Jesus without recognising him, as οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν, "their eyes were kept from recognising him" (24:16). Even when Jesus has explained the Scriptures, they fail to understand. Only in the act of blessing, breaking, and sharing the bread, as the sign of what Scripture is about, αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν, "their eyes are opened and they recognise him" (24:31). From this example it may be inferred that visual understanding of the Word-event is a top virtue in Third Gospel (but tellingly, once they have recognised Jesus, he disappears like a true hypaethral person). Let me now turn to the other question: what does it mean to understand?

3.4 The Reader Invited to Understand

What would it mean to understand the Word-event? Competence in understanding is a quality fitting in quite well with the hypaethral position. The preface itself points in this direction with the use of the words ἀκριβῶς, "accurately," and ἀσφάλεια, the "reliability," for what is related. The word ἀκρίβεια denotes "strict conformity to a norm or standard," which corresponds to the moral need for good order.[275] The word ἀσφάλεια, emphasised as it is the last word of the

[272] Plautus, *Truc*. II, 6, 8; Lindsay 1905.
[273] On Moses and masculinity according to Philo, cf. Conway 2008: 49–58.
[274] On the connection between the preface and Luke 24, see esp. Dillon 1978.
[275] BDAG s.v. ἀκρίβεια.

sentence, denotes not only the notions of safety and reliability, but first and foremost the notion of stability, and security against stumbling or falling, hence stability of idea or statement, certainty, and truth.[276] It does make sense when the virtue of understanding is concerned, to find good order and stability in a written account that offers a sure foundation for insight, especially so as virtuous manliness is continuously seeking stability.

On the primary level of the narration, the narratee is the κράτιστε Θεόφιλε. As a competent narratee, he is called to find stability in the account of a Word-event that has come to fulfilment. I have already suggested that the title κράτιστε (in the book of Acts also used for the two high-ranking Roman officials Felix and Festus) seems to indicate that Theophilus is a high-ranking official.[277] Now I need to be more precise. There is no need to search for a Theophilus who may have been some Roman official somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.[278] It is rather the other way round: Theophilus' competence in understanding the Word-event would establish him as a κράτιστε, as a high elite manly person, precisely because he shows virtuous understanding. The humorous thing is that it was precisely the task of the Roman officials Felix and Festus to investigate the reliability of the teachings of Paul, something in which they failed. The name of Theophilus, "God lover" or "friend of God" may be semiotically motivated, or it may not, it does not really matter. He may even have been a woman, a Greek foreigner, or a freedman: representation follows understanding, and understanding is manly virtue, on the way to hypaethral beyond-manliness.

Although the narratee is in narratological respect not the same as the reader, it may be argued that the reader is prefigured by the narratee. Thus the narratee in Luke 1:1-4 sets an example for a truly competent and understanding reader, who is established then in the ideal hypaethral position of beyond-manliness.

3.5 Conclusion

The preface to the Third Gospel is a statement by the narrator on the first level of narration. The whole of the subsequent gospel should be read as a second level narration. The preface resumes the course taken by the narrator: examining, and writing down the eyewitnesses' accounts of

[276] LSJ s.v. ἀσφάλεια 1; BDAG s.v. ἀσφάλεια 2; cf. Alexander 1993: 140–141.

[277] It may be argued that the term simply wants to express esteem for a person (Carroll 2012: 21), but this would bypass the use of the title in Acts. Besides, D'Angelo, who dates the Third Gospel in the reign of the emperor Trajan, mentions in addition to the evidence from Acts, that the title κράτιστε was awarded to Trajan by the senate and connected by Pliny the Younger to Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Pliny, *Pan*. 2.7; 88.4–8; *Ep*. 10.1.2; D'Angelo 2003: 285).

[278] E.g. Richard Anderson (1997), Kilgallen (2007) and Carroll (2012: 22) have defended a real existing person of some social standing.

the things that have come to fulfilment among us, so that the narratee may understand the reliability of the account. With these elite virtuous qualities (secure examination, writing, and understanding), the narrator sets an example of the reader's task. Implied is in particular the notion of (moral) stability, needed to uphold the ideal of (beyond-)manliness. Priority lies with the visual, as seeing and understanding are closely connected. Competence in understanding the way the divine Word is happening among us, will establish you as a reader in the high elite position that goes with this virtue, as representation follows behaviour. Whether this position goes together with Romanness or rather concurs with it while prioritising the divine Word is an issue that is at stake in the remaining sections of Luke 1–2.

4. Zachariah on the Gender Map (Luke 1:5–23; 57–80)

In this section I will discuss the two passages on Zachariah and Elisabeth (Luke 1:5–23; 57–80). When the priest Zachariah enters the temple to fulfil his duties, an angel appears to him announcing that his wife will have a son, the future John (the Baptist). Zachariah finds the information hard to accept, as both his wife and he himself are old aged people. His hesitation is punished, if we may call it so, by the angel who takes his power to speak away from him, until all the things that are prophesied by the angel will have come to fulfilment. Leaving the temple again, Zachariah stands before the people waiting in the temple square. The people are surprised that the priest's duty would take so long. They understand, however, when they see the mute priest (1:5–23). In the second passage the child has been born, and Elisabeth gives him the name John. The bystanders find it hard to accept this name and ask the mute father for his opinion. Writing down the name he confirms what his wife has said. At that very moment his speech is returned to him; he concludes with a hymn in praise of God, known by tradition as the Benedictus (or the Song of Zachariah, Luke 1:68–79).

Much has been written about these passages. However, it would be impossible to present a survey of literature on the subject. I would like to focus on just a couple of aspects. First, there is a lavish use of biblical references. One of the effects of intertextuality is that it appeals to your competence in understanding. In other words, and speaking from within the ancient gender paradigm, reading this text in an understanding way will already put you on the road to virtuous manliness. I will discuss this aspect of the text in section 4.1. With the introduction of Zachariah and Elisabeth we may expect examples of understanding behaviour. On closer examination, however, the manliness of Zachariah is ambiguous. Do we recognise a man when we see one? Zachariah's manly (or not so manly) behaviour will be the subject of section 4.2. His muteness, a demasculating feature, will be discussed in section 4.3.

4.1 Welcome to Septuagint Country

In the passages on Zachariah and Elisabeth, and indeed in Luke 1–2 as a whole, lavish use is made of biblical references. In an early stage of my research I started to make an inventory of intertextual references, but soon I had to give up: it is simply too much. Besides, it is fairly difficult at times to decide whether a specific line or a couple of words is really an intertext. Explicit quotations may be easy enough to trace down their source, but diffuse references are in many cases probably just the result of the reader's cleverness, rather than of a conscious

insertion by the author. How will we be sure? I believe we should not want to be sure. Let me give a comparison to explain my point.

As a European visitor walking for the first time through Disneyland, Anaheim, I wondered at the pastiche of medieval and old rural European elements in the buildings represented. Somehow, I had the feeling that I had seen all this before, nearby at home somewhere, sometime. But I was not able to say exactly where. Of course I had seen a mansion like Toad Hall before, as a child travelling with my parents through England. I recognised the Tudor elements, but could this mansion be a replica, a faint imitation, or what? Sleeping Beauty's castle, does that not remind of a structure in the Bavarian Alps? The ship of Captain Hook: I had been on Nelson's *Victory*, but this ship? Just so, a reader finds her way through the first two chapters of the Third Gospel. The narrative sets off in a truly biblical manner, with a wealth of intertextual references strongly evoking the world of biblical narrative and poetry in Septuagintal language, but often not clear enough to confidently establish a referential frame. Elisabeth and Zachariah, for instance, remind us of Sarah and Abraham. And then, those songs sounding everywhere, did we not hear them before, in the Psalms, in Genesis, in 1–2 Samuel (1–2 Kgdms LXX) or 1–2 Maccabees? It seems that the Third Gospel takes care to set up an elaborate biblical scenery, using elements from Tanak and especially from Septuagint, all sounding very familiar. On closer inspection, however, scenes, voices, and bodies do not quite seem to match.

The point is that it is a make-believe. The scenery is set up carefully to engage you in a different world and to prepare you for anything that may happen in such a world. In Disneyland you may fancy that Captain Hook is just about to come round the corner, as he is angrily after you for having disturbed him in his afternoon nap. The make-believe serves to sharpen your attention to the things that may happen. Just so, in the Third Gospel an angel may suddenly appear, or you may recognise a prophet proclaiming words that sound really old, involving you in this biblical setup, provoking your competence in understanding. It will, therefore, not be very helpful to my purpose, to try and trace the precise origin of the intertextual references in these chapters. It is the idea of intertextuality itself that counts, not the precise sources. Intertextuality, in this case at least, is part of a manly virtue of understanding.

Theoretically, intertextuality functions on a gradual scale between traceable and diffuse intertexts.[279] The more you want to establish precise references, the more they tend to disappear. The wider you throw your net, the more the intertexts will tend to multiply. Recognising intertexts is a readerly act. It is the reader who selects, recognises, and accepts

[279] I first proposed the concepts of "traceable" and "diffuse intertext" in Troost 1993: 252–257.

certain intertexts, bypassing other intertexts. In some cases, such as recognisable quotations, it seems easy enough to settle on a traceable intertext. In many cases, however, intertextuality will remain diffuse. It is especially this diffuse intertextuality that I have in mind when I compare the referential elements in the first two chapters of the Third Gospel with the evocative techniques applied in Disneyland. Taking in view the wonderful biblical world evoked in Luke 1–2, with its king, its priest, its prophetically styled men and women, the temple, the common people, and the psalm-like songs, set in Jerusalem and the country side of Judea, I would say that we are now in Septuagint Country. We are prepared to read for anything that may happen in this world.

The Disneyland-like technique is particularly interesting in view of the goal set by the preface, understanding as insight. Ulrich Busse (1991: 176) has rightly argued (like Darr 1992) that the function of Luke 1–2 is to tune the reader to a biblical understanding. As Busse has explained, the many biblical references work to draw the subsequent Gospel narrative within the domain of the Bible as a whole, while the reader is called to be equally creative in understanding. I agree with Busse, though I would like to emphasise that it is in particular this readerly creativeness that marks the competent reader who is advanced in manly understanding. Likewise, the suggestion by Fitzmyer that in view of the use made of references to Tanak and Septuagint "Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts as the continuation of the history of God's dealings with his people" (1992: 309) remains valid. Again, however, it is readerly competence to discern this history. Hence intertextuality itself is a gendering feature, that is, within the frame set by ancient virtuousness.

4.2 An Ambiguous Position

In this section I will argue that Zachariah at first raises high expectations when he enters the Jerusalem temple as a priest. It is not unreasonable that the reader is at first involuntarily reminded of a Jewish high priest and takes Zachariah for an outstanding hypaethral person. On closer examination, however, his priestly office has something ambiguous about it. At the *moment supreme*, when he is faced with the divine, he fails pitifully in understanding. As a result he is thrown on fe/male axis where he belongs due to his behaviour.

The narrative starts with the name of King Herod. There has been some debate which Herod actually could be meant, as there were many by the name, but probably the name is just a signifier for the situation at large. We have a king of foreign descent, designated by the Roman occupying authorities and supported by Roman troops. From a Roman point of view, he is a foreigner anyway, not an elite Roman official; someone to be tolerated only as long as he suits

Roman interests. He is not a manly man, therefore. From a Judean point of view he is equally a foreigner, representative of foreign interests and not exactly the epitome of pious Law abiding Jewish people. Again, he failed in manliness. With Zachariah and Elisabeth we suddenly have two characters who are δίκαιοι, "righteous people" (1:6). In terms of Jewish virtuousness they are *tsaddiqim*; a Greco-Roman audience would understand them as prototypes of the virtue of εὐσέβεια, "piety."[280] They are a couple, both of priestly descent and living according to all the laws and precepts of Torah. There is only one problem: they are old and without child. Apparently something is wrong, for people living as δίκαιοι should have had children, at least so as a literary topos. As Joachim Jeremias writes, "the absence of children was considered a great misfortune, even a divine punishment."[281] On the other hand, the competent reader will be reminded of comparable narrative examples, such as Abraham and Sarah, where Abraham was righteous and they were without child in their old age (Gen 15–18), or the story of Jacob and Rachel (Gen 30:22–23; later referred to in Luke 1:25). It seems safe to conclude at this stage that the political situation is morally defective and that, in the best of biblical tradition, we are waiting for the word of God to happen. An angelic vision or a divine announcement is in the air, in order to get the story started.

In this situation the priest Zachariah enters the temple to bring the incense offering (1:9). There is enough diffuse intertextuality to make us wonder where we could have seen this before, but not enough to establish a documented proceeding. The scene seems to evoke the idea of a high priest officiating on the Day of Atonement,[282] but the way Zachariah is introduced

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[280] On the use of the term δίκαιος , see Jeremias 1980: 22–23.

[281] Jeremias 1969: 371–372, referring to b. Pes. 113b; Luke 1:25; II (4) Esd. 9:45. I fail to see why Jeremias should include Luke 1:25 as we find certainly no divine punishment here, while it is not clear that it is a great misfortune. The Third Gospel simply states their childlessness. A feminist critique of Jeremias' approach offers Brooten 1985: 78.

[282] Cf. Lev 16:3. Luke 11:51 has the priest Zachariah murdered near the altar, recalling the death of Zachariah in 2 Chr 24:20ff., which happened according to the *Targum on the Lamentations* 2.20 on the Day of Atonement. It is not entirely clear what is meant by the word ναός (Luke 1:9). In contemporary usage, ναός simply refers to a temple, but in Septuagint the ναός could be taken to refer to the holy of holies of the Jerusalem temple, though not necessarily so. The ναός (Luke 1:9, 21, 22) could mean both “the temple” and “the inner sanctuary of the temple." The people attending are already within the temple precincts, while the priest has to proceed to the sanctuary to perform the incense offering (Schürer 1979). In Luke 2:45 Jesus speaks with the teachers in the ἱερόν, apparently meaning the temple precincts. To enter the holy of holies, Zachariah should have been high priest, which he is apparently not. Later liturgical reception silently accepts that he actually was a high priest; the date of Christmas is based on this argument. The birth of Jesus being on 25 December, the annunciation of his birth must have been nine months earlier, on 25 March, when Elisabeth was in her sixth month implying that the scene of the appearance of the angel to Zachariah took place somewhere in September or October, in which months the Day of Atonement falls. If the scene refers to the commandments in Exod 30:78, the room just before the holy of holies is meant. Gnuse (1998) has suggested that the author of the Third Gospel and the roughly contemporary writer Josephus in his *Antiquitates* both may have drawn on a common narrative format in which a theophany occurred to a high priest, cf. Josephus' account of the experience of the high priest Jaddus in *Ant.* 11.326–328, and the theophany to the high priest Hyrcanus, in *Ant.* 13.282–283. This

makes him just a common priest fulfilling his duties as a hebdomadarian. Perhaps, again, we should not want to know his precise function and just focus on his priestly office. From a biblical point of view his priestly office may be understood in a really hypaethral way; within Greco-Roman gender logic his performance has an inherent instability, even an ambiguity. I will explain this.

Zachariah's entering the temple to perform the incense offering suggests a truly hypaethral position. Zachariah has to perform under the open sky in the inner court of the temple. But then Zachariah's manliness could be jeopardised as he has to appear before the divine, who is per force more manly than Zachariah. Moses was able to deal with this, but he was close to the divine himself. There are more risky elements in the narrative. His manly autonomy is obviously curtailed, as he has to obey cultic rules: he has to fulfil his duty according to a service-roster (1:8), he is chosen by lot to officiate (1:9), and he officiates on the preset hour of the daily incense offering (1:10). Furthermore, entering the temple has the ambiguity of leaving public space and entering inner space as the place where usually women's gender scripts are performed.[283] Thus, Abraham entertains his divine guest(s) outside the tent, while Sarah stays inside (Gen 18:1–15). In Luke 1–2 the angel Gabriel enters Mary's place (1:28), and Mary enters the house of Zachariah to greet Elisabeth (1:40).[284] In the final chapter of the Third Gospel, the women even enter the empty grave (24:3). Of course all these things (to appear before the divine, to obey to the rule, and to enter inner space) belong to the normal "business risk" of a priest, against which he should be protected by a set of rules inhibiting sexual intercourse and excluding any physical stain, which means that he has to enter the temple as a man *in optima forma*, indeed being himself as hypaethral as possible.[285] For the time being, a certain ambiguity remains. It depends on Zachariah's competence whether he will leave the temple unaffected. The sequel will show that he plainly fails in this respect.

In the temple an angel appears to him. The word ὤφθη, "appeared" (1:11), is written in the first position of the sentence, thus emphasising the sudden movement. The angel foretells Zachariah that he will have a son and that he will call the child's name John (1:13). Calling a child's name is indeed a father's due task, so it seems that Zachariah's fatherly role is safely installed. There is, however, one slight problem: the child to be born will not really be Zachariah's. Zachariah is not free to call the child after his own family as was the custom (1:61).

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seems plausible, especially in view of Sterling's (1992) thesis that Josephus and the author of Luke-Acts share the same cultural heritage.

[283] Jeremias 1969: 360–361, referring to Philo, *Spec.* 3.169 and *Flacc.* 2.89. We need to be careful, however, in view of the sources used, see Brooten 1985: 78.

[284] It belongs to the subversiveness of Jesus to enter the houses of the most unseemly persons.

[285] Cf. the regulations in Lev 21:17–23, inhibiting physical blemishes or imperfections. A discussion of gender implications in the Hebrew sacrificial system, cf. Ruane 2013.

Actually the child's name is derived from the Hebrew *Jochanan*, meaning "YHWH is merciful," through which name a metonymical relation with God is established. Furthermore, the child will be entirely within the domain of God: he will be great before God, drink no wine,[286] full of holy spirit (1:15); he will return the children of Israel toward their God (1:16), and like Eliah he will prepare the people for God (1:17).[287] In short, this future child has a real "Godfather."

The biblical competent reader will recognise in Gabriel's words references to the story of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1–15), Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:2–5), or Elkanah and Hannah (1 Sam 1), maybe especially the prayer of Hanna (1 Sam 1: 11) and the words spoken by her at the presentation of Samuel (1 Sam 1:27–28). These references, however, are not spent on Zachariah. He simply misses most of the message, as he just sticks to the very first part of it: “your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son.” Reminding us of the laughter of Abraham (Gen 17:17) and of Sarah's laughter (Gen 18:12), he responds by repeating the sheer physical impossibility, “I am old and my wife has proceeded in her days” (1:18, cf. Abraham in Gen 17:17b and Sarah in Gen 18:12b).[288] This answer may be fine in reference to the Abraham and Sarah narrative, and if the angel would have been more patient, as in the case of Abraham and Sarah, the story would have proceeded more smoothly. What we get, however, is a fearful display of angelic power, underscored by a sudden change in poetics. Gabriel abruptly abandons his lofty way of speaking and turns instead to a polysyndetic staccato full of repetitions in which he even contradicts his earlier words. He starts with an authority argument: “I am Gabriel, who stands before God, and I am sent to speak to you and to evangelise you this” (1:19). The name of Gabriel is resounding with messianic overtones, such as in Dan 8:16 and 19:21.[289] The angel makes his point perfectly clear: God's concern is not with how a pregnancy comes about, but with messianic reconciliation of the people with their God. That is, Zachariah has missed the messianic implications of the angel's message, which is a grave lack in due understanding.

Zachariah is silenced by the angel: his voice is taken away. The exact meaning of this silencing of Zachariah will appear in the following scene, when he leaves the temple and appears before the people who are waiting in the temple square (I will discuss the scene in the following section 4.3). At this point I would suggest that, as Zachariah's objection pertains to the human

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[286] A quotation from Numbers 6:3, part of the Nazirate instruction of Num 6:1–21. It is a vow of special dedication to God, predicted of John from his birth onwards, like Simson in Judg 13:5.

[287] According to Mal 3:23 will be sent by God before the day of the Lord, in Mal 3:24 it is Eliah's mission "to convert the hearts of the fathers to children."

[288] Compared with 1:7, there is a difference. Instead of the earlier narratorial “Elisabeth was without child, and both had proceeded in their days,” now we read Zachariah's objection “I am old and my wife has proceeded in her days.” Would this be just an instance of the Third Gospel's preference of variation? Cf. Cadbury 1966: 87–102; Mussies 1991; Mussies 1992. The first part of Zachariah's response, "How will I know?", repeats Gen 15:8 where Abram asks for a sign.

[289] In Daniel 8.16ff Gabriel explains to Daniel the messianic history.

procreative part of the prophecy (we are too old), this preoccupation locates him on the fe/male axis. This is, however, only an intermediate station. The loss of his voice seems the obvious result of this preoccupation, but as a silencing that prevents him from speaking publicly, the loss of voice is basically a physical disability that characterises him as an unmanly person and puts him down in the domain of gender ambiguity. In the following chapters of Luke-Acts, physical disability is time and again the field where manly understanding is at stake. Zacchaeus, the travellers to Emmaus, or the eunuch, are seeing, discussing, or reading without understanding, until insight dawns through explanatory deeds. Zachariah, however, has to wait for such an explanatory sign. Meanwhile, it is remarkable that the angel in his fit of anger apparently contradicts himself when he says "you will be silent and not able to speak, until the days that this will happen" (1:20). In 1:13b the angel announced that "you will call his name John," but as it turns out, Elisabeth will have to do the job (1:60). This means that Elisabeth takes the place of Zachariah in the manly position, as she is now in a position to speak publicly and performs the task due to the father.

Making up the balance I would say that through the use of biblical references the story of Zachariah in the temple is constructed in such a way as to be understood in terms of the paradigm of virtuous behaviour that became prevalent during early imperial rule. Zachariah in his priestly role, despite the suggestion of hypaethrality, displays a certain ambiguity, as he is not able to perform autonomously, his narrative role requires just the opposite of public performance, and his confrontation with the divine may just serve to set him back in manliness. It all depends on his understanding. Unfortunately, he fails precisely in this respect. Although his question (or objection) may have some venerability in view of the examples set by Abraham and Sarah, the angel makes clear that he misses the point: the child to be born is part of a messianic programme in which the moral standstill represented by king Herod will be set in motion again. It may be objected that Zachariah just asks for a sign, and that his muteness, until the angel's words are fulfilled, is meant as just this very sign. Zachariah's question, however, betrays him: κατὰ τί γνώσομαι τοῦτο (1:18), "how shall I know this?" He should have known without a sign, which is true understanding. But let me take a closer examination of his muteness, in order to substantiate my claim.

4.3 Like a Mute Person on the Stage

Zachariah's muteness has an obvious consequence: he is prevented from speaking in public. This can be very annoying for a priest who is leaving the temple while a whole crowd is waiting for

him at the temple square (λαός, "the people," with the double meaning of the people of God). What were they waiting for? Should he have spoken to them? He should probably have said a blessing. The Mishnah tractates *Tamid* and *Sotah* may be taken (with due cautiousness) as evidence for this situation: here the priest leaving the sanctuary after having offered the daily incense offering, bestows the priestly blessing on the people.[290] This blessing may have been the one of Numbers 6:24–26.[291] In Jesus' time this could have been daily practice in the temple.[292] The same ritual is described in Sirach 50:11–21, where the same priestly blessing is pronounced. O'Fearghail (1978: 306) sees a parallel between Sirach 50:11–21 and Luke 1:8–23. This parallel, however, is not fully convincing as Sirach describes and exalts the high priest Simon the son of Onias II. Sirach's idealisation of a high priest is hardly comparable to the Third Gospel's failed hebdomadarian. Taken together, however, and considering that intertextuality in this gospel is mostly of a diffuse kind, suggesting rather than exactly referring to, it seems possible that Zachariah should have bestowed a benediction upon the attending crowd.

While Zachariah due to his failure in understanding has to remain silent, the attending people do understand. They understand that he is κωφός, which is an ambiguous word, ranging from the simple inability to speak (being mute) or hear (being deaf) to the connotation of being dull or stupid.[293] The word clearly denotes a physical disability, which is an impediment to moral virtuous development. Flavius Josephus, describing around 94 CE in his *Antiquitates judaicae* the rather intricate family pedigree of Herod the Great, suddenly informs us that ὁ δὲ τρίτος τοῦ Ἀγρίππου ἀδελφὸς Ἀριστόβουλος γαμεῖ Ἰωτάπην Σαμψιγεράμου θυγατέρα τοῦ Ἐμεσῶν βασιλέως, θυγάτηρ τε αὐτοῖς γίνεται κωφή: ὄνομα καὶ τῇδε Ἰωτάπη, "Aristobulus, the third brother of Agrippa, wedded Jotape, the daughter of Sampsigeramus, king of Emesa, and they had a daughter who was deaf, whose name was also Jotape."[294] Apparently, being deaf is important enough to be mentioned between other markers such as "king," "the high priest," "died childless," "was slain," "deserted the Jewish religion," etc. Philo, commenting in his *On the Special Laws* on the commandment forbidding blasphemy and speaking ill, connects this physical disability to the maltreatment experienced by a κωφός and in general by those who are unable to perceive with the aid of their outward senses and whose sense of hearing is defective.[295] Being mute made you vulnerable to maltreatment, which again detracted from being a man.

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[290] M. Tamid 6:3–7:3; *par*. m. Sotah 7:6.
[291] Str-B 2:75–76; Schürer 1979: 306, 453 n. 137.
[292] But the link between the priestly benediction and the temple is not mentioned in the Torah, see Safrai, Stern, Flusser and Van Unnik 1988: 885–890; Edersheim 1987.
[293] In the New Testament the word κωφός is used in the sense of being mute or deaf (BDAG s.v.), which is also common in classical and Hellenistic Greek (LSJ s.v.).
[294] Jos., *Ant.* 18.135 (Niese 1890).
[295] Philo, *Spec.* 4.197–198 (Cohn 1906: 254–255).

In the gospels the word κωφός often has a metonymical aspect, referring to an external power. In Matthew 9:32–33 there is a person who is mute as he is possessed by a demon. When the demon is driven out, the mute person speaks again, to which the crowd responds with surprise. There is also surprise of the crowd in Matthew 12:22–24, where we hear of someone who is blind and mute as he is possessed; after being healed by Jesus he is able to see and speak again. Again, the crowd reacts in surprise. Finally, according to the Lukan version of this story (Luke 11:14–15) Jesus drives out a mute demon, after which the person starts to speak again; and again the crowd is surprised. In these stories muteness is a physical defect caused by a demon (whereas in ancient reflection on body and behaviour the defect would have been the result of moral depravity and the resulting failure to keep the body in shape).

If we now turn from these instances again to Zachariah before the crowd, it appears that the proceeding is reversed. The crowd reacts to his long absence with surprise (Luke 1:21); he is not able to speak and he remains mute (1:22). It would not make sense to suggest that Zachariah's muteness was caused by a demon: in this case the narrative stands much closer to the ancient body-behaviour thought (Zachariah's failure to understand leads to a physical defect), although the story seems also to exploit the biblical idea that the confrontation with the divine may lead to temporary blindness or muteness (as the story of Paul on the road to Damascus, in Acts 9, makes clear). This seems the implication of the response by the attending crowd: when Zachariah is unable to speak, ἐπέγνωσαν ὅτι ὀπτασίαν ἑώρακεν ἐν τῷ ναῷ, "they understood that he had seen a sight in the temple" (Luke 1:22). It is important to notice what this understanding does to the people. Especially the example from Philo, cited above, suggests that a mute person was liable to be treated badly. It would even be imaginable that he would be the laughing-stock of the city. Another example, related by Philo, suggests that Zachariah may have given a sorry sight, much like a mime player in a theatrical act. Writing about the pogrom in Alexandria that took place under the emperor Caligula in or about 32 CE, Philo remarks that the Roman prefect Flaccus was hold on a string by his so-called friends, who treated him κωφὸν ὡς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς προσωπεῖον," like a mute person on the stage," as one who was only, by way of making up the show, inscribed with the title of authority.[296] Luckily for Zachariah, the crowd is very understanding and thus makes up for manly virtue where the priest failed.

The events outside the temple remind me of the iconic scene of president George W. Bush at ground zero, addressing the people. "We can't hear you!" someone shouted, which is potentially devastating for a leader in crisis. The president's response was: "I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you!" His reply was brilliant in that it suddenly put the American people,

[296] Philo, *Flacc.* 20 (Cohn and Reiter 1915: 124); cf. Van der Horst 2003.

and more in particular the firemen and other rescue workers gathered around the president in the role of valiant heroes, exposed to the eyes of the world. They were the real heroes, who, however, through their eyes being focussed on the president, accepted him as the commanding leader. I would say that something very similar now happens outside the temple. As Zachariah cannot be heard, his manly authority is in danger; manliness now shifts to the crowd for "they understood that he had seen a vision" (1:12). Their understanding saves the day for the priest. As a result he is able, as the next verse continues to say, to fulfil the days of his priestly service (1:23).

In Luke 1:57–80, when the words spoken by the angel have come to fulfilment, we find a mirror to the events. There is a kind of crowd, that is, the people who are present when Elisabeth publicly pronounces John's name. They are surprised (1:63), Zachariah's mouth and tongue are opened again (1:64), and he speaks again, praising God (1:64). Thus, Zachariah is reinstated in his manly role by being able to speak publicly again. Something, however, has changed. As a diffuse intertext, one may recognise the words from the Wisdom of Solomon 10:21 about the people who cannot speak:

> ἡ σοφία ἤνοιξεν στόμα κωφῶν
> καὶ γλώσσας νηπίων ἔθηκεν τρανάς
> Wisdom opened the mouth of the mute
> and the tongues of little children/those unable to speak she made clear.

These words are echoed in Luke 1:64, when Zachariah's mouth is opened again:

> ἀνεῴχθη δὲ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ παραχρῆμα
> καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα αὐτοῦ.
> And immediately his mouth was opened
> and his tongue.

I would suggest that Zachariah is responding to Wisdom. That he is able to speak is not the result of some kind of divinely worked miracle, but the expression of his understanding as insight. His insight relates to his understanding that the words of the angel have indeed come to fulfilment. Although his muteness is potentially devastating (vulnerable to maltreatment, becoming the laughing-stock, loss not only of virtuous manliness, but also of masculinity), the crowd's

understanding prevented a further downfall. His insight has led to his finally understanding. Meanwhile, his wife Elisabeth took over the manly position due to her speaking in public.

4.4 Conclusion

The narrative of Zachariah and Elisabeth is full of words and motives suggesting a LXX landscape. The intertexts evoke among other things in particular the biblical birth accounts in which a barren woman miraculously gets pregnant, although they are not detailed enough to establish precise references. Reading this text calls for a competent readerly understanding. It is remarkable that the father-to-be fails in high understanding, for which he should be qualified due to his position, and turns to the wrong category instead: the one of human procreation on the fe/male horizontal axis. He should have understood that a divine son is announced, someone who will help to bring a messianic turn in the people's history. His muteness resulting from this misunderstanding, is on the one hand a metaphorical sign of his failure as he does not command the right discourse. On the other hand, however, this muteness sides him with those who are physically disabled, an effect that would place him in the domain of ambiguity. As he failed in manliness, and confesses his masculine interest ("I am old"), the ambiguity resulting from his muteness would set him even further down the vertical axis. In a sense, he is saved by the people's understanding, while his wife Elisabeth takes over the manly role of speaking in public. She does what Zachariah should have done, if he only had understood. When he sees that the words of the angel have come to fulfilment, Zachariah finally understands, and addresses the public, praising God.

5. Elisabeth and Mary (Luke 1:26–56)

Zachariah's silence offers the opportunity for Elisabeth to demonstrate her understanding. In section 5.1 I will explain that her understanding should not surprise us, as she is ἐκ τῶν θυγατέρων Ἀαρὼν, "from the daughters of Aaron" (Luke 1:5). Sandwiched by the scene of Zachariah in the Jerusalem temple (1:5–23) and the scene of the naming of John (1:57–80) are two closely related narratives, the annunciation scene (1:26–38) and the visitation scene (1:39–56). The annunciation is the name traditionally given to the passage where the angel Gabriel announces the future birth of Jesus to Mary. The visitation is the traditional name for the section in which Mary visits Elisabeth. In section 5.2 I will briefly recall the interpretation of the annunciation scene proposed by me in my previous chapter and try to answer the question what this proposal could mean for the construction of gender in these lines. In section 5.3 I will argue that the words spoken by Elisabeth in the visitation scene can be read as if they filled in the silence left by Zachariah when he stood on the temple esplanade, unable to speak before the crowd. Here again is an important constituent of gender.

5.1 From the Daughters of Aaron

While Zachariah fails in understanding and is silenced, it is clear that Elisabeth does understand, both in the visitation scene and in the scene of the naming of John. There is, however, considerable ambiguity. When she speaks the revolutionary words of the Magnificat (that is, if we are prepared to accept this tradition), and when she calls her son's name, Elisabeth definitely enters the field of manly virtuous behaviour. On the other hand, it is also true that Elisabeth seeks the seclusion that was customary in those days for women who were in an advanced stage of their pregnancy (1:24) and that her words are partly spoken in the house (that is, the dialogue with Mary and the Magnificat; the naming of John may be considered a public affair).

When Elisabeth is introduced, we hear that she is ἐκ τῶν θυγατέρων Ἀαρὼν, "from the daughters of Aaron" (1:5). This piece of information draws attention, as in the case of Zachariah the narrator did not choose to explain that Abijah, to whose clan Zachariah belonged, was also a descendant of Aaron. Why then should Aaron be mentioned in the case of Elisabeth? In Exodus 6:23 mention is made of Elisabeth, the wife of Aaron. Aaron was chosen to speak to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses, because of his outstanding ability to speak. In Exodus 4:10 Moses complains to God that he is a slow speaker, to which God replies in a rhetorical question τίς ἔδωκεν στόμα ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ τίς ἐποίησεν δύσκωφον καὶ κωφόν, βλέποντα καὶ τυφλόν; "who has given a

mouth to a human, and who has made speechless or deaf, seeing or blind?" (4:11) It is only when Moses continues to protest, that his brother Aaron is charged to speak on his behalf (4:14). In this context it is makes sense that here, in the Third Gospel, a descendant of Aaron, a woman who also through her name evokes Aaron, is allowed to speak on behalf of a man who has been made speechless by God "who makes speechless or deaf," metonymically represented by the angel.

When Zachariah and Elisabeth have returned home and Elisabeth has temporarily withdrawn from public life as was customary (1:24), the narrator for the first time releases her voice:

> οὕτως μοι πεποίηκεν κύριος ἐν ἡμέραις αἷς ἐπεῖδεν
> ἀφελεῖν ὄνειδός μου ἐν ἀνθρώποις. (1:25)
> Thus has the Lord done to me in the days wherein he saw upon me
> to take away my disgrace among the people.

Here the term ὄνειδος draws attention. The word may be understood as meaning simply “disgrace" or "reproach." To read the ὄνειδος this way would seem appropriate, as it serves to draw the reader into the biblical imagery of barren women, especially the archmother Rachel in Gen 30:23 who after the birth of her son Joseph confessed: ἀφεῖλεν ὁ θεός μου τὸ ὄνειδος, "God has taken away my disgrace." On closer examination, however, I would say that it is not simply a matter of disgrace that Rachel/Elisabeth has been without child for such a long time. The basic meaning of the word ὄνειδος, in a biblical context, is "loss of standing connected with disparaging speech."[297] Disgrace does not lie in being childless, but in the way you are talked about, that is, it is about perception and representation. Understood this way, the word ὄνειδος helps to get a clear vision on the gender ambiguity involved in the way Elisabeth is described. In view of her excellent priestly descent and her exemplary religious behaviour (ἦσαν δὲ δίκαιοι ἀμφότεροι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ, πορευόμενοι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιώμασιν τοῦ κυρίου ἄμεμπτοι, "they were both righteous before God, living according to all the commandments and prescriptions of the Lord without blame," 1:6) Elisabeth would be qualified for the hypaethral position (similar to the matron like priestess of ill. 13), if it were not for her barren state. Being righteous entails, in biblical language, that you have children, while being without child would mean that something is wrong with your righteousness, hence the feeling of disgrace in the eyes of others. Becoming pregnant—something we would regard in a

[297] BDAG s.v. ὄνειδος.

parontocentric way as quite female—is in the gender logic of this text rather the corollary of righteous behaviour. Hence the disgrace is taken away by God, as Elisabeth notices.

5.2 What Mary Knew

The way the angel announces the future birth of Jesus is in many ways similar to the way Gabriel announced the future birth of John, the most obvious difference being that this time the angel chooses to address a woman. This woman, introduced as Mary, is called a παρθένος, "a girl" or "a young woman of marriageable age," hence "a virgin" (1:27).[298] The word παρθένος classifies her for a position on the horizontal axis, what I have called the Corinthian position. Like Zachariah, Mary objects to the angel's words. The objections are even almost identical, which raises the question why Mary is not silenced like Zachariah. The most obvious answer is of course that Mary is a woman and not a man. You could say that it belongs to her gender script not to understand and to receive additional explanation, whereas the priest should have understood at first sight. But would this not be a very parontocentric approach? Does Mary really not understand?

On closer inspection, there is something strange with the use of the verb γινώσκω, "to know." Both Zachariah and Mary respond with a twofold question. First a sign is requested. Zachariah asks κατὰ τί γνώσομαι τοῦτο; "how shall I know this?" 1:18a, while Mary asks πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, "how shall this be?" 1:34b.). The second part of their responses contains a physical objection (or so it seems!), as Zachariah remarks ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι πρεσβύτης καὶ ἡ γυνή μου προβεβηκυῖα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτῆς, "for I am old and my wife has proceeded in her days" (1:18b), while Mary notices ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω, "for a man I do not know" (1:34c). The verb γινώσκω that takes a different position in Mary's response, and hence obtains a different meaning.

As I have explained in my first chapter, the verb γινώσκω is ambiguous. Denoting the concept of "knowing," there is also a sexual connotation.[299] As if to illustrate the way we tend to respond differently to a man or a woman speaker, we take the denotation of "knowing" for granted in Zachariah's case, while in Mary's case the sexual connotation suddenly seems self-evident. If we accept the obvious denotation of "knowing" also Mary's response, her words cease to imply a physical objection of the kind put forward by Zachariah. "Knowing no man" would indeed be quite appropriate for a young woman or a girl, promised by her parents to a

[298] BDAG s.v. παρθένος; betrothal usually taking place at an early age, cf. Jeremias 1969: 364–365.
[299] On the various ways in which this "knowing" is interpreted, see the concise survey by Fitzmyer 1973 (repr. 1981b: 55–56.

man, but apparently still living with her parents. To be with child in such a situation would put her in a most awkward situation, justifying the question "how shall this be."[300] This question, then, would cease to be a question for a divine sign, and rather come down to a concern for the consequences of her pregnancy. Read this way, Mary's response is not the expression of a lack of competence, but on the contrary an expression of keen understanding. Hence the reply of the angel, not with a fit of divine staccato authority as in Zachariah's case, but with a LXX worded exodus motive with prophetic overtones. This is the type of response that resounds in the Magnificat, where divine protection is extended to those who live in a state of ταπείνωσις, "humiliation."

In short, there is ambiguity involved in the word γινώσκω. Although it is tempting to read Mary's words at face value as the anxious expression of a young woman in the Corinthian position of my gender map, the conclusion seems warranted that she shows herself a worthy conversation partner of the angel, and therefore a competent hearer of divine words, ready to enter the domain of hypaethrality.

5.3 The Blessings

After the annunciation scene Mary visits her cousin Elisabeth in her house in the countryside of Judea. It is remarkable that Mary, apparently still an unmarried woman, travels alone. In view of behaviour deemed appropriate for women in those times, it seems highly improbable that a young women would have travelled alone.[301] Unless of course she was in such a position that nobody really cared. The narrative slows down to a dialogic scene between Elisabeth and Mary. Elisabeth approaches her with the words:

> ἀνεφώνησεν κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ εἶπεν·
> Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν,
> καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου (1:42).
> [Elisabeth] started to shout with a loud cry and said:
> blessed are you among women
> and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

These words have become famous as the two blessing have become part of the traditional prayer called the Ave Maria. The scene of these words is private enough: the house demarcates

[300] Among the literature cited in my chapter 1, cf. esp. Schaberg 1987; 1992.
[301] Jeremias 1969: 360–361, but in view of the sources used we cannot be sure, cf. Brooten 1985: 78.

the space allotted to women. When Mary enters the house, Elisabeth addresses her with considerable force. The verb ἀναφωνέω, "to cry out" (the prefix ἀνα, indicating the upward movement, reinforces the ingressive aorist) is only used here and may already be a bit hyperbolic in view of a private meeting inside the house.[302] The addition κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ, "with a loud cry," is definitely hyperbolic and gives her words enough force to reach even the crowd assembled on the temple esplanade.[303] Although the blessings, "cried out with a loud cry" by Elisabeth, do not conform to what one might expect from a priestly blessing, it is funny to see that whereas Zachariah falls silent amidst the crowd on the temple square, Elisabeth cries it out loudly with only one person standing right before her in the private setting of her house. The contrast is striking, highlighting in a somewhat comic or maybe subversive manner traditional male/female gender scripts.

Elisabeth does so, the text continues, after she has noticed how her yet unborn child responded to Mary's greeting, and she herself was filled with holy spirit (1:41). Despite the private setting, the way Elisabeth speaks is quite hypaethral, full of understanding, as she continues:

> καὶ μακαρία ἡ πιστεύσασα ὅτι ἔσται τελείωσις
> τοῖς λελαλημένοις αὐτῇ παρὰ κυρίου. (1:45)
> and blessed is she who believed that there will be a completion
> to the words spoken to her on the part of the Lord.

After εὐλογημένη en εὐλογημένος, this third blessing is really a beatitude in view of the word μακαρία. These words too seem to be addressed to Mary; the words τοῖς λελαλημένοις αὐτῇ παρὰ κυρίου, "the words spoken to her on the part of the Lord," would refer to the words spoken by the angel at the annunciation scene. The word πιστεύσασα, "she who believed," however, surprises. For although Mary accepted, we did not hear the word πιστεύω applied to her. Curiously, the word occurred when the angel rebuked Zachariah οὐκ ἐπίστευσας τοῖς λόγοις μου, οἵτινες πληρωθήσονται εἰς τὸν καιρὸν αὐτῶν (Luke 1:20), "that you did not trust my words, that will come to fulfilment in due time." Could the blessings and the beatitude spoken by Elisabeth, and apparently addressed to Mary, not also include Elisabeth herself, as she (temporarily) took over Zachariah's role?

Elisabeth was already introduced as one who kept the commandments and who was righteous before God (1:6). For this reason, you would expect the words of Deut 28:1 ἐὰν ἀκοῇ

[302] See BDAG s.v. ἀναφωνέω.
[303] See BDAG s.v. κραυγή.

ἀκούσῃς τῆς φωνῆς Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ σου, φυλάσσειν καὶ ποιεῖν πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς ταύτας, "if you listen carefully to the voice of Adonai your God, and keep all the commandments" to reflect Elisabeth's own position, and then also the sequence to this verse: εὐλογημένα τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας σου, "blessed will be the fruit of your womb" (28:4), followed by a couple of other blessings.[304] Who, then, is this blessed woman addressed by Elisabeth? Is she, indeed, Mary? Or does the addressee include Elisabeth herself? From this point of view, the old tradition that the Magnificat would have been spoken by Elisabeth (discussed in the previous chapter; see also the appendix) does make sense. Instead of deciding, however, on who actually might have been the original enunciator of the Magnificat, it seems from a narrative point of view more satisfying to accept a distinct and perhaps deliberate vagueness, as both women could have spoken the Magnificat due to a narrative vagueness that is already initiated in the words spoken by Elisabeth at Mary's entrance. Mary and Elisabeth both show themselves competent in understanding biblical words.

Nevertheless, although their understanding testifies to what I would call a hypaethral position, that is, an understanding that is gendered as virtuous manliness within ancient gender logic, the narrative takes care to stage the scene as homely as possible, as a private meeting between two women within the house of one of them. Here we have the ambiguity of the Third Gospel's double message in a nutshell. On closer examination, however, participation in the domain of understanding promotes a virtuous manly ideal of high competence. Remains the observation that in this story there is the experience of the foetus in the womb, which makes the understanding of what God is doing to a large degree a bodily understanding. Manly virtuousness, be it hypaethral, is in this passage not quite disembodied. In the following passages we will witness this bodily turn again.

5.4 Conclusion

In this section I have examined the representation of Elisabeth and Mary from the perspective of gender. We saw Elisabeth, much like the statue of the matron-like priestess, on the axis between ambiguity and moral virtuousness. This was due to her exemplary law abiding attitude and her priestly descent. As a daughter of Aaron she was able to take over speech where Zachariah was

[304] The quotation from Deut 28:4 LXX is not a literal one. Luke 1:42b reads καρπός instead of ἔκγονα. It should be noted that both Luke 1:42b and Deut 28:4 LXX use the word καρπός instead of γένημα. Γένημα is the more usual word for *that which is begotten* or *born* (LEH s.v. γένημα), while καρπός is in LXX less frequent as a metaphor for a human child. The expression καρπον κοιλίας occurs also in the dialogue between Rachel and Jacob (Gen 30:2). On καρπός, see also Ps 126 (127):3; Ps 131 (132):11 (A S[1]); Mic 6:7 καρπὸν κοιλίας μου, which is remarkable as this would imply a woman speaker; Lament. 2.20.

silenced. Although the only place where she was allowed to speak publicly was at the name giving of her son, she showed a keen insight in the way God acts when she was in the private setting of her home, the difference between private and public being highlighted by narratological means, in particular through the antithesis between *his* public silence and *her* private scream. Mary, on the other hand, started in the position of girls who are about to marry, what I have called the Corinthian position. In her dialogue with the angel, however, she showed herself sensitive to the divine protection offered to her. When she entered the house of Elisabeth, narratological means interacted to give the impression that both characters somehow merge in virtuous understanding.

It belongs to the double message of the Third Gospel that these two women, who show a keen understanding competence (on the vertical axis), are at the same time encapsulated by ambiguous words that tend to evoke a sexual code (on the horizontal axis). The "disgrace" of Elisabeth would seem to denote her barren state itself, while actually slanderous talk is involved. The "knowing" of Mary would seem to denote sexual intercourse, though actually a social category is referred to, while likewise the idea that her "overshadowing" implied a sexual connotation cannot be substantiated, while rather the connotation of divine protection is prevalent. What is complicating the notion of a double message is that virtuous understanding is basically an evasive manly enterprise, as a bodily aspect is involved. Though the precise meaning of this has yet to be established.

6. "Let Us See the Word that Happened": The Shepherds (Luke 2:1–20)

With the beginning of Luke 2, the scene changes. Did the first chapter start with the reign of king Herod, basically a foreigner to both Romans and Judeans, now the scene is dominated by the emperor himself. The emperor in early imperial rule represents per force the highest degree of virtuous manliness. It is not surprising to see that the field of contention is now explicitly the word itself. The emperor may exercise control over the whole world through his word, it is God who makes his Word happen to all the peoples. With the narrative of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1–20) we are in the midst of the real thing: whose word will come to pass? I will first discuss the emperor's dogma (section 6.1) and continue with the shepherds (section 6.2).

6.1 The Emperor's Dogma

The second chapter starts with the introduction of the Roman emperor, his representative in Judea the governor Quirinius, and, most interesting of all, the emperor's δόγμα, his "imperial decree." Was the narrative sequence of the first chapter dominated by the angel in the name of God, now in the second chapter the narrative sequence is initiated by the decree in the name of the emperor. Apparently, the emperor and God are installed as narrative competitors.[305] As narrative characters, both the angel and the δόγμα, the imperial decree, represent sublime, abstract forces, that have the power to initiate a sequence of events.[306] They act through words, spoken or written. In Roman manliness discourse, there is a preference for the spoken word, especially the commanding performative word.[307] The written word of the emperor's decree is an extension of the emperor's spoken word, just as the written word of Scripture is the condensation of God's spoken word. As we have seen in Luke 1, God's word is effective: once it is spoken, it happens. In Luke 2 the emperor's word is at first sight not less effective, as his decree happens at once: ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. αὕτη ἀπογραφὴ ... ἐγένετο, "there came a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world must be registered. This registration took place ..." (2:1–2)

[305] A comparable case can be found in the Esther Scroll. According Brenner (1989), King Ahasuerus has no narrative counterpart as this would run counter to kingship ideology, but later she admits that it would be possible to "consider the absent God, the `other place' of [Esther] 4.14, as his counterpart." (1995: 76). According to Robbins (1994: 191) there is also a tension between, on the one hand, God/angel in Luke 1:26–56 and, on the other hand, the emperor/King Agrippa in Acts 25:13 – 26:32, representing "an inner tension in the discourse of Luke-Acts."

[306] In semiotic terms, God and emperor act as a *destinateur*. On the concept of destinateur, cf. Greimas and Courtés 1979: 94–95.

[307] Gleason 1999: 79–82; cf. Alexander 1990.

The emperor, within the moral pattern established in early imperial rule, represents per force the highest degree of virtuous manliness.[308] As I have explained, the emperor represents himself the empire as a morally well structured and coherent entity. There is a tendency to what I have called the elusive body, an ideal of incorporeity, that is not per se non-male, but rather supra-male or beyond male. Good order, moral (manly) virtue, empire, and emperor ultimately coincide. How would the God of the biblical imagery evoked by Luke-Acts relate to this all-pervasive imperial body? At stake is mastery, that is, mastery of the wor(l)d. The reader of course knows in advance that the hero to be born, Jesus, will die in the end at the hands of Roman occupying forces. He will die an unmanly death, being humiliated and crucified. But in the end of Luke-Acts, the word of God will be heard in the heart of the emperor's power, Rome. Now, in Luke 2, we get the first physical appearance of God's word, traditionally called its incarnation. Incarnation is far from gender-neutral. Within the gender logic of the time Jesus must be a virtuous manly child anyway. Thus, against the imperial tendency towards incorporeity, the gospel sets up a new body that shows a virtuous manliness right from the beginning, as Luke 2 concludes with the narrative of the virtuous performance of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple.

The emperor's pretentions are hyperbolic and compete with the biblical God. The emperor's decree envisions no less than πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, "the whole inhabited world" (2:1). The οἰκουμένη is originally the civilised (Greek) world and, by extension, the whole inhabited world. By the time of the New Testament the word came to denote the Roman empire and hyperbolically the whole world.[309] The decree is also far reaching, as the command to register, repeated even another three times (2:2, 3, 5), reaches as far as the Roman Provincia Syria, and right into the smallest places, to Nazareth in Galilee, to Bethlehem in Judea (2:4), and is even felt in a hayrack in a caravanserai (2:6–7). The competing element in this becomes more clear when we realise that the decree really pertained to a fiscal census.[310] Whether or not this event actually took place in this way seems irrelevant, as we have here to do in the first place with a literary construct painting the emperor's pretentions. In terms of Roman manliness, exercising the power to collect taxes is a token of mastery and subjugation.[311] In biblical terms, however, registration of the people is an activity that is only allowed to God; for each person that is numbered, a ransom has to be paid to God (Exod 30:11–16). In Numbers, it is God who

[308] On Caesar Augustus and the imperial male body, cf. Conway 2008: 39–49.
[309] BDAG s.v. οἰκουμένη.
[310] BDAG s.v. ἀπογράφω: "to register," especially as "official registration in tax lists." It is a taxation held every fourteen years of someone's possessions, the so-called κατ' οικιαν απογραφη, which could entail that someone had to return to his or her own possessions in his or her own city (Barnett 1973).
[311] Gleason 1999: 82–83.

orders a census (Num 1). When the people ask Samuel to appoint them a king, Samuel warns them that a king might want to tax his people (1 Sam 8:11–17). King David counted all the people of Israel and Judah, a sinful activity as he noticed himself, eliciting the wrath of God (2 Sam 24:1–17), while elsewhere it is said that Satan incited David to hold a census (1 Chron 21:1–6). King Joab, finally, started a census, but stopped in fear of God's wrath (1 Chr 27:24). Besides, the term came to be used as referring to the records kept by God in the book of life.[312]

The emperor's decree, as a literary construct, must be understood as an instance of Roman "power play." I wonder whether there is already a moral (gendered) evaluation implied in the literary construct. Not only is the area in which the census was to be held, "the whole inhabited world," described in a hyperbolic, exaggerated way, so too is the information that ἐπορεύοντο πάντες ἀπογράφεσθαι, ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ πόλιν, "all went to be taxed, every one into his own city" (2:3). A full migration of people certainly would not have suited the purposes of an occupying force (Gollwitzer and Lapide 1981). It looks as if the emperor in this narrative has forgotten virtues like self-constraint and a sense of good proportion. The emperor's proceeding is excessive. To put it differently, and in terms of my gender model, it looks as if this emperor does not operate in the position of hypaethral domination, but exercises from the Doric position of martial suppression and herculean force. Perhaps we may remind the emperor of the words spoken in Vergil's very "Augustan" epic *Aeneis* by Anchises: "remember, o Roman, to rule the people with authority … to add morals to peace, to spare the subjected, to precipitate the proud" (*Aen*. 6.851–853). If this makes sense, the verdict over the emperor is clear right from the start, as we may expect that the biblical God will not fail in virtuous respect (actually, in the Magnificat this God already precipitated the proud, cf. Luke 1:51). The male emperor will be ousted by the truly hypaethral God. The story of the shepherds gives an impression of the way this God proceeds.

6.2 The (Good) Shepherds

The shepherds are such a well-known element of modern romantic Christmas representation, that we may easily forget that they are a substantial part of biblical diffuse intertextuality of a definitely less romantic kind. We should not be surprised to find shepherds in the biblical imagery as we are in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, the city of David in his role as shepherd; the place also were David was anointed king instead of the rejected Saul (1 Sam 16:13). It is telling that only the Third Gospel calls Bethlehem "city of David," while in Tanak Jerusalem is

[312] BDAG s.v. ἀπογράφω.

mentioned as such. The occurrence of shepherds and sheep also evokes a prophetical context, closely related to the Davidic experience. Metaphorically, shepherds and sheep refer to the leaders and the people of Israel. Ezekiel 34 denounces the leaders of Israel as they are bad shepherds who fail to take care of the flock (Ezek 34:2), as they rather take care of themselves (Ezek 34:8). God will be a good shepherd (Ezek 34:11–16), who will lead the sheep to peace, so that they will no longer be plundered by the nations (Ezek 34:28). This metaphor is also resounding in the New Testament, together with Psalm 23, in the parable of the good shepherd (John 10:1–20).

The shepherd metaphor in Luke 2 draws full attention precisely to the power contest (or so it seems) between emperor and God. The point in the Ezekiel reference is that the shepherds, considered as metaphor for the leaders of the people, are not necessarily good shepherds. A shepherd is someone who should not only take care of his flock, rather than of his own interests, he should also be able to distinguish between the fat sheep and the lean sheep (Ezek 34:20) and protect the lean. A good shepherd is, therefore, a pre-eminently competent interpreter, with a clear political eye. So are the shepherds in Luke 2:1–20. They do understand that "the city of David" (2:11) is Bethlehem, the city of the "real" shepherd (2:15), instead of Jerusalem, the city of the political and religious shepherds who left the sheep to be plundered by the nations and failed to protect the lean sheep. They also understand that the word that is spoken by the angels has happened so that it can be seen, when they say ἴδωμεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο τὸ γεγονὸς, "let us see this word that has happened" (2:15). Even before they have seen, they already know that it has happened.

In view of the narrator's aim set out in the preface, these shepherds are model interpreters. The word that is spoken (ῥῆμα) is believed. They underline this competence when they say ὃ ὁ κύριος ἐγνώρισεν ἡμῖν, "which the Lord has made known to us" (2:15). The word is witnessed, hence they are prepared to witness in their turn. After they have seen, they make known the word (ἐγνώρισαν περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος, 2:17) that was told to them. That is, after having heard the word, they have verified by themselves what they have heard, so that they have become eyewitnesses themselves and trustworthy proclaimers of the gospel. As such the shepherds are indeed competent in responding to the aim set out by the preface.

6.3 Conclusion

Luke 2 begins with staging what at first sight looks like a confrontation between Roman imperial rule and the biblical God. The census organised by the emperor, whatever the historical value of

the account may be, can be understood as a hyperbolical, overstretched appropriation of divine prerogative. On closer examination there is an aspect involved of what we would want to call gender. The emperor's power play, precisely because it is exaggerated, lacks moral virtuousness, hence manliness. It is martial or herculean work, not the sensible rule of an occupied region as would be advised by Augustan literature. The real high virtuousness of the biblical God appears in the scene with the shepherds when the birth of Jesus is announced to them. The shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem can be considered as a prophetic metaphor for the kind of perceptive and morally just leadership that is required. They at once understand, they go to see the spoken word, and return to witness in their turn. In this respect they exemplify the ideal interpreter of the preface.

7. Sublime Vision and Double Trouble: Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:21–38)

After the scene with the shepherds, there is now a second group gathered around the newborn child Jesus. Two elderly people in the temple precincts, Simeon and Anna, approach at the moment when the child is symbolically presented to God as the firstborn of his parents. The scene is traditionally called, therefore, the Presentation in the temple (2:22–38). Simeon is characterised as just and pious, while Anna is an old widow and a prophetess. It is remarkable that the words of Simeon are cited for over six verses, where he is even allowed to sing his Song, known through its use in later Christian liturgy as the Nunc Dimittis (2:29–32. 34–35), while the words of the prophetess Anna are only related briefly, in just half a verse, and in oblique speech besides (2:38). We should not be surprised at this division of speech, as speaking in public was a man's affair. On the other hand, the narrative role of a prophetess would require direct speech, as the books of Tanak offer instances of substantial prophetical styled addresses delivered by women, for instance by Deborah in Judges 4–5.[313] This leaves us with the question why the narrative should insist on Anna being a prophetess, when she is hardly allowed to speak. Furthermore, quite a lot of details are given about Anna's life, in contrast to her narrative counterpart Simeon, who is only introduced in a more abstract, almost incorporeal way. Do we really have to be satisfied with a lot of personal details when a woman is concerned, while for a man it would be enough to highlight his elevated behaviour?

In the following, I will start with Simeon's spiritual, incorporeal being (section 7.1) and then proceed with Anna's widowhood (section 7.2). I will conclude that Simeon is as close to the hypaethral position as can be; Anna, however, seems indeed invested with a double message, although on closer inspection we have rather to do with the new body.

[313] Figueras (1978) argues that we have a passage from the Law to the Prophets here. The Law would be represented by Simeon, who like Moses before him is not allowed to see the ultimate fulfilment (the promised land and the promised Messiah respectively), while Anna would represent the Prophets, that is the realisation of the messianic promise here and now. Figueras' suggestion would be a nice allegory (especially the realisation of prophecy in the old widow appeals to me), were it not for the implied bias that the Law is surpassed by the Messiah. A similar track is followed by Manelli (1995: 272 n. 17). On Simeon's song, cf. e.g. Grelot 1986 and Koet 1992. Derrett (1993) bypasses this aspect of Hannah, focusing on her widowhood. Chesnutt (1991: 121–122) does not address the silence of Anna, but takes the fact that she is called a prophetess as a sign "that prophetesses were accepted and respected in at least some early Christian circles."

7.1 Sublime Vision: Simeon

Simeon expects the consolation of Israel (2:25) and recognises the child Jesus as a sign of the fulfilment of his expectations (2:29–30). His words are prophetically styled: in Luke 2:32 he refers to Isaiah's prophecy about the Servant of the Lord, who will be given as a φῶς ἐθνῶν, "a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6; 49:6), which will mean salvation given to Israel in Sion for glory (εἰς δόξασμα) to Israel (Isa 46:13). The words of Simeon may reflect common expectations. There is a connection between φῶς and δόξα in a contemporary pseudepigraphon, the *Vita prophetarum* 12:10 about the prophet Habakkuk: "he gave a sign to the people in Judea, that they would see ἐν τῷ ναῷ φῶς, "a light in the temple," and thus they would know τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ναοῦ, "the glory of the temple,"[314] referring to the presence of God's glory appearing in the end of times (2 Chr 7:1–3). Here, as in Luke 2:32, we see the light and the glory shining in the temple. The idea of a prophetic appearance of Simeon seems, therefore, pertinent.

Although Simeon's prophetically styled presence may seem manly enough, what really attracts attention is his extremely hypaethral characterisation. He just seems to have no body at all. An ἄνθρωπος, "a human," (2:25) rather than an ἀνήρ, "a man," his behaviour is just and pious; holy spirit is already upon him (2:25); he speaks to God (2:29); his eyes have seen God's salvation (2:20); he is ready to go (2:26. 29). In short, Simeon is a divine man. The sublime character of Simeon is reinforced by a diffuse intertextual reference through his name, to the books of the Maccabees, where we find a Simon the Maccabean (1 Macc 13–16).[315] In the year 40 BC Simon the Maccabean liberated Jerusalem and other Judean cities from the Syrians, after centuries of occupation. The feeling of independence is voiced by the poem in 1 Maccabees 14. The superpowers of those days, Rome, Sparta, and Syria, recognised the newly formed state, Simon is praised and the new state is offered their protection. In this rather euphoric situation, Simon is made leader of the people and high-priest forever by the Judeans, until a reliable prophet rises. As it came to pass, Simon was murdered before this reliable prophet arose, but apparently his memory lived on. In Luke 2, his memory is, as it were, substantiated in a kind of lingering semi-spiritual being, for ἦλθεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν· "he went in the spirit to the temple" (a temple that did not exist any longer in the time the Third Gospel was written). As it is said to him ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον πρὶν [ἢ] ἂν ἴδῃ τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου, "by the holy ghost that would not see death until he would have seen the Messiah of the Lord" (Luke 2:26), words that do remind us of Simon the Maccabean, who would be priest "forever

[314] Text and translation Torrey 1946.

[315] The name Συμεών is a transliteration of the Hebrew name. A Greek rendering would be Σίμων (as in Acts 8:9). The best known Simeon is one of the children of Leah (Gen 29: 33).

until a reliable prophet rises," now that a reliable prophet has appeared in Jesus, his soul finally may to come to rest, as he says νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου, δέσποτα / κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ· "now let go your servant, lord, after your word in peace" (2:29).

It would perhaps be too much, and certainly a serious lack of due reverence, to call Simeon a temple zombie, but the fact remains that Simeon is the most hypaethral appearance in these chapters. He is the one who puts before our eyes what it is to see as an eyewitness, and to fully understand. With the prophetess Anna he makes a narrative pair, but Anna is almost the opposite, that is, at face value.

7.2 Double Trouble: Anna

Anna stands in remarkable narrative contrast to Simeon. She is characterised in detail, as a widow of eighty-four, as a daughter of Phanuel, and as a prophetess. Despite the suggestion of preciseness these remarks are on closer inspection rather vague. Her descent as θυγάτηρ Φανουήλ, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσήρ, "a daughter of Phanuel from the tribe Asher" (2:36) may sound well informed, but the tribe Asher seems to convey only a notion of insignificance, while the name Phanuel does not seem to offer a clue, as this name is only found in 1 Chr 4:4. 8 in the Bible as a person's name, figuring in a name list without any additional information.[316] Anna's descent, like the entire biblical imagery in Luke 1–2, only seems to serve the biblical experience. On closer inspection, however, I have the impression that the information concerning Anna is not given at random.

If we turn for instance to contemporary pseudepigrapha, we find the name Phanuel on several occasions. In 1 Enoch 40:9, in the Book of Parables, of debated origin but probably stemming from the late first century BCE or the early decades of the first century CE, Phanuel, according to the Ethiopic text, substitutes for Uriel as one of the four angels of presence, who stand before God's throne.[317] Here Phanuel appears as the angel of repentance.[318] In another pseudepigraphon, the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (or 3 Baruch), probably composed shortly

[316] As the name of a city or place, we find the name Φανουήλ in LXX Judges 8:8–9, where Gideon in vain asks for bread for his men, and in Philo, *Conf*. 26 [129] as the name of the tower of Babel (Cohn and Wendland 1897: 253). It is likely that the name refers to the Hebrew name of the place Peniel (or Penuel) in Gen 32:30, although LXX chooses to translate this name as εἶδος θεοῦ (Kulik 2010: 94).

[317] On the date of the Book of Parables in 1 Enoch, see esp. Suter 2007; Stone 2007; Charlesworth 2007. I accept the dating by Charlesworth. In the Slavonic mss. of 3 Baruch, probably representing an older Greek version, we find in 4:7 a list of four angels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel/Phanuel, and Raphael, which would reflect a tradition in which Uriel is substituted for Phanuel (Kulik 2010: 94).

[318] "The fourth, who is over all action of repentance unto the hope of those who would inherit eternal life, is Phanuel by name" (1 En. 40:9, translation Kulik 2010: 94).

after Luke 1–2,[319] the name Phanuel (or: Panuel) occurs in the Slavonic text (3 Bar. 1:2; 2:5) as the angel who leads Baruch through the heavens, whereas the Greek text reads Phamael, probably a corruption of Phanuel (3 Bar. 2:5).[320] In the Greek text this angel is called ὁ ἄγγελος τῶν δυνάμεων, "the angel of hosts (or: of powers)" (3 Bar. 1:8; 2:6), and an archangel (3 Bar. 10:1); in particular this angel appears as the *angelus interpres,* ὁ τὰς ἀποκαλύψεις διερμηνεύων, "the interpreter of the revelations" (3 Bar. 11:7) who leads Baruch through five heavens showing him that, now that the temple of Jerusalem is destroyed, worship in heaven still continues.[321] It would seem that the name of Phanuel circulated in the context of understanding the revelations. Could this information be brought to bear on the prophetess Anna? After all, like the Phanuel of 3 Baruch, the Phanuel of Luke 2 is mentioned in a revelatory context in which the events (the child Jesus presented in the temple) are understood as a sign of consolation and redemption. It seems probable that the name Phanuel serves, again, to prepare the reader for the right biblical, in this case revelatory experience.

In this context, it must be noted that Anna ἀνθωμολογεῖτο τῷ θεῷ, "praised God" (2:38). The verb ἀνθομολογέομαι, "to praise," is a *hapax* in the New Testament. In Koine Greek the verb denotes acceptance or recognition.[322] Thus, we read in Sirach 20:3 ὁ ἀνθομολογούμενος ἀπὸ ἐλαττώσεως κωλυθήσεται, "who recognises/confesses his fault shall be preserved from hurt." In the Third Gospel it is assumed to mean "to praise (God)," like for instance in Psalm 78:13 LXX. This Psalm is about the devastation of Jerusalem and its temple, the recognition of sins, and a prayer for redemption and retribution to those who humiliated God. It is possible that the verb ἀνθωμολογέομαι in Luke 2:38 evokes the memory of the destruction of Jerusalem and proclaims its liberation, precisely as Anna says. Anna, called a prophetess and bearing a hereditary name suggesting revelatory vision of the continuity of the Jerusalem temple cult after the destruction of the physical temple, speaks out well-know words about the salvation of Jerusalem.

In view of her prophetic vocation and, indeed, her competence in finding the right response to what she sees, even as her words are only conveyed in oblique speech, Anna must be regarded as a woman high on the vertical axis of the gender map. Perhaps she is in the same sublime position as Simeon, but apparently the narrator is not yet prepared to let her go. It is as if she is still needed, as there are elements of characterisation (her widowhood and her old-age) that somehow detract from this sublime position. Again we see elements suggesting a double

[319] Picard 1967: 81–96. On the date, cf. Charlesworth 1983: 86; Kulik 2010: 12.
[320] Panuel/Phamael/Phanuel in 3 Baruch, cf. Kulik 2010: 94–95; 132–133.
[321] "The angel of hosts/powers" Kulik 2010: 104, 120, 133; "the interpreter of the revelations, cf. Kulik 2010: 338.
[322] BDAG s.v. ἀνθομολογέομαι, "praise, thank (publicly express thanks or recognition)."

message. Let me turn, therefore, to these two elements, widowhood and old-age, and look how they fit together in the field of gender.

The position of widows in Greco-Roman Judea, as in classical and late antiquity as a whole, was far from bright, at least so as a literary topos (Archer 1990: 182–187, 268–270). In a biblical frame, widows are usually portrayed as one of those poor groups "that had to be protected against unjust treatment from judges and other people of influence" (Praeder 1988: 54). Various biblical precepts and curses bear witness to the injustice from which widows suffered.[323] God is presented as protector of widows.[324] The idea of unjustly treated widows is undoubtedly the background to the parable of the judge and the widow (Luke 18:1–8), where a widow has to go to court in order to obtain her legal dues.[325] That widows could be very poor is illustrated by the story of the widow in Mark 12:41–44 // Luke 21:1–4. The need to support widows was urgent enough to cause problems in the early Christian community in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–6; 9:39). Generally speaking, "that the lot of the widow was frequently not a happy one is amply testified by the repeated appeal of writers of the period to show her mercy and charity" (Archer 1990: 184). With regard to Anna this would mean that her characterisation as a widow would at once evoke a connotation of poorness and suffering from injustice. That she is introduced as "daughter of" is remarkable, as "mother of" or "of the house of" would be more proper to a widow. The words "daughter of" combined with "widow" may indicate that her husband's family did not care for her.[326]

The age of eighty-four surprises both in view of the high age and of its preciseness. Given the average life expectancy in the ancient world, eighty-four is a fairly old age.[327] This may reflect the tendency in antiquity to ascribe high numbers of years to elderly people,[328] a tendency that could very well be inspired by biblical indications of high age as a marker of righteousness. But in that case one would expect a round number.[329] In view of the historical unlikelihood to keep record of precise high ages, the number eighty-four must be of a deliberate

[323] See, e.g., Exod 22:21–23; Deut 27:19; Isa 10:1–2; Jer 22:3; Ezek 22:7.
[324] See, e.g., Ps 68:5; Exod 22:21–24; Deut 10:17–18; Sir 35:12–14; Mal 3:5.
[325] Derrett 1972: 187; Praeder 1988: 51–71.
[326] See Irvin (1980), who on the basis of inscriptional evidence notes that a widow is no longer "wife of." She may be identified as "mother of" or may have some other descriptive phrase after her first name to set her apart from others having the same first name" (77). See for comparable conclusions also Brooten 1985 and Archer 1990: 269. There was also the possibility that a woman was widowed while there were no heirs to fulfil the maintenance which was her due. In 1 Timothy we find this category of "a real widow standing alone" (χήρα καὶ μεμονωμένη, 1 Tim 5:5). This, too, might be the reason that Hannah in 2.36 is not defined as "mother of."
[327] Van der Horst (1991:73–84) discusses epigraphical evidence from contemporary Jewish tombstones, *i.a*. pertaining to the age of the buried persons. Codex Sinaiticus (first hand) on Luke 2:37 probably had the same experience, reading the age of 74, which seems more realistic.
[328] As observed by Van der Horst 1991: 77–78, 83.
[329] Van der Horst 1991: 76–77, 82.

pseudo preciseness. Maybe we could read her longevity as a sign for a general longing for "the liberation of Jerusalem," or even, as eighty-four is seven times twelve, as a number to represent the fullness of Israel's tribes.

As an old widow, Anna should be located on the gender-map in the domain of ambiguity. Her widowhood is in the ancient gender logic a physical hindrance preventing her from exercising full virtuous behaviour, however competent she may be in scriptural respect. Her position is vulnerable and unstable. As representation follows behaviour, Anna is not allowed to speak in direct speech. This leads to the paradoxical situation that Anna is in double trouble: as a prophetess she proclaims liberation speaking in the hypaethral position, while as a widow (and probably a neglected one) she belongs to those who are in the ambiguous position of physical or social defect, who will benefit from this prophecy in the first place. Her double position, hypaethral and ambiguous, is visible in a metaphorical way in the remark that ἣ οὐκ ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ … λατρευουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν, "she did not yield from the temple, serving [God] night and day" (2:37). This means that she did no longer belong to her deceased husband's *oikos*, she choose the temple to be her new *oikos*. A similar attitude is told of the widow who claimed her legal dues in Luke 18:7, τών βοώντων … ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, "calling to God day and night." We find this attitude also reflected in 1 Timothy 5:5, though of somewhat later date, where the widow hopes on God and keeps praying night and day. Moreover, this remark reminds us of the earlier mentioned diffuse intertextual link to Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Hannah, barren and therefore scorned, fasted and prayed in the temple, asking God for a child (1 Sam 1:2). Just so, one might say, Anna receives a child—the child Jesus—in the temple.

In short, the story about Anna provides us with yet another instance of the double message. She is a hypaethral character in view of her prophecy, testifying to keen scriptural understanding. Nevertheless, she is not allowed to speak directly, as she is also a widow in a vulnerable position, which qualifies her in virtuous respect for the field of ambiguity. On closer inspection, however, there is not really a double message. The widow Anna belongs to the group of humiliated people who benefit from the prophecy of liberation voiced first by Mary/Elisabeth and then by Anna herself. Again, receiving a child (be it one's "own" child, be it the child Jesus) is not a qualifier for a female position as one might suspect, but rather an assurance of excellent behaviour in terms of the Law, and thus a way to the hypaethral position. There is no double message really, but she has to do double trouble: to overcome the hindrance of the ambiguous position and to perform virtuously.

7.3 Conclusion

Like the shepherds, Simeon and Anna should be understood metaphorically. Their representation, however, testifies to an ancient gender logic. Simeon is an outstandingly hypaethral character, incorporeal to a high degree, evoking the memory of the high priest who would not die until a reliable prophet would arrive. His words spoken to Jesus suggest that now finally he has seen this prophet, he may go at last. Anna as a prophetess is likewise in a hypaethral position, competent in biblical language and envisioning the liberation of Jerusalem, although we do not hear her words in direct speech. As an old widow, she is in an ambiguous position, dependent and too old to ever be with child (again) to care for her, that is, she is the exemplary addressee of her own promise of liberation. Thus Anna is in double trouble, to overcome her ambiguity and then be able to give public voice to her prophecy. When she receives, metaphorically, the child Jesus, she is, in a way, restored to the virtuous position.

8. "The [Things] of My Father": The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:40–52)

A third meeting with Jesus (the second in the temple) takes place after an interval of twelve years. The setting of this passage is the yearly Pesach pilgrimage to Jerusalem (2:41). When his parents return home, it appears that Jesus has stayed behind. After a three-days' search, they find him in the temple, discussing with the teachers. Mary's question, τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως; ἰδοὺ ὁ πατήρ σου κἀγὼ ... ἐζητοῦμέν σε, "why have you done this to us? Your father and I … have been searching for you" (2:48), is countered by Jesus with the words, οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με; "did you not know I had to be in the [things] of my father?" (2:49), an enigmatic answer that has elicited much discussion.[330] Again the narrative's main focus is on understanding, the top marker of virtuous manliness that is called for in the preface with the words ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς, "in order that you may understand," (1:4). I will argue that in this passage the understanding called for in the preface is brought to an apotheosis in the exemplary understanding of Jesus.

The importance of understanding in this narrative appears from the frequent use of verbs belonging to this semantic field: γινώσκω (2:43), οἶδα (2:49), συνίημι (2:47. 50), νομίζω (2:44), and, as I will argue, in a certain sense also ἐκπλήσσομαι (2:48). Understanding is what is needed to make sense of the ambiguous words ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου. What could these words mean? Who, in the first place, is this father? If it is not Joseph, is it God, or perhaps Abraham? And what is the meaning of this enigmatic ellipsis conveyed by ἐν τοῖς, "in the [things]"? I will defend that the narrative is playing with these words in order to trigger a right understanding of what is exactly happening here. The ellipsis is elusive, but metonymically it points to hypaethral manliness as an ideal that has to be understood by the reader.

8.1 The Ambiguity of Being Overwhelmed

Around the age of twelve, children generally begin to reach for maturity. Children at this age are gradually leaving their metaphorical existence, the family, and start to interact through metonymical relationships with relative strangers, with the external world. In this way, children will grow more or less successfully into the (hegemonic) symbolic order. Applying this psychological code, derived from Lacan, to the narrative, it appears that the narrative is, indeed,

[330] A summary and discussion of various positions is provided by Laurentin 1966: 38–76 and Fitzmyer 1981a: 434–444.

about growing into the symbolic order, though it remains to be seen which symbolic order. The two verses by which the narrative is enclosed, verses 40 and 52, already emphasise the importance of growing, both in wisdom and in age. Furthermore, the main scene is set among the teachers in the temple. We may safely assume that these teachers are all men, and that they are religious teachers in the matter that may be expected to be taught in the temple, the Scriptures, that is, the books of Tanak, and the corpus of its interpreters. These teachers, therefore, may be taken to represent the symbolic order Jesus is about to enter.[331] The surprising thing is, that Jesus shows himself already highly competent in dealing with the discourse that goes with this symbolic order: he is listening and asking questions (2:46), and he shows insight through his understanding and answers (2:47), to such a degree even that everyone is perplexed. Particularly remarkable is the position Jesus takes, καθεζόμενον ἐν μέσῳ τῶν διδασκάλων, "seated in the midst of the teachers" (2:46), instead of being seated at the feet of the teachers, as would suit a student, such as Paul who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). We see Jesus speaking and being seated as if he were already one of the teachers himself, just the way he appears again in Luke 5:3, seated as a teacher.[332]

When Jesus' parents find him, seated among the teachers, Mary rebukes him for his absence, referring to the distress experienced by his father and herself (2:48). In my third chapter, I will go deeper into this short dialogue between Mary and Jesus. At this point, it is the verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι that draws my attention. The narrator informs us, that ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐξεπλάγησαν, "when they saw him, they were startled" (2:48). In Luke-Acts, we encounter the verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι three times more, each time as a response to Jesus' teaching (Luke 4:32; 9:43; Acts 13:12). In these instances, the verb conveys feelings of wonder and astonishment. In this sense we find the word stem also used in contemporary rhetorical literature, for instance in Longinus, *On the Sublime* (first century CE), where ἔκπληξις denotes the effect upon the reader/hearer of amazement due to the irresistible power and mastery of what has been said:

> πάντη δέ γε σὺν ἐκπλήξει τοῦ πιθανοῦ καὶ τοῦ πρὸς χάριν ἀεὶ κρατεῖ τὸ θαυμάσιον, εἴγε τὸ μὲν πιθανὸν ὡς τὰ πολλὰ ἐφ ἡμῖν, ταῦτα δὲ δυναστείαν καὶ βίαν ἄμαχον προσφέροντα παντὸς ἐπάνω τοῦ ἀκροωμένου καθίσταται (*Subl.* 1.4)

[331] As Fitzmyer (1981a: 438) says it: "[Jesus] is now shown to be one trained in the Torah and its requirements and fulfilling his obligations, even in advance."

[332] I find it remarkable that Creed (1930: 45) focuses on 2:46 only, that is, the verse in which Jesus listens to what is said and asks questions, and bypasses 2:47, where everyone is struck by his understanding and his answers. Thus, Creed is able to conclude that "in Luke the boy is a genuine learner," in which Creed is followed by Fitzmyer (1981a: 442). Clearly, Jesus is portrayed here already as a teacher himself.

> Invariably what inspires wonder, with its power of amazing us, always prevails over what is merely convincing and pleasing. For our persuasions are usually under control, while these things exercise an irresistible power and mastery, and get the better of every listener. (Transl. Russell, in Halliwell, Russel and Innes 1995: 163)

In view of the ideal of ancient high manliness, the word ἔκπληξις in this Longinus passage is remarkable. Being under the spell of a mastery and irresistible force over the mind is an ambiguous experience, as you lose your control over "what is convincing," which must have a degrading effect on the scale of manliness. At the same time, however, the experience of the sublime, the context in which Longinus is speaking here, offers the idea of a transcendent insight. In Longinus, this effect is clearly gendered, when he adduces the example of the emotional vehemence of the orator Demosthenes (*Subl.* 12.5; 22.3–4). Obviously, the vocabulary of ἔκπληξις is part of the hearers' experience of the sublime (Halliwell 2011: 332–334). It has, indeed, a "stunning effect on the mind that is compatible with various emotions, including tragic pity and fear" (Halliwell 2011: 332).[333]

When we return to Jesus' parents, the point is that they are not simply amazed at seeing their son seated among the teachers in the temple. Such a reading would be too homely. They are mastered, overwhelmed so to say. This is an irrational effect, through which the absolute mastery of the other in terms of manliness is recognised. This experience is quite the opposite of the clear understanding, reached at by research of oral accounts, called for in Luke's preface. In my Vitruvian gender map, Jesus' parents are clearly in the Ionic position, the *mediocritas*, where ambiguity is enacted and where the trajectory towards hypaethral understanding is set in motion. Jesus' performance in the temple should be interpreted as an act of (sublime) teaching, precisely because of the response conveyed through the verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι. His parents now have to travel their way to clear understanding, the hypaethral position. But will they? And will we, as readers? Jesus offers a clue, though an ambiguous one: οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με; "did you not know that I had to be in the [things] of my father?" (2:49)

[333] The verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι is used, e.g., in Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*, where Antigone is not ἐκπεπληγμένην, "terrified," when she is suddenly hunted down (like an animal) by Creon's guardsmen (σὺν δέ νιν θηρώμεθ᾽ εὐθὺς οὐδὲν ἐκπεπληγμένην, "together we immediately hunted her down, she who was in no way terrified," *Ant*. 432–433, Lloyd-Jones 1994). It is interesting to see that the translation of *Antigone*, offered by Lloyd-Jones shows the same tendency to soften the otherwise strong connotation of the verb: "we … at once seized her, she being in no way surprised" (Lloyd-Jones 1994: 43).

8.2 The [Things] of My Father

The words of Jesus, οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με; "did you not know that I had to be in the [things] of my father?" (2:49) give rise to at least two questions: (1) who could be meant by this father? And (2) what could possibly be referred to by the ellipsis of "in the [things]"?

Let me start with the ambiguity of the father metaphor.[334] Which father is meant? Joseph? In that case Jesus' answer would not make much sense. Or rather God? Although God is frequently called father in Tanak,[335] and Jesus himself does call God father,[336] we should not jump to conclusions, as it seems just as well possible in a Jewish context to think of Abraham as father, especially in view of the important role played by Abraham in Luke.[337] Not surprisingly, therefore, Jesus' parents οὐ συνῆκαν τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς, "did not understand the saying that he spoke to them" (2:50).[338] How should the words ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου be interpreted? Various solutions have been proposed. When "my father" does indeed refer to God, it would make sense to interpret the words ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου as "in my Father's house," especially so as the construction of an article neuter plural with a genitive denoting "the house of" frequently occurs in biblical and extrabiblical literature.[339] Although this interpretation is by now widely accepted, that is, that the words refer to the temple, I wonder whether the temple is really referred to. Admittedly, in biblical literature, the temple is called "my house," "a house of prayer," or even the "house of God," but when Jesus speaks about "the house of my Father," in John 14:2, it is not about the Jerusalem temple.[340]

The words of Psalm 27 (Psalm 26 LXX) may put us on a track, for in this psalm we hear about dwelling in the temple as the house of God, to behold the beauty of God and to make inquiries, while father and mother are not there. Thus, we read in the verses 4 and 10,

[334] On the meaning of *father*, cf. the survey in Laurentin 1966: 72–76.

[335] E.g., Deut 32:6; Isa 63:15; 64:7; Jer 3:4. 19; 31:9; Mal 2:10; Ps 89:27; 103:13; Sir 51:10 MT; Sir 23:1. 4 LXX; Tob 13:4 LXX; Wis 2:16; 14:3 LXX.

[336] E.g., Luke 11:2; Mark. 14:36; and of course frequently in John, e.g., John 17.

[337] E.g., Luke 1:73; John 8:56; Jas 2:21. On the "Abrahamic Convenant" in Luke, cf. Parsons 2006: 81–82 and the literature cited there.

[338] That Jesus' parents did not understand is a much debated part of this narrative. A discussion of the various positions and authors on the subject is given by Laurentin 1966: 11–32.

[339] The reading "the house of my father" (French "chez mon Père") is defended comprehensively by Laurentin 1966: 56–72, and Fitzmyer 1981a: 443–444.

[340] The temple is called "my house," e.g., in Isa 56:7, Jer 7:11, and Luke 19:46. In Isa 56:7, the temple is "a house of prayer" (referred to in Mark 11:17; Matt 21:13; Luke 19:46). In John 14:2 Jesus says that ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρός μου μοναὶ πολλαί εἰσιν ("in the house of my father there are many dwelling places/rooms"), where the temple is clearly not intended.

μίαν ᾐτησάμην παρὰ κυρίου, ταύτην ἐκζητήσω·
τοῦ κατοικεῖν με ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς μου,
τοῦ θεωρεῖν με τὴν τερπνότητα τοῦ κυρίου
καὶ ἐπισκέπτεσθαι τὸν ναὸν αὐτοῦ…
ὅτι ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἡ μήτηρ μου ἐγκατέλιπόν με,
ὁ δὲ κύριος προσελάβετό με. (Ps 26:4. 10 LXX)

One thing have I asked of the Lord; that thing I will pursue:
that I may come to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to contemplate the delight of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple…
For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the Lord will take me up. (Ps 27:4.10)

Admittedly, the narrative does not tell that Mary and Joseph have forsaken Jesus, or that his absence was due to any negligence on their behalf (although it would be possible to draw such a conclusion in view of the long time that has passed before the parents started to worry about his absence). Dwelling in the temple, however, as living in the house of God, without parents, to behold God's beauty and to make inquiry, clearly go together. This resembles the situation sketched by the narrative. I would suggest therefore that being ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου, taken on a narrative level, could indeed refer to being in the temple, with this addition, however, that this presence in the temple goes together with study of Tanak. In this context, it is illuminating that it has also been proposed to understand ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου in a more general sense, referring to "the things of my father," in which not only the temple is included, but also the teaching of Torah.[341] It has even been proposed that the word τοῖς should be taken as an article masculine, thus referring to the teachers of Torah amongst whom Jesus is actually sitting.[342]

I propose that the narrative is exploiting the ambiguity of the words ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου and that we should not want to make a choice for the most plausible interpretation.[343] More probably, we should try and explore the ambiguity to trace the type of understanding implied. The remarkable ellipsis may be an aspect of the elusive corporeity of the hypaethral position itself. I would therefore prefer to adopt the ambiguous reading "the [things] of my

[341] Cf. Fitzmyer 1981a: 444 for a list of instances.
[342] Fitzmyer 1981a: 443.
[343] Laurentin (1966: 68–72) rejects the idea of ambiguity.

father," accepting that within the semantic field connoted by this metaphor is included the house of God in a broad sense, with the study of Tanak, and its teachers as well.

8.3 The Body Inclusive

What could these words want us to understand? On a superficial level the ambiguity of the father metaphor works to bend the story of two parents deeply in distress at the loss of their son into a comical story of non-understanding, as if Jesus would have responded to Mary's words "your father and I have searched for you" with the words "why mother, did you not know you could find me in the house of my (real) Father?" This would at least explain why the words "your father and I" are used in a context that is otherwise very reluctant in calling Joseph Jesus' father, without the reader having to take recourse to a different source for this narrative.[344] The reader is triggered, however, to understand that with ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου really the act of discussing Torah with the teachers is meant, that is, putting questions, giving answers, searching for insight and understanding.

If this makes sense, we may tentatively say that Jesus is installed in these verses as a child of Torah. As such, Jesus responds to the ideal of perfect manliness, at least so in the frame of early imperial elite virtuous behaviour. Countering the emperor's excessive and hypermasculine claim to master the whole inhabited world (really an unvirtuous lack of due self-constraint and moral clemency, although the means of registration is in itself a verbal and virtuous skill), we now witness Jesus showing himself already at the age of twelve up to such an insight in the divine Word that ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ συνέσει καὶ ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν αὐτοῦ, "they were all bewildered—those who heard him—because of his insight and his answers" (2:47).

Meanwhile, I would refrain from excluding the possibility that with "my father" (also) Abraham is meant. The community envisaged by Luke consists of the sons and daughters of Abraham.[345] There is a certain virtuous understanding involved in this, that can be reached at by those who are, in terms of virtuous manliness, on the ambiguous side: the bent woman who is called a daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:10–17), the small statured tax collector like Zacchaeus, he, too, being a son of Abraham (Luke 19:1–10)—both already rightly called children of Abraham by descent; but also the lame man (Acts 3:1–4:31) or the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39), outsiders who are included in the Abrahamic family. Parsons (2001, 2006) already discussed

[344] As defended by Fitzmyer (1981a: 434–439), this narrative would stem from a source that was not acquainted with a virginal conception of Jesus.

[345] See Parsons 2006: 81–82 and the literature cited there.

these four instances in terms of ancient physiognomy, and rightly so, but a clear gender aspect must also be underscored. Their growing insight and understanding, despite their insignificant outward appearance, does not just make them members of an eschatological family in which they are all equals as sons and daughters of Abraham, but also offers them—with their virtuous understanding—a new body that is neither male nor female. This new body transcends male and female on the horizontal axis, transcending to the hypaethral position, although it must be said at once that it does still represent high manliness on the vertical axis. Jesus, being "in the [things] of my father," already represents this new body.

That this new body includes manly and womanly representation becomes clear when we take a closer look at the way understanding, in this narrative, is achieved. Verbs denoting the semantic field of searching and finding are found in 2:44. 45. 46. 48. 49. The suggestion that searching for "the [things] of my father" really refers to the study of Tanak, and probably more in particular the study of the covenant with Abraham, may put us on the track of biblical wisdom literature, in which searching for God's word is a dominant metaphor.[346] The two verses that make up for an *inclusio* of the narrative, verses 40 en 52, both feature the word σοφία, "wisdom," together with the word χάρις, "grace," a word frequently used in wisdom literature.[347] Thematically, the way Jesus is portrayed in the midst of the teachers and the people evokes Wisdom, who as a personification used to stand in the midst of the people according to Sirach 24:1–12. Jesus' answer, that he has to be in "the [things] of his father," resembles Wisdom who declares that she served God in the holy tabernacle at Sion and that she has her place in Jerusalem (Sir 24:10–11). As Fitzmyer rightly remarks, Wisdom is usually represented, both in Hebrew and Aramaic, and in Greek, as a woman, and in Sirach she is identified with Torah itself. I do, however, not agree with his conclusion that "it is farfetched to extend this to the person of the adolescent Jesus" (Fitzmyer 1981a: 437). On the contrary, I would say that Jesus subsumes this womanly represented Wisdom in his understanding of Scripture, while at the same time his understanding can be considered manly in the elite virtuous world of early imperial rule. I venture that we are here on the track of a subtle shift in the virtue of understanding. Jesus' presence in the temple, seated among the teachers and discussing with them, qualifies Jesus within an elite frame of virtuous behaviour, as well as within a more specific Jewish frame of wisdom literature. Apparently, Jesus is at home in two

[346] Especially Laurentin (1966: 135–141) comprehensively demonstrated the high degree to which this narrative is indebted to wisdom literature.

[347] Thus, we read in Luke 2:52 Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν [ἐν τῇ] σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ χάριτι παρὰ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις ("and Jesus grew up in wisdom en age and grace with God and men"), which evokes Proverbs 3:[3–]4, καὶ εὑρήσεις χάριν … ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων ("you will find grace before Adonai and men"). Laurentin 1966: 137.

symbolic orders, in which manly and womanly representations coincide and merge into a real hypaethral "the [things] of my Father."

As a representative of Wisdom, Jesus enters a well-known female personification, that is, in a Jewish context, although personifications in antiquity were generally female while the onlookers are understood as male (Lieu 2008). The interesting point in this respect is, that within this same ancient gender logic of female personifications and male gaze, the perspective (narrative focalisation) shifts from the teachers (who are paying attention to Jesus) to Mary. On the one hand, Jesus as personification of Wisdom, standing in Sion, demonstrates precisely a manly nature, as Philo writes ἤ διότι ὄνομα μὲν θῆλυ σοφίας ἐστίν, ἀρρεν δὲ ἡ φύσις, "although Wisdom is feminine its nature is masculine."[348] As Lieu (2008:77) suggests, there is a faint touch of eroticism connected to the personification of Wisdom, in addition to traditional aspects of vulnerability, transformation, barrenness and fertility, in that she can be the object of passionate pursuit, as e.g. in the Wisdom of Solomon 14:20–27 (cf. Sirach 51:13–19). The same is the case with Jesus standing amidst the teachers. Jesus represents in his youthful wisdom just the wisdom the teachers are qualitate qua so passionately longing for. In a sense, the Jesus-child-Wisdom impersonation has swallowed up the manly/womanly, transposing it to a new hypaethral manly level. On the other hand, Mary, precisely in her act of gazing at the scene, participates in the manly act of trying to understand, propagated by the gospel. Although she is no teacher, her longing for Jesus is not less real. There is an ambiguity in her words between parental longing-for and the teacher's longing-for. Her words may be taken as an expression of parental sorrow (though we must be careful to avoid the pitfall of parontocentrism). At the same time, however, she commands the right biblical language, suggesting an intuition of the real meaning of what is happening here. This puts her on the manly way of the teachers. Thus, both Jesus and his mother strive towards a new body, in this case the woman body with the manly virtue.

Be this as it is, the narrative takes care not to abandon the other, more down-to-earth father. After the scene with the teachers in the temple, the narrative explains that Jesus went home with his parents, καὶ ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς, "and was subject to them" (2:51). As D'Angelo has it, we see Jesus here conforming "to the demands of Roman family values for a son in *patria potestas*" (D'Angelo 2003: 288). The virtuous part of it is, that Jesus does so on his own accord. It is a voluntary obedience, not an enforced one. Obedience to your parents was clear Roman virtue of the *pietas* type, you had to pay your respect to your parents, the state, and the gods. That Jesus does so voluntarily, contributes to his virtuousness.

[348] Philo, *Fug*. 51–52 (Wendland 1989: 121).

8.4 Conclusion

My conclusion is that the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple exploits the ambiguity of the word "father." Towards his parents, Jesus inserts himself into the symbolic order, "the [things]," of another father. It does not really matter whether God is meant, or Abraham. In both cases, reference is made to Jewish values, condensed in Torah, and represented by the assembled teachers in the temple. Jesus demonstrates his belonging to Torah by questioning, answering, explaining and showing insight. The narrative suggests that Jesus' position in this respect very much resembles, if not coincides with, the position of Wisdom, the womanly personified understanding of Torah. At the same time, Jesus' display of understanding corresponds to the virtuous understanding that is called for in the preface and that is required of the embedded reader, and by extension of us as readers. These first words spoken by Jesus in the Third Gospel, precisely about "the [things] of the Father," seem to be programmatically spoken to the reader, and offer a kind or mirror-text to the overall narrative programme of the Third Gospel, of searching the scriptures and trying to understand.

As a result, we find here in this narrative the installation of a virtuous understanding that is really hypaethral, as it takes up the representation of man and woman by means of manly virtue. Meanwhile, the narrative does not simply abandon more down-to-earth fatherhood of the hegemonic virtuous type, for he voluntarily obeys his parents, thus safeguarding ancient notions of *patria potestas*. It may be noticed that when Jesus appears as a teacher of Torah in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:14–30), the inability of the listeners to understand what is happening oscillates precisely between the two poles set up in the twelve-year-old Jesus passage: ἐθαύμαζον ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος, "they were surprised at his words of grace," (4:22b), and they said οὐχὶ υἱός ἐστιν Ἰωσὴφ οὗτος; "is he not a son of Joseph?" (4:22c). The competent reader will understand.

9. Conclusion: All You Need Is Understanding

The aim of this chapter was to describe the way gender is constructed in the text of Luke 1–2. Gender research on the Third Gospel wants to gain insight in the way the gospel deals with men and women and their interrelation. The problem is that we approach the text with our own preset notions of gender, which is basically a modern concept based on the priority of the body male or female. As a hypothesis, I had the impression that the main problem we are faced with in understanding gender in the Third Gospel, the well-known problem of the double message, has to do with a mismatch between our own modern concept of gender and the ancient gender paradigm. In order to understand how gender in antiquity would have worked, I first examined the research done on the subject. Based on ancient medical and anthropological ideas, the body is considered instable and needs to be kept in shape by appropriate behaviour. This means that in the ancient world your behaviour determined whether you were seen as a man or as a woman or as an ambiguous person. Focusing on the period of early imperial rule, there are two problems. First, at least two patterns of gender are interfering, the one of the martial type, the other of the moral virtuous type. Second, the model used to describe gender in this period is of the bipolar gradient type, set out between the male ideal on the one side and the female on the other. This scale works insufficiently as the parameters are ambiguous. The martial male and the moral virtuous do not overlap, while on the other hand the female often goes together with male. It would be better to conceive of a gradient between the semantic fields of Romanness on the one hand and the foreign/disorderly on the other. Actually, the category of gender as we are used to understand it, does not fit well on this scheme. It would be better to speak about body and behaviour as parameters within the well organised state.

In an attempt to find a more nuanced model, that would help in a descriptive and heuristic way to understand body and behaviour during early imperial rule, I turned to Vitruvius. The architectural handbook of Vitruvius is basically a grand moral vision on everything technical, incorporating through bodily metaphors technical skills in the moral programme installed during Augustus' early reign. The model sketched by me consists of two axes, one horizontal axis of the martial type between male and female, another vertical axis between ambiguous manly/womanly and beyond-manly hypaethrality. The hypaethral position is a metaphor, referring to a temple type, non-existent in the Roman world, with an open roof, *sub hypaethra*. The elite moral virtuous behaviour tends clearly towards incorporeity. By means of this model various aspects of body and behaviour can be adequately described. The hypaethral position combines Augustan moral virtuousness with understanding. This is a high manly position. The

ambiguous position on the other hand refers to manly and womanly alike, in an instable way. Here we find disabilities, instable bodies, body transgressing behaviour, everything that is not well-ordered. The horizontal martial axis describes virile masculinity and versatile femininity. Of course it is not very likely that a model like this would fully match with a text like the Third Gospel. The Third Gospel has its own biblical imagery and patterns of thought. Besides, due to the character of a gospel, we cannot expect that all positions of my Vitruvian model can be recognised in only such a limited section as Luke 1–2. A preliminary sketch should be enough at this stage to substantiate my claim that the gospel participates in and responds to a type of gender logic that we also encounter in Vitruvius' text, a moral virtuous programme established during early imperial rule.

The preface of the Third Gospel states the aim of the gospel as understanding. You have to understand the reliability (that is, virtuous stability) of this account, based on the understanding of the eyewitnesses, who have seen (that is, understood) the things that came to pass. The reader who understands will find herself in the hypaethral domain, in the stability of moral (beyond) manliness, where perception, understanding, and insight come down to the same. The narrative proper presents the eyewitnesses, time and again focused on the act of understanding. We see Zachariah tragically failing in understanding. While we expected hypaethral behaviour, we see him preoccupied in the male procreative domain. Elisabeth on the other hand shows herself highly competent in speech and in perceiving the meaning of biblical words. Unfortunately, in what may seem as an illustration of the double message, she is at the same time put into the confines of what we may call in hindsight a homely matronly position: high on the scale of understanding, but not allowed to enter full hypaethrality. This is especially clear in the visitation scene, in her dialogue with Mary. Like Elisabeth, Mary too scores high on the axis of understanding; actually it is difficult to differentiate clearly between the two, their narrative roles merge in the Magnificat. This song makes clear that the humiliation experienced by those who live in humiliation, that is, by the people who live in the ambiguous position of defectiveness, disability or deviancy, will be resolved (that is, they will be liberated) in what appears to be a new body, as virtue reshapes the body.

In Luke 2, over against the word of God that comes to pass, the word of the emperor is promulgated. There is a power contest with the mastery of the word as the prize. Three instances are given in which eyewitnesses show various degrees of understanding, like the Magnificat with clear political overtones. The shepherds reflect the good leaders of the people. Simeon and Anna bring to us the word of the liberation of Jerusalem. Simeon is almost incorporeal, a real hypaethral figure. Anna again seems to represent the double message, as her

understanding would qualify her for the hypaethral position, while in the meantime her widowhood and her old age signify her as the topical widow who is the object of the promises of liberation. Thus she is placed in the domain of ambiguity, where the stable order has yet to be realised. Yet, as an instance of double trouble rather than as a double message, it is the "double" virtuous understanding of Anna (her prophetic speech and her living in the temple) that accounts for the virtuous body, as someone who lives in the temple night and day. The narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus brings us to "the [things] of the father." Now the reader's understanding is called for. We learn that understanding is what "the [things] of the father" is about: learning, reading, asking, perceiving the words of Torah, in the body of knowledge brought forth by Israel represented by the teachers in the temple. The ellipsis "the [things]" may be understood as the hypeathral elusive metaphor of the virtue required by the gospel: understanding with a new body that encompasses manly and womanly in good order, establishing a beyond manliness.

The new body indeed seems to be a deviant element compared to the ancient gender paradigm. In the chapters of the Third Gospel following Luke 1–2 we will see how Jesus time and again enters ambiguous situations, calls for understanding, restores good order, bypasses the simple male/female opposition. Jesus goes so far as to let his body be maltreated, penetrated by weapons, and humiliated. He gives his life in obedience to his father, which is really a twist in the ancient gender paradigm. In the narrative of the travellers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13–35), we again find many of these elements. We are on the road from Jerusalem, the words of Scripture are discussed, explained (we are in "the [things] of the father"). Jesus is present in a new body, but when he is recognised he disappears.

Much research could be done. As my focus is on Luke 1–2, I must lay the remainder of the gospel at rest for the time being. Further analysis will help, I expect, to better understand the way body and behaviour are constituted in the gospel, and will in turn help to clarify further what is really going on in Luke 1–2. I do not claim to have understood the text in all respects, and I admit readily that much has been left unsaid, maybe even overlooked, and definitely still not fully understood. As John Darr has said (I quoted these words before), "Luke's rhetoric of perception is so ubiquitous, various and nuanced that it cannot be adequately treated in a single study or through a single approach. One is forced, therefore, to get it bit by bit, topic by topic, passage by passage." (Darr 1994: 87). I trust that the Vitruvian model will remain helpful to gain better insight how body and behaviour were related in the span of time covered by early Augustan and imperial rule and the first century CE, formative years of the gospel tradition.

Chapter 3
Autobiographical Criticism: Three Readerly Exercises in Luke 1–2

> *The following day I returned to that library … "Father," I said to him, "what are those huge volumes that fill all that side of the library?" "Those," he said to me, "are the interpreters of the Scriptures." "There are a great many of them!" I replied. "The Scriptures must have been very obscure formerly, and very clear by now. Do any doubts still remain? Are there any points left disputed?" "Any, good heavens! Any!" he answered me. "There are almost as many as there are lines." "Indeed?" said I. "Then what have all those authors done?" "Those authors," he replied, "did not at all search the Scriptures for what ought to be believed, but for what they believe themselves."*
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> *Montesquieu, Persian Letters 134.*[349]

In this third chapter I will focus on the role of the reader in the hermeneutical process. After a period, prior to New Criticism, during which the author was held responsible for the meaning of the text, and a subsequent period during which text-immanent approaches (such as structuralism, semiotics, and narratology) commanded the field, a period began in the 1980s in which the reader was held responsible for the meaning of the text. Reader-oriented criticism is perhaps best known from the various positioned criticisms, such as feminist criticism, black criticism, womanist criticism, postcolonial criticism, etc. What tie these types of criticism together is their political use: there is a group with shared interests (political, liberating), that seeks to reclaim its heritage with the aim to strengthen its self-understanding and its motivation to fight for a better world in which their own backlog is lifted and in which there will be equal

[349] Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes,* 1721. My translation is based on the French edition by Vernière 2001, although I am inspired by the English translation by Mauldon (2008: 179). Letter 134 is in Mauldon's translation Letter 128. On Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* 134, cf. Vernière 2001: 345–347. The library in question, St Victor's or St. Honoré's in Paris, had its books classified along size and subject matter, according to the principle introduced by the Oratory (Vernière 2001: 345 n. 1). Apparently, the *Interpretes critici et commentatores*, probably octavo size, filled one of the walls of the library, including Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant interpreters (Vernière 2001: 346 n. 2). In the following section of this letter, Montesquieu compares scriptural textual interpretation with a battlefield. A survey of the critical bearing of the *Persian Letters* is offered by Shklar 1987: 29–48.

chances for everyone. Due to its authoritative and mythological function, the Bible has for a long time been an important object of positioned criticism. From the beginning of reader-oriented criticism, however, there has also been a personal criticism in which the "I" of the interpreter was brought to bear on the text. This "I" was admittedly often still a positioned "I," but in personal criticism the subjective element was explicitly addressed. It is relatively late, by the end of the 1990s, that this approach found its way to biblical criticism in the form of autobiographical biblical criticism.

Autobiographical biblical criticism has not received much attention, although there are, next to a few volumes and articles dedicated to it, dispersed autobiographical elements in scholarly biblical studies. My argument is that autobiographical biblical criticism could offer a very useful contribution to the field of biblical exegesis. The aim of the present chapter is, first, to explain what exactly autobiographical biblical criticism is, and, second, to show what you could do with this type of criticism. In the first half of this chapter I will present a survey of what is in my view the most groundbreaking literature in the field, followed by a discussion of what should be understood by autobiographical criticism proper. I will conclude this first half by proposing a definition. In the second half of this chapter I will present three readerly exercises, circling around Luke 1–2, in order to demonstrate what you could do with autobiographical biblical criticism.

1. Autobiographical (Biblical) Criticism

In his *Persian Letters*, Montesquieu introduces us to a fictional Persian traveller who in his letters tells his friends of his extraordinary experiences in Paris in the early eighteenth century. One of his remarkable experiences is a visit to a library, where the librarian, a kind and patient reverend father with clear convictions, shows him around. The Persian visitor is clearly astonished at the wealth of biblical exegetical books, filling the whole of one of the walls. So many books! Could any unclear passage be left in the Book? Oh yes, our reverend librarian explains, for all these authors have read the Scriptures for what they believed themselves, rather than for the message the Scriptures convey. Montesquieu's librarian has of course a point. Our own convictions and beliefs, conscious or unconscious drives, inevitably determine the way we approach the text, or rather what we believe to be "in" the text. This insight calls for two methodological considerations. First, the text must have some authority of its own, that is, the text is supposed to convey a message and the interpreter's task would be to explain this message (Montesquieu's librarian would agree with this). Second, as an interpreter, you must give account of your position and your involvement in the text (Montesquieu's librarian would scarcely be interested). I will address these two considerations in the following, first the notion of the text's authority, and second, the question of the reader's position and personal involvement in the text.

With regard to Lukan studies, the first point, the textual authority, has been explicitly addressed by Brigitte Kahl (2002) who argues that, although Luke's narrative may convey many voices that at times even seem conflicting (the impasse concerning the double message, as I have demonstrated in the my first chapter), there is still a message. She traces this message by means of an internal deconstructive key that offers a perspective to make sense of these many voices. As Kahl defends, the voices in Luke's narrative, oscillating between a gospel for the poor and a gospel for the pagans (Kahl's analysis), obtain their specific coherence from the Magnificat section (Luke 1:24–57), where liberation of the poor converges with liberation of women. According to Kahl the patriarchal text is transposed "in a manner that does justice to women and the poor" (Kahl 2002: 88). Thus, both the authority of the text and the experience of many voices in the text are brought into balance. I like the suggestion and I am inclined to subscribe, were it not for a methodological point. The choice for the Magnificat (or the Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-55) as the guiding deconstructive key still seems an arbitrary one. What is really happening, I suspect, is that Kahl has accumulated a set of sound arguments, liable to be convincing to a majority of (feminist) critical scholars (including myself). These arguments are, however, only

convincing as long as we stay within the same interpretive context. The argument is really based on intersubjectivity.

This brings me to my second methodological remark. When your argument is based on intersubjectivity, you should be prepared, as an interpreter, to account for your position and your involvement with the text, especially in view of the many contexts and interpretive communities in which you live (Smit, Creangă and Van Klinken 2015). You should do so in order not to hide yourself behind the veil of innocence, silently claiming objectivity for interpretations that might continue biased positions (Wekker 2016). The various contexts in which you live, such as biblical interpretive communities, politically shared positions, ethnic and gender conscious affiliations (to mention only a few), meet each other, intersect, coexist, and coincide in ourselves. To be sure, this meeting place is not the "self" per se, but the "self" as it is perceived by the "I," that is, in autobiography.[350] There is no "self" other than a perceived self. When "I" perceive my "self," I am continuously selecting, re-arranging, omitting, and plotting my self-understanding according to the discursive means offered to me. Autobiographical criticism means that you are aware of the fact that you are continuously re-writing your "self" in the course of reading. The task you are faced with in autobiographical criticism, therefore, is to become aware of the types of discursive means you are allowing to possess your perception, such as biblical narrative, liberative paradigms, psychological patterns and the like, and that you are concerned with the way these discursive means work together to establish your self-understanding.

In short, there are two methodological considerations at the origin of an autobiographical criticism. First, textual authority inevitably calls forth the role of the reader; otherwise the text would be silent. Second, when the reader is merged in intersubjectivity, the reader must be prepared to say what she is doing and why she is doing so, in order to remain self-critical and to avoid a convenient innocence in the guise of objectivity. The reader does need the authority of the text, not only so because there would otherwise be nothing to read, but also and especially because the reader's self-understanding develops vis-à-vis the text. These two considerations, self-evident as they may seem, make up for what is called autobiographical (biblical) criticism. I will now present a survey of the development of this autobiographical (biblical) type of criticism, followed by a demonstration of how this type of criticism can be put to use.

[350] I refrain from a discussion of what exactly the self is, and whether the self is a coherent entity. This discussion would lead too far and is not really necessary for my point. For a survey of theories on the self, I would like to refer to Taylor 1989.

1.1 Autobiographical Criticism: A Survey

Already in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey discussed the value of autobiography from a hermeneutical perspective.[351] Dilthey proposed to study all existent autobiographies in order to map the self-presentation of the human mind. This track of research was further developed by his pupil Georg Misch, resulting in 1907 in two volumes on Greek and Roman autobiography.[352] As the project proved to be too ambitious, subsequent periods of human writing were laid to rest for a considerable time.[353] It must be emphasised that the primary object of research was the working of the human mind itself, rather than a literary interest in the autobiographical genre as such. Research into autobiographical writing was revived mainly by women's studies from the 1980s onwards, and gradually extended to womanist/black criticism, ethnic studies, gender studies, and postcolonial criticism.[354] This time, the focus of interest was not to map the working of the human mind, but to make visible women's lives, the lives of (former) slaves and their descendants, and the lives of oppressed and marginalised people in general, and to reclaim their role in history and society in order to counterbalance hegemonic discourses.

In short, autobiographical criticism so far, focused on the genre of autobiography and concerned itself with the knowledge and insights conveyed by this genre when in the hand of oppressed people. To be distinguished from this generic concept of autobiography is the rhetorical use of autobiography. Rhetorical autobiography is the way an author refers to her own experiences (or at least suggests she is doing so) as a stylistic means. This way of working pieces of your own biography into discourse is well-known in antiquity. To New Testament scholars it is particularly well known through the autobiographical references in the Fourth Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline letters.[355]

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[351] Dilthey 1981; Buckley 1984; Becker 2003b; 2003c.

[352] Third revised edition, including "Plato's" *Seventh Letter*, Misch 1951.

[353] More recently, on autobiography in antiquity, cf. Smith and Powell 2008; Marasco 2011.

[354] A selection may include works such as Butterfield 1974; Jelinek 1986, 1980; Stanton 1984; Sidonie Smith 1987; Brodzki and Schenk 1988; Bassard 1992; Bergland 1994; Gilmore 1994; Swindells 1995; Jacquelyn Hall 1998; Sidonie Smith 1998; Smith and Watson 2001; Mostern 2004; Moore-Gilbert 2010. On early modern Jewish autobiography for instance Chajes 2005. On autobiography, science en gender, cf. Govoni and Franceschi 2015. On the genre of autobiography in general, see for instance Spengemann 1980; Nora 1987; Barros 1998; Passerini and Geppert 2001; Linda Anderson 2001; Bradford 2010.

[355] In the Fourth Gospel: John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7.20. In the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 13–28. For a defence of these passages as autobiographical, see Baum 2007 (who defends an anonymous autobiography). On stylistic aspects of autobiographical sections of the Pauline letters, see e.g., Mitchell 1993 (esp. on 1 Cor 9:26–27), and Dodd 1996 (on Gal 1:10). The Prologue to the Third Gospel may be taken as an autobiographical section (see my first chapter and the literature cited there). On autobiographical introductions to non-fictional texts, establishing a subjective author throughout the text, cf. Halse 2006.

The study of generic and rhetorical autobiography is outside the scope of my research. What I am interested in is a third type of autobiographical criticism that employs the self of the reader. This type of research emerged within reader-oriented literary criticism in the course of the late 1970s.[356] The reader-oriented approach is connected with the work of critics such as Jane Tompkins (1980) and Stanley Fish (1980). Given the spirit of the age, an age of high political involvement nourished by the existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and by the liberation movements (including the student movement and second-wave feminism), it is understandable that the distinction between the reader's self and her experiences on the one hand and the reader's cause in power relationships on the other was blurred. They merged into each other, testified to by the then famous slogan "the personal is political," used in particular in the more radical liberation movement of second-wave feminism.[357] Contextualist approaches emanating from these early strands of political literary criticism, such as women-of-colour feminism, testify to the (mainly political) involvement of the reader.[358] The reader is personally present in her experience of injustice, and of incongruity between the self and the text, or incongruity between the text and reality.

Instead of focusing on acts of conscious, polished self-presentation by the author such as it is practised in generic or in rhetorical autobiography, now the non-written real-life biography of the reader is explored as a determinant in the reading process, that is, insofar as she herself takes her biography as a conversation partner in the reading-process. This biographic approach is autobiographical, as it is the reader herself who turns towards her own context in order to inform her way of reading (rather than leaving it to others to explore the connections between her interpretations and her biography, as was customary prior to the New Criticism). As David Bleich (1978) explains, the emergence of this type of criticism, also called personal or subjective criticism, must be understood as an attempt to counter the objective paradigm in science and the humanities, including philosophy, and to remove objectification so as to reconceive of a subjective paradigm.[359] Although it may seem as if the reader simply adduces facts or experiences from her personal life in order to account for the way she reads, the reader actually chooses specific facts or experiences, downplaying other elements, constructing them in such a

[356] In the following section I give a brief bibliography of autobiographical criticism. In addition, see Staley 2002: 13 n 2.
[357] Mccann and Kim 2013: 191. The slogan became well-known as the title of Hanisch 1970 (Crow *2000: 113–117*), though she did not use the phrase in the essay itself. The title was added by the editors (Hanisch 2006).
[358] On contextual approaches and the reader as part of the context, see Wischmeyer 2004: 106-112; 2009: 352-56, and the literature cited there. For a survey of modern reader-response criticism, related to Biblical criticism, see Wischmeyer 2009: 478–481.
[359] Bleich 1978, discussed by Kitzberger 2002a: 3–4. Cf. also Gordon 1988 on character and self in autobiography.

way that they "work" to account for a certain reading. That is, through selection and rearrangement, there is a touch of autobiography over it.

The book *Getting Personal* by Nancy K. Miller (1991) was among the first in forwarding the awareness of the "I" as an embodied, that is, a contextualised person. Miller started with the essay by Jane Tompkins, "Me and My Shadow" (1989) in a volume edited by Linda Kauffman, under the heading "The Body Writing/Writing the Body," along with the quotation from Adrienne Rich, that "every mind resides in a body."[360] The embodied "I" is an answer to the gradual vanishing of the subject within the emerging postmodern and deconstructionist discourse. It is remarkable that the type of questions, asked in generic and rhetorical autobiographical research, reappears again in this third type of autobiographical self-criticism, such as the trustworthiness of related experiences or facts (Popkin 2005), the selection and emplotment of life events (Jill Kerr Conway 1968), the occurrence of flaws of memory and ideological biases, the use of rhetorical tropes, and in short all the means of construction and representation (Halse 2006: 96–99), and transformations as emplotted metaphors (Barros 1998).[361]

The obvious question is, whether it would be really possible to give an account of your own life events, experiences, paradigms or locations in a self-critical, trustworthy way. Will you not always be biased by locations of hegemonic criticism, by your embodiment, by your personal maybe hidden and even suppressed drives? The study by Marcella Althaus-Reid (2000) on indecent theology may serve as a reminder of how human drives, suppressed as they may be, are deeply rooted and prone to affect theological discourse too.

1.2 Autobiography in Biblical Criticism: A Survey

Within biblical exegesis, the hermeneutical track set in with Schleiermacher and Dilthey has always been there. The publication in 1957 by Rudolf Bultmann of an essay that would become influential, under the title "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" does probably less testify to an increasing awareness in biblical exegesis (and Bultmann's visionary role in it) of the role of the reader in the hermeneutical process, than to a growing influence in biblical exegesis

[360] Miller 1991: 4. The full quotation is from Rich's 1979 essay "Taking Women Students Seriously": "Men in general think badly: in disjuncture from their personal lives, claiming objectivity where the most irrational passions seethe, losing, as Virginia Woolf observed, their senses in the pursuit of professionalism … To think like a woman means thinking critically, refusing to accept the givens, making connections between facts and ideas which men have left unconnected. It means remembering that every mind resides in a body; remaining accountable to the female bodies in which we live; constantly retesting given hypotheses against lived experience."

[361] See also De Man 1979; Blanchard 1982; Abbott 1988; Davis 2005; Saunders 2010.

(in the 1950s, the heydays of New Criticism) of objectifying formalist ways of close reading that excluded both the author and the reader as interpretive factors.[362] Bultmann's essay worked to draw the attention of biblical exegetes again to the hermeneutical track that was part of theology at least since Schleiermacher. Bultmann's presuppositions (*Vorverständnis*) are related to Martin Heidegger's notions of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) and existence (*Existenz*): the reader is always a subjective reader insofar as she knows of the sorrows and finitude of human existence.

In the late 1970s and in the 1980s contextual approaches gained ground in biblical criticism, at first especially through women's studies, at a pair with ideology-critical approaches. Again, the reader is personally involved in the case. Nevertheless it is surprising that a personal turn, such as advocated by Miller, seems not to have really acquired a position in scholarly biblical exegesis. Hypothetically, and speaking more or less from my own memory, I would suggest that in those years the subject matter of a personal approach has been bluntly discarded by dominant biblical exegesis as being the stuff women's studies is typically made of, hence as less interesting to good scholarly biblical exegesis. Nevertheless, elements of personal exegesis are there, such as for instance in the volumes by Bal, van Dijk-Hemmes and van Ginneken (1984), Schaberg (1987), Bal (1989), and Exum (1993).

In the course of the 1990s, the hermeneutical priority of the reader in biblical exegesis suddenly acquired the guise of autobiographical biblical criticism in which the personal, as advocated by Miller, obtained a place. In retrospect we may say that the starting signal was given with Jeffrey Staley's *Reading with a Passion* (1995), originally read in 1992 as a deliberately autobiographical paper on the passion narrative in John 18–19. It would perhaps be unfriendly to say that a paper written by a man finally opened the way to the personal in biblical exegesis, although the fact that the paper was read by an established scholar may have been of some help. Be this as it is, Staley's passionate reading was followed by the *Semeia* volume *Taking it Personally: Autobiographical Biblical Criticism,* edited by Janice Capel Anderson and Jeffrey L. Staley (1995).[363] The new autobiographical turn was in the air, for simultaneously an autobiographical approach was established in classical studies with Judith Hallett and Thomas Van Nortwick (1997). The *Semeia* volume was soon followed in 1997 by a small section under the header of "The Personal/Autobiographical" in a volume edited by Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine in the Feminist Companion Series, and in 1999 and 2002 by two collections of

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[362] English translation in Bultmann 1960; 1984. The essay is briefly discussed by Wischmeyer (2004: 115–116) and by Smit (2006: 137).

[363] Though Anderson and Staley (1995) offer mainly contributions on NT scholarship, there are also a few essays on Tanak in it.

essays on autobiographical biblical criticism edited by Rosa Kitzberger. In 2003 there is a volume edited by Eve-Marie Becker consisting of autobiographical essays written mainly by protestant New Testament scholars working in Germany (Becker 2003a), followed by theoretical assessments by Becker (2003c), and by Oda Wischmeyer (2004: 113–125) of the interpreter's personal input towards the exegete's attempt to explain the text (again, the hermeneutical dilemma stated by Montesquieu's librarian). Soon afterwards, Fiona Black (2006) used autobiography to explore and critique the interplay between culture and biblical text, while Peter-Ben Smit (2006) asked attention for the role played in biblical hermeneutics by confessional identities that are closely connected to specific churches, or more precisely to specific ecclesiastical interpretive communities, in which he especially seeks to validate the heuristic value of Bultmann's presuppositions.[364]

Perusing these papers and theoretical reflections on autobiography and biblical criticism, I can only conclude that the term autobiography is highly problematic. On the whole the term is used rather vaguely in that quite a few approaches that we are already used to, mainly contextual (feminist, Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+) or deconstructionist readings are brought under the umbrella term of autobiography. Besides, papers brought together under this heading differ methodologically, as some are obviously explanatory, investigating the situatedness of the autobiographer (such as e.g. Gunn 1997) and the way autobiography does influence criticism (as e.g. Brenner 1997), while other papers are more heuristically oriented, searching for new insights into the text and the self as well.[365] The least we can say, is that an autobiographical approach is characterised by an interpreter who is aware of him/herself, or as Kitzberger has it, quoting Mary Ann Caws, "a mode of criticism that takes autobiography seriously into account and entails an 'outspoken involvement on the part of the critic with the subject matter'."[366]

What could be the use of these many different autobiographical approaches? Many of the collected essays, mainly in Becker 2003a, provide me with the formal data generic biographies are usually made of, without ever becoming really personal. I would prefer to call

[364] The interpretive church community envisioned by Smit is the German Old-Catholic (Union of Utrecht) Church.
[365] Kitzberger 1999 recognises only three strands of what she calls "personal (voice) criticism": reader-response criticism that focus on real readers, cultural studies/social location readings, and explicit autobiographical readings, cf. also Kitzberger 2002a: 5 n.24. I recognise that Staley (2002: 23) uses the term "heuristic" to denote a way of reading that critique "particular readings, or those that demythologise and deconstruct the apparent autogenesis of or scholarly work."
[366] Kitzberger 2002a: 3 and n. 10, quoting Caws 1990: 2. The implied self-understanding could be taken as a legacy of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey (1981), cf. Becker 2003b; Becker 2003c; Wischmeyer 2004: 116–117.

them narrativised biographies, mostly deficient in critical respect.[367] From a gender-critical perspective, for instance, especially the essays in Becker 2003a are revealing, as many of them feature a narrative plot of the type "quest for scholarship" in which we start with the "birth of the future scholar," are subsequently confronted with setbacks and helpers, while at times a new narrative programme is installed such as "the years in the parish," which of course ultimately contributes to the subsequent resumed scholarly life and eventually a sip of the holy grail of academic tenure.[368] These essays remind me of Jill Conway's typology of gendered autobiography, according to which men generally tend to tell their story as a heroic quest of the Ulyssean type, while women often turn to the difficulties of child-rising, love and being rejected.[369]

Other essays, especially in Anderson and Staley, and in the Kitzberger volumes, strongly profess their personal involvement in black or malinchista criticism,[370] which is personal enough, for though I come to know very little about the interpreter's private life, I do understand that the self is deeply affected by oppressive structures (again "the personal is political"). When these essays are autobiographical, I understand, they are so because interpreting is a way to recover the self and to re-inscribe the self within societies. A couple of essays confess thoughts that relate to the individual author's personal life experiences, as, e.g., Brenner (2002) on growing older and what this means to her reading; Julia O'Brien (1995) on the way a pending divorce hovers over her struggle with the prophecy of Malachi; Tina Pippin (1995) on the way early childhood may help to read anew the "little apocalypse" of Matthew 13; Kitzberger (2002b) on

[367] In Becker 2003a, NT scholars are asked to give an account of their present and possible future contribution to the field of NT exegesis by referring to their preliminary studies and influential teachers who introduced them to the field. Cf. The questionary (*Fragenkatalog*) in Becker 2003a: 393–394. Cf. also Wischmeyer 2004: 121.

[368] Here, I have rearranged in a slightly sweeping way the narrative data provided by the authors in terms of the Russian literary critic Vladimir Propp and the French-Lithuanian semiotician Algirdas Julien Greimas, cf. Greimas and Courtés 1979 and 1986.

[369] As Jill Conway has explained, the construction of a life's narrative tends to follow the outlines set for a man's life or a woman's life. A man's life narrative, constructed in retrospect, will tend to follow those examples fit for a man's life, often variants of the epic Ulysses type, while a woman's life narrative generally feature elements of self-denial, more or less romantic love, the restraints of convention and motherhood and the like (Jill Conway 1968; discussed by Schüssler Fiorenza 2003: 348–349). Heilbrun analysed the masculine Quest plot, and identified as plots available to women the marriage plot and the erotic / fallen woman plot (Heilbrun 1988). Maldonado extends Heilbrun's Quest plot to a (Con)Quest plot, accounting for the effect of Anglo-Saxon conquest of the West and South of the US on *meztizaje* people (Maldonado 1995: 91–93). Exceptions to my admittedly somewhat sweeping verdict, as far as Becker 2003a is concerned, include Breytenbach's experience of New Testament criticism in a situation of apartheid (Breytenbach 2003), Schüssler Fiorenza's repeated experience of being excluded and the way this affected her reading (Schüssler Fiorenza 2003) and Dietrich-Alex Koch's experiences due to his upbringing in the German Democratic Republic (Koch 2003).

[370] Malinchista criticism (criticism from the perspective of *meztizaje*, Latin Americans of mixed ethnicity, conceived as a "hermeneutics of betrayal"), cf. Maldonado 1995, 2002.

her experience as a clinic pastor faced with the death of two babies; or the moving account by Lori Rowlett (2002) of the way her father was murdered, set off against the book of Job. Sometimes, an interplay between personal experience and biblical text is staged, so as to evoke new insights in the self and in the text as well, which I would prefer to call a heuristic approach. At other times, personal experience mainly works to become aware of one's involvement in the text and seems thus to work rather explanatory.

A special case is the work by Mikeal Parsons (2006) on ancient physiognomics and Luke-Acts. Parsons demonstrates the connection in antiquity between defects in someone's outward appearance and negative moral evaluation attached to this. As he argues, Luke-Acts takes care to include the disabled, such as the bent woman, the short statured Zacchaeus, the lame man, or the mutilated eunuch, in the community of the Abrahamic promise, opposing patterns set by current physiognomic literature working to the contrary. In the epilogue, Parsons relates the story of how his father lost his right arm and how he, as a child, witnessed the manifold responses to his father's disability, ranging from curiosity to fear. Though he admits that his book is not about physical disability in antiquity, he admits that "my father's story has remained persistently in the background as I, an able-bodied male, have explored the ancient's views concerning the relationship between physique and moral character." (Parsons 2006: 144) We have here an example of the way autobiographical elements (your perception of the way people respond to your father's disability) is recognised as an inner drive to do research on the way physical defectives were responded to in the ancient world and, additionally, an author such as Luke-Acts subverts these patterns so as to include everyone in the (Abrahamic) family.

I am aware that the above survey of autobiographical biblical criticism is by no means exhaustive. My selection is intended to collect what I regard as the most groundbreaking markers and to show the diversity of approaches, both methodical and in view of subject matter, as well as the personal intensity with which autobiographical biblical criticism is at times invested with. In the following section I will try and evaluate this material and set out a direction.

1.3 A Definition of Autobiographical Biblical Criticism

Does the term "autobiographical" in biblical criticism convey a new approach? In many cases I do not think so. Many papers duly refer their scholarly, positioned, even personal circumstances, without allowing these circumstances to enter their exegetical work, or perhaps I should say, and to be more precise: without staging an encounter between text and context in such a way as to let a third emerge, that helps to elucidate, understand, and even to transform both. These

papers may perhaps be more appropriately called contextualist. Contextualist essays do not mark a real methodological shift; they refer to what they perceive as context within making a hermeneutical point of it. The formal autobiographies are, in my view, autobiographical only in a generic or a rhetorical way; they do not contribute to a new turn in the field of biblical criticism either. Only those essays that bear witness to a reflection on the self and bring the insights thus gained to bear on the interpretation of the text, I would be ready to call autobiographical criticism. In the following section, I will explain my position, taking as my starting point the fourfold purpose of autobiographical biblical criticism formulated by Anderson and Staley. After a theoretical discussion on this fourfold purpose I will conclude by offering my own definition of autobiographical criticism.

Anderson and Staley (1995: 10) have formulated a fourfold purpose of autobiographical criticism:

> (1) To explore the connections between NT scholars themselves as real readers, their exegetical practices, and biblical texts.
>
> (2) To do this in a self-conscious, autobiographical manner.
>
> (3) The autobiographical mode offers itself as a hermeneutical dialogue partner with those rhetorical tropes of academic writing which normally count for scientific objectivity.
>
> (4) To problematise the theological presuppositions which underlie the formation of unified texts and selves.

The first purpose refers explicitly to "real readers." That is, the interpreter herself is in play as a real reader, and not as a theoretical construct. But what is a real reader? Wischmeyer (2004: 113–125) distinguishes between the reader, the interpreter, and the exegete, which makes the question who actually is the reader even more complicated. I would say that a real reader should have, at least, a real body. In my first chapter, I defended, based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty, that the body is a source of knowledge. But where and how does the body come in within autobiographical criticism? How could I hope to perceive myself as a real, embodied reader? Am I a stable and coherent unity? Or am I a collection of various identities or, as Susanna Braund (1997) suggests, does the "I" consist of "personal plurals," maybe not fitting well together? Or am I a collection of flowing identities, as I live in interaction with ever changing cultural and discursive contexts?[371] That is, am I a postmodern fragmented subject, the self to a high extent

[371] Cf. Kitzberger 2002b: 91–95.

dependent on the texts, discourses, and cultural representations she is living in? Furthermore, I would like to know the nature of this exploring of connections, mentioned by Anderson and Staley. A systematic exploration needs models. Are these models of an explanatory kind, trying to reconsider afterwards what has happened, how my interpretations relate to my biography, maybe even immunizing my-self against critique?[372] Or are they of a heuristic nature, in that I try to bring pieces of my own biography to bear on the text in order to evoke, in a dialogic way, ever new meanings?

The second purpose presupposes a self-conscious "I." My question would be how far this self-consciousness reaches. Into what depths of the soul does self-consciousness want to go, if at all? Does it imply that I am prepared to scrutinise myself to account for the way I read, e.g., in a psychological way,[373] or in a sexual way?[374] Or does it only mean that I account for my readerly position, that is, my location of criticism? Furthermore, the extent to which I am self-conscious is interdependent with both the wish and the possibilities to be confronted with differences. Self-consciousness will only arise in the face of difference with cultural and discursive environments; otherwise I will live in a continuum that does not challenge me to reflect on my-self in the first place. This raises the question for (divergent) interpretive communities (who share presuppositions and understanding),[375] locations of criticism and conventions.[376]

The third purpose seeks to establish a hermeneutical dialogue "with those rhetorical tropes of academic writing which normally count for scientific objectivity." As I understand these words, autobiographical criticism should not stay within the realm of the uncontrollable subjective, but enter into dialogue with common scholarly discourse. This seems fair enough, as every reading must be controllable, responsible, and well-argued for. My response, however, would be a twofold question. On the one hand, I would like to ask whether academic writing with its claim to scientific objectivity is not taken too much as a normative discourse. Scientific objectivity is of course questionable, so to embark on a dialogue with this type of discourse might be, at least from a gender-perspective, but most probably also from a liberationist perspective, hazardous in so far as it compels autobiographical criticism to use the language of its oppressor.[377] On the other hand, I wonder whether autobiographical writing in its turn does

[372] Cf. Staley 2002: 19 on the question how I can critique someone's personal experience.
[373] Cf. Kitzberger 2002b: 92 who remarks that according to C.G. Jung the Self "comprises not only my conscious ego, but also the unconscious, both personal and collective."
[374] Cf. Althaus-Reid 2000 and the response by Sands 2003.
[375] Fish 1980; Kitzberger 2002a: 8–9.
[376] Frye and Macpherson 2004; Kennard 1981.
[377] Osayande Obery Hendricks (in Anderson and Staley 1995: 73–90) on guerrilla exegesis, time and again redefines words so as to reappropriate language. Thus, he makes you aware to what high degree language itself is already a vehicle of oppression.

not equally apply rhetorical tropes, so as to adapt or differ from common scholarly discourse. Autobiographical criticism is versatile and should not be taken for what it is at face value.

Finally, the fourth purpose seeks to unveil theological presuppositions. This term, theological presuppositions, certainly needs elucidation. Does it only include formal dogmatic positions? Or does it also include also existential considerations, such as trust, coping with fear, or the role of the senses? Furthermore, I wonder why the focus should be (primarily) on theological presuppositions, instead of the more basic presuppositions concerning gender, race, ethnicity, sex, and the like. After all, problematising theological and other presuppositions is not enough. In order to be responsible an evaluative criterion is needed.

In response to these questions and considerations, I defend that there is a real reader, however instable her identity might be. The real reader is embodied, that is, she has a body that is the first and main domain of cultural signification. The reader is a real reader precisely in the act of reading, partly constituting the text, partly constituted by the text. It is, therefore, necessary to define beforehand who the reader is and to evaluate in the process of reading and afterwards who the reader has become. For this reason, explanatory and heuristic approaches do not exclude each other and can even hardly be separated. Rather they are to be thought on a gradual scale, through which they work together in order to help me understand who I am and why I want to read in a certain way, at the while producing new insights into the text and into myself as well. The difference between generic autobiography and autobiographical criticism is that generic autobiography responds to the demands of a coherent narrative plot, while autobiographical criticism can afford to remain fragmentary and tentative (and maybe should remain so), and takes shape in relation to the text, the text being shaped in relation to autobiography. Objectivity is not to be expected, if it were possible at all, but clarification is required in order to establish good scholarly debate in terms of intersubjectivity and ethics. On this basis I would suggest the following definition of autobiographical criticism:

> Autobiographical criticism is a way of reading a text in which you systematically search for similarities and differences between the way you read the text on the one hand, and the way you understand your own life's experiences on the other, so as to account for your interpretation in terms of intersubjectivity and ethics, and at the same time to extend your self-understanding as well.

In the following sections, I will present three readerly exercises, that is, tentative rereadings of passages of Luke 1–2, as examples of autobiographical criticism. Each of these three readerly exercises has its own focus. The first is intended as an example of explanatory use of autobiographical criticism. In it, I use my autobiography to explain why I read the priest Zachariah the way I did (section 2). The second readerly exercise is meant as an example of a heuristic use of autobiographical criticism. In this section I will confront my autobiography with the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, to light up new possible meanings both in the text and in my autobiography (section 3). There is also a self-understanding aspect in autobiographical criticism that may work in a transformative way. In the third readerly exercise I will explore this transformative approach, reflecting mainly on the result of the second readerly exercise (section 4).

2. First Readerly Exercise: Explaining Zachariah the Priest

The first readerly exercise is intended as an example of an explanatory use of autobiography. My focus is on the priesthood of Zachariah in Luke 1:20–23. In the previous chapter I have argued that Zachariah's position as a priest shows a certain gender ambiguity. As a priest, he is expected to mediate between the people and God, which makes him both a representative of high manliness and subject to (and hence vulnerable to) divine mastery. While the people most probably were expecting a well voiced blessing, the angel silenced him and thus forced him into an unmanly disability. I have added that this belongs, as such, to the normal business risk of a priest, against which he is protected by a set of cultic regulations, requiring him to be a man in optima forma. But the question I would like to ask from an autobiographical perspective is: why did I deal with Zachariah's priesthood this way? One may object, for instance, that I apparently knew exactly what and how a Jewish priest was at that time, despite the Third Gospel's vagueness about the precise nature of his priesthood. For, as I have explained, Zachariah, as a character in the Third Gospel, keeps the middle between a common hebdomadarian and a high priest. Could it be that I simply put my own preset ideas about priesthood over the narrative description of Zachariah? Why did I make so much of his priesthood anyway? Is so much attention paid to his priesthood warranted by the text? I could have gone deeper into the references to the stories of the patriarchs, or the prophetic overtones or the Maccabean references. Could it be that I, involuntarily, imported a concept of priesthood taught to me in my youth? Let me explore this possibility.

2.1 Where Does the Priest Come From?

When I finished my theological studies at Utrecht University in 1988, I received a letter from women's studies professor Rosi Braidotti congratulating me, adding "that it is seldom that a man's intellectual itinerary is so closely connected to women's studies." I cherished her letter and kept it ever since, reflecting that I was indeed deeply involved in women's studies and that my intellectual itinerary did go through women's studies, although I did not regard it as a merit. Rather it was an inner drive. It had not always been so. Originally, influenced by my mother's defensive, even hostile attitude towards second-wave feminism, I took the course of blunt opposition towards the objectives of feminism and feminist theology.[378] This was soon followed, however, by the experience that I had said the wrong things, that what I said was not really

[378] A curious and rather depressing example is my "letter to the editor" in Troost 1980.

"I."[379] Out of this awareness grew a feeling of shame. According to Naud van der Ven (2006), shame is a powerful stimulus for change, because you are confronted with the other, the face of the other, who is different, and does not fit in with your rationality. You understand that you are confronted with the pain of the other who is victimised precisely by your very way of thinking. My feeling of shame gradually gave way to an eagerness to understand, stimulated by an edited volume on men in feminism, by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (1987).[380]

My attitude became one of parting with privileged innocence. I started to read the Journal for Women's Studies (*Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies*) and subscribed to Mara: Journal for Feminism and Theology (*Mara. Tijdschrift voor feminisme en theologie*). For years I wrote my appointments in the Women's Agenda (*Vrouwenagenda*), I went to the feminist health centre "Aletta Jacobs" in Utrecht. My book shelves became filled with the novels by women authors eagerly read by me, all of Jane Austen, the Brontë Sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and many more authors published in the Virago series ("Steaming ahead" was the motto of the editor, with a nice illustration of a steaming ironer). These books I bought of course at the feminist bookshop Savannah Bay in Utrecht. I followed the Women's Studies programme at the Arts Faculty with professors Mieke Bal, Rosi Braidotti, and Maaike Meijer.

It was a kind of paradigm shift with—it cannot be avoided—dire consequences. I lost my ideal to become a priest, and I lost my church, the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands, its traditions handed down to me by generations of my family ever since the late seventeenth century.[381] It must have been a disappointment to my mother (my father had already died) and to many people in the church (although I am not quite sure whether there might not also have been a sigh of relief). Losing my church, I lost much of my trusted social ambiance, while at the same time I felt unsure in my new language. Old language, metaphors, and patterns of thinking worked no longer. Searching for a new language for a long time I listened eagerly. What language shall I borrow?[382] For I adopted a language at first, and only after much

[379] In particular triggered by a publication on the subject by a fellow student, Wildvank 1980.
[380] In particular I was inspired by the contribution by Alice Jardine, "Men in Feminism: Odor di Uomo Or Compagnons de Route" (Jardine and Smith 1987: 54–61).
[381] The first cracks in the wall already visible in an interview with students "of the church" in Jaap Smit 1982.
[382] Words from the famous hymn *O sacred Head, now wounded*, a 1830 rendering by James W. Alexander of the Latin hymn *Salve caput cruentatum*, attributed to St Bernard of Clairvaux (1153) or alternately to Arnulf of Louvain (fl. 1240–48), the Cistercian abbot of Villiers in Brabant. The Latin hymn is better known through the German tranlation by Paul Gerhardt *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (1656). The quoted words are in the 6th stanza of the English version (the 8th stanza in the Lutheran hymnal). The words are used by Wren 1989 as a title to his study on the need to find a new inclusive language in liturgy, taught by feminist insights.

disappointment, after hearing to speech and being heard to speech,[383] I started to find a language of my own.

These experiences may have affected my reading of Zachariah, the priest who lost his power to speak, this token of an ideal of manliness in antiquity, and who finally joined in a new language, with his wife Elisabeth, from priestly family like himself. When I say that Zachariah's question for the physical impossibility of the angel's prophecy is a failure in view of the high manly behaviour we expect from a priest, it is precisely this "we expect" that opens the door to uncontrolled parontocentrism. Who is "we"? And what kind of priest? Searching in my memories for a possible clue for my reading of Zachariah, the thought gradually occurs to me that there is a remarkable coincidence between the way I have read Zachariah, and a particular conception of priesthood taught to me by my mother. I remember that after we attended an ordination service in the Episcopal cathedral of Inverness, Scotland, in 1979, my mother explained to me that a priest, in his most ideal appearance, should not be "defiled," her words, "by intercourse with a woman."[384] The idea of a mandatory celibatarian priest was even at that time certainly not honoured within our own Netherlands Old Catholic Church, we were quite used to married priests, so naturally I was confused.[385] I only gradually understood that my mother preferred to see the relationship between herself and me in terms of Augustine and his mother Monica. The Augustine and Monica case calls for some explanation.

In his *Confessions*, Augustine describes his mother's close affection to him, and her wish to stay with him, so that she even followed him to Italy. Augustine also described her death, and their shared vision of heaven.[386] Likewise, it was my mother's wish, as she said, to stay with her son, once he would have entered holy orders. In addition, Augustine in his *Soliloquies*, his discussion with Reason, offers a radical plea for abstinence: "For I know of nothing that so debases a man's soul as the charms of a woman and that bodily contact which is so much a part

[383] "Hearing each other to speech" is a way of empowering each other, assumed to have been introduced by Nelle K. Morton in her 1977 essay "Beloved Image," reprinted in Morton 1985: 122–146, "We empower one another by hearing the other to speech. We empower the disinherited, the outsider, as we are able to hear them name in their own way their own oppression and suffering […] Hearing in this sense can break through political and social structures and image a new system. A great ear at the heart of the universe – at the heart of our common life – hearing human beings to speech – to our own speech" (Morton 1985: 128).

[384] For now, I skip the ethical question, posed by Kitzberger (2002b: 92) following Martindale (1997: 94), whether one has the right, writing autobiographically, to "write others." As Kitzberger suggests "we memorialise the dead and thereby reclaim them from dissolution into nothingness." (2002b: 92 n. 35) I have reported on the event in Troost 1979.

[385] Mandatory celibacy was formally abolished in the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands in 1922, in Germany already in 1878.

[386] Augustine, *Conf.* 3.11.19–20 on Monica's dream; 5.8.15 on her wish to stay with her son; 6.1.1 on her following her son to Italy; 9.8.17–9.13.37 on the death of Monica, and in particular their talk on the Kingdom of Heaven shortly before her death (10.25).

of having a wife."[387] These sections from the *Confessions* and the *Soliloquies* were definitely known to my mother, as they are discussed at length by Frits van der Meer, a Dutch Roman Catholic priest and much read author on Augustine at the time, and highly appreciated by my mother.[388] The fact that our The Hague parish church in which I spent a good deal of my time was dedicated to St. Augustine, and the women's association of the parish to St. Monica (my mother being the treasurer of Monica) must have contributed to the identification. A steel engraving of Augustine and Monica, made after the well-know painting by the Dutch painter Ary Scheffer, and once presented to the parish, hung for a considerable time at our home (ill. 18).

Ill. 18
"Saints Augustine and Monica." Steel engraving probably 1860, present location unknown, after an original painting by Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), "Saints Augustine and Monica," 1854, National Gallery, London. The subject is taken from Augustine, *Conf.* 9, the vision of heaven.

After some time, it started to dawn on me, that this Augustinian type priesthood advocated by my mother in my teens was not only alien to our church, but also alien to my own self. Though I experienced, in due course of time, feelings of shame, banning from my mind this curious intermezzo and turning toward a type of ministry more congruent with an embodied self, I realise that I did not succeed to disparage fully with this memory. It seems to me that this way of

[387] Augustine, *Solil.* I.17: "nihil esse sentio quod magis ex arce deiciat animum virilem, quam blandimenta feminea, corporumque ille contactus, sine quo uxor haberi non potest." Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 32, 878. English translation in Paffenroth, Ramsey and Rotelle 2000: 38.
[388] Van der Meer 1957: I, 197–207, esp. 205–206.

thinking has found its way again in my reading of Zachariah as a priest who should have been occupied with the word and other more lofty aspects of the temple service, rather than bothering over the way his wife might conceive.

2.2 Conclusion

In the above example I have used my autobiography to explain the way I have read Zachariah. My conclusion is that I have read Zachariah in terms of an Augustinian type of priest, seen through the lens of the author Van der Meer, the way Van der Meer was read, interpreted, and advocated by my mother, that is, the way I have understood her words. The question that should be asked now is, whether this conclusion would falsify my interpretation of Zachariah proposed in chapter 2. I am inclined to allow that my interpretation is, in a certain way, one-sided, although not necessarily beside the point. Of course an Augustinian type of priest is an anachronism. At the time the gospels were written, there were no church priests yet, and certainly not in the way described by Augustine. As to pagan Roman or Greek priests, for all we know they were of a very different type. The most appropriate way to understand Zachariah's priesthood is from a Jewish context. My point is, however, that the Third Gospel is inaccurate or suggestive regarding the position of Zachariah, in order to address the moral values, gender obviously included, of a Greco-Roman elite readership. Zachariah is probably just what he looks like, a man fulfilling his cultic office in the temple of Jerusalem, a man of pious behaviour but failing in clear understanding. Precisely this aspect legitimises his place in the gender paradigm sketched by me.

3. Second Readerly Exercise: Finding Jesus

The question in my second readerly exercise is, whether I could use my autobiographical presence deliberately, as a heuristic device to search and light up new possible readings of the text. I will put this heuristic approach to the test in a personal rereading of the passage of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. It will appear that, although I originally intended only to allow pieces of my autobiography to inform my reading of the text, the reverse also occurred. My reading of the text started to evoke more old memories and experiences (section 3.1). Apparently, a heuristic rereading works both ways, as a searchlight going both over the text and the self, in close interaction. Regarding the text, I will argue that, despite a relatively recent tradition that makes the twelve-year-old Jesus part of the happy holy family, to quote Adele Reinhartz (2004), the text really stages the pains Mary went through when she had to let her child go and allow him to act as a mature and competent speaker of the word (section 3.2). Regarding my own memories, I will argue that the text helped me to better understand why my mother, and indeed both my parents, acted the way they did (section 3.3).

3.1 Old and Painful Memories

"Child, why have you treated us like this?" (Luke 2:48) These words are spoken by Mary, when she and Jesus' father found Jesus after a three-day search in the temple, having a discussion with the teachers.

These words in Luke evoke old and painful memories. Somehow, I remember my mother speaking these words, and I seem to imagine how she stood, how she spoke, as her voice still resounds. My mother was important to me; she gave me so much of religious tradition. She was much of an erudite too, seemed to know really everything about plants, grasses, mushrooms, stones and stars, literature, history, art, physics and all the like. Was I interested? Yes, I suppose. But somehow I did not seem to satisfy, I knew I was beloved, but I had also to fit in with the highest standards. How could I otherwise? My brother was brilliant, they used to say, a genius. My father was a technician who, in my view, commanded everything mechanical. I was warned, in a playful way I wish to believe (though I am not sure), with the title of a collection of short stories popular in the Netherlands at the time, "a child prodigy or a total loss."[389] *That's what my mother said to me, "you are a child prodigy or a total loss." I feared the prospect, a total loss. Total loss of love?*

[389] Willem Frederik Hermans, *Een wonderkind of een total loss*, 1967.

Rejected? Would they cast me out? My mother must at times have been quite desperate, when she cried out "child, why have you treated us like this?"

When I started working on the section of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, this memory was continuously hovering inside me. I also remembered having seen, during a visit of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany, the famous painting from 1926 by Max Ernst, of the Virgin Mary chastising the Child Jesus (ill. 19).[390] Like the twelve-year-old Jesus section, this painting called forth old and painful memories. Let me, before introducing this painting, devote a few words on the use of a painting, as if it were a third text, next to my reading of the biblical text and of the self.

The use of a third text is a means to find connections between the biblical text and the self. I consider the self as a text, inasmuch as I have written the self from my experiences as I perceive them. The third text should be considered a metaphor, resembling in a way both the biblical text and the autobiographical text. As a metaphor, the third text does not fully overlap the biblical text and the autobiographical text; the third text just provides me with a set of similarities that help me to interpret the biblical text and the autobiographical text in terms of each other. The ground on which I choose a third text is not simply an unpronounced feeling that there is something familiar. The third text is chosen from the insight that both the biblical text *as it has been received in a specific context* (time, interpretive community, society, symbolic order etc.), and the autobiographical text *as it must have originated in roughly the same context*, share a space in which the third text equally has a place. I was brought up in a context in which the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus was read in a certain way. That is where the biblical text, as it has been received, meets my autobiographical perception of what my mother said to me. The third text may help to elucidate this meeting, for instance because this text equally receives the biblical text of the twelve-year-old Jesus and shows something of motherly despair. Then, the third text may help to explore further, both in biblical narrative and in autobiography, the similarities and differences. A third text does not necessarily need to be a narrative; a painting will do just as well, as paintings and narratives alike share the principles of discourse (Bal 1991). These methodical remarks being made, I will now proceed with the third text, the Max Ernst painting. I believe that the painting responds to a reading of the twelve-year-old Jesus that we are all too acquainted with, while at the same time the painting helps to visualise part of my experiences.

[390] Max Ernst, *The Blessed Virgin Chastising the Infant Jesus before Three Witnesses: A.B., P.E., and the Artist*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 196 cm x 130 cm, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

Ill. 19
Max Ernst**,** *The Blessed Virgin Chastising the Infant Jesus before Three Witnesses: André Breton, Paul Éluard and the Artist,* 1926. Oil on canvas, 196 cm x 130 cm. Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

In 1926, during his first French period, when residing in Paris, the German surrealist painter Max Ernst painted this canvas, in which we see the Virgin Mary, traditionally clad in red and blue, giving the child Jesus a good spanking, while sitting in an otherwise empty room. Three men are visible through the window. These men are the painter Max Ernst himself, and his friends André Breton and Paul Éluard, both companions in surrealism. The painting is nowadays often interpreted in a satirical way, Mary is slapping Jesus' buttocks in such a way that his halo is falling down. In his days, however, the painting was considered a sacrilegious provocation and elicited much criticism. When I look at this painting, nearly a century after it was painted, I must admit that it does not really strike me as a provocation. We have by now witnessed enough blasphemous representations of Jesus as to be possibly shocked by this work of Ernst, which I would rather classify as playful. On the other hand, however playful it may be, the canvas is not

funny either. There is something about it, which makes me feel uneasy, and this is definitely not because of a supposed sacrilege.

My uneasiness becomes more pronounced, when I look at Mary's face. The exposure is remarkable through an almost baroque *claire-obscure*, the expression almost dark. Who is she and what is she going through? And those men outside? Only one is looking through the window, the other is looking in the opposite direction. The third one, the painter himself, has his eye(s) closed, apparently unaffected, his nose high in disdain as it seems.[391] This is not a representation of a scene known from either Matthew's or Luke's birth and childhood narratives, nor do we know such a scene from apocrypha such as the Protevangelium of James or early legend. Could it be a representation of some idea of the painter connected to an existing passage in the childhood narrative of Matthew or Luke? Could the painter, perhaps, if his critics were right and there is really anger in his work, have wanted us to think differently about such a concept as the happy holy family, a concept very much en vogue precisely in those days? The canvas was painted only six years after Pope Benedict XV constituted the feast of the Holy Family in the Roman Catholic Church, with Luke's narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple as the set gospel lecture of the feast day. Against the threatened and broken families of the industrial age, the church wanted to propagate stable family life. It is imaginable that the painter had his own thoughts about the holy family and that the anger aroused by his work did not only concern presumed sacrilege, but also his raw vision of daily family life. Where then, and when could Mary possible have chastised Jesus?

Suddenly, there is the feeling, lying there to be slapped by my mother, crying and wondering why my father and brother were not there. Were they unaffected, unwilling, unable to interfere? My mother, who also introduced me to great religious thinkers as Augustine, Pascal and Teilhard de Chardin, who made me read the lives of the saints and stories of the Bible, taught me to appreciate liturgy and made me a link in the long religious family tradition. Did she feel pain? Did she appear as a Mary-like character to me? After all, her name was Mary. And indeed, she more than once repeated those words (knowingly?), uttered by Mary when they found the twelve-year-old Jesus sitting among the teachers of the temple and discussing with them, "Child, why have you treated us like this" (Luke 2:48). Not long afterwards, I kind of broke away, became at home in our local parish church, the Old Catholic church in The Hague, reading in the old library or in the eighteenth-century Bishop's Room in my spare hours, doing my schoolwork, discussing

[391] Of course this painting reflects in many ways elements traditionally connected with the "Virgin with Child" theme, such as the three magi, now converted into the three painters, or the future passion of Christ at the hand of the soldiers, reflected in the spanking given by Mary.

and learning. A second home, a new home as it felt to me, with the bishop and his wife as alternate parents.[392]

When I come to realise this, I want to investigate the connection, made at first through association, between the Max Ernst painting, my own memories and the scene of the twelve-year-old Jesus having discussions with the teachers in the temple. I will do this in the following sections, in which I will first argue that the text deploys a semantic register of loss and that Mary is confronted with the loss of her child (section 3.2). Next, I will turn again to my mother's sorrows in the light of Luke, and argue that this comparison helps me to understand and to accept (section 3.3). I will end with an evaluation of my conclusions.

3.2 Rereading Luke: The Language of Loss

When Mary and Joseph discovered that Jesus was not with them on their way home, they returned to look for Jesus in Jerusalem. When they found him in the temple after a three-day search, Mary spoke the words Τέκνον, τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως; "child, why have you treated us like this?" (2:49). These words resound with similar reproaches e.g. in 2 Samuel 16:10 LXX, τί ἐποίησας οὕτως; "why have you done like this?" when king David responds to the curse of Simi, and in the Protevangelium of James 13:2, when Joseph perceives that Mary is pregnant and says to her τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας, "why have you done this?"[393] The words spoken by Mary to Jesus, were already considered a reproach by the fifth-century Greek writer Theodoret of Cyrus, Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century, as well as Simeon Metaphrastes during the second half of the tenth century.[394] The twelfth-century Latin writer Aelred of Rievaulx comments "cum audieris matrem dulci quadam increpatione filium verberantem," "when you have heard his mother chastising her son with a gentle reprimand."[395] Aelred shows a certain ambiguity in using both a word for gentleness (*dulcis*) and a stern chastising (increpatione

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[392] To avoid misunderstanding, it must be remembered that I am talking of my childhood years in the Old Catholic church (Union of Utrecht) in The Hague and that priests and bishops in this church were allowed to marry.

[393] Prot. Jas., De Strycker 1961. See Laurentin 1966: 35–36 and n. 8 and n. 9. Cf. also Judg 8:1 LXX Τί τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο ἐποίησας ἡμῖν.

[394] Theodoret, *De incarnatione Domini* 24 in PG 75, 1461 D. See also PG 84, 73A and the discussion in Laurentin 1966: 203–204. In Theodoret, Jesus is reproached (ἐγκαλεῖται) by his mother to which Jesus defends (ἀπολογεῖται) himself. Maximus the Confessor, originally ascribed to John Geometres, *The Life of Mary*, by Wenger 1955: 185–189, in which Jesus reproaches his parents (αὐτοῖς ἐγκλητέον μᾶλλον), discussed by Laurentin 1966: 209–211; attributed to Maximus the Confessor (Georgian text) by van Esbroeck 1986. Simeon Metaphrastes, *Menologion: On the Theotokos*, 24 in Latychev 1912, in which his mother addresses Jesus by way of reproach (ὡς ἐγκαλοῦσα).

[395] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum* 31, Dumont 1961: 123.

verberantem). Modern interpreters often prefer to ponder only the gentle side of the reproach, leaving out the stern reproach. As John Martin Creed remarks, "the parents are struck with amazement. The mother first finds words of enquiry and gentle rebuke" (Creed 1930: 45). René Laurentin claims that the tone is of a deferential affection.[396] It seems that we have here comments favouring the happy holy family. However, would Aelred and his Greek predecessors not have a point in stressing the reproach?

Shortly before, the narrator informs us that καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐξεπλάγησαν, "when they saw him, they were startled" (Luke 2:48). The verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι usually expresses strong emotion.[397] Nevertheless, Raymond Brown and Joseph Fitzmyer argue that Jesus' parents were simply "startled," or "amazed."[398] Or is there "perhaps even joy in the present case," as I. Howard Marshall (1978: 128) suggests? In Luke-Acts, we encounter the verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι three more times, each instance is a response to Jesus' teaching.[399] It may be inferred that what Jesus is doing here at the age of twelve in the temple should be interpreted as an act of teaching, precisely because of the response conveyed through the verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι. The interpretation offered by Marshall (1978: 128) seems to come quite close, Mary and Joseph "wonder at finding Jesus in the company of teachers in the temple." Nevertheless, something strange happens, as it is not the father who speaks these words, as one might expect in view of ancient gender scripts, but the mother. This observation might be countered by a psychologising remark such as Marshall's (1978: 128) that "Mary's question is a natural one for a mother to ask in the circumstances," but this remark is parontocentric given the gender scripts in antiquity. Hans Klein finds a different, but still psychological solution, when he says that Luke shows this way "dass sie wirklich die Mutter, Josef hingegen nur der rechtliche Vater ist" (Klein 2006: 155). This solution is not only parontocentric, but also improbable in view of Mary' words that ὁ πατήρ σου κἀγὼ ὀδυνώμενοι ἐζητοῦμέν σε, "your father and I, being vexed, have been looking for you" (2:48).

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[396] "le ton est celui d'une déférente affection" (Laurentin 1966: 36).

[397] The verb ἐκπλλήσσομαι is used, e.g., in Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*, in which Antigone is not ἐκπεπληγμένην, "terrified," when she is hunted down (like an animal) by Creon's guardsmen (σὺν δέ νιν θηρώμεθ᾽ εὐθὺς οὐδὲν ἐκπεπληγμένην, "together we immediately hunted her down, she who was in no way terrified," *Ant*. 432–433, Lloyd-Jones 1994). It is interesting to see that the translation of *Antigone*, offered by Lloyd-Jones shows the same tendency to soften the otherwise strong meaning of the verb: "we … at once seized her, she being in no way surprised" (Lloyd-Jones 1994: 43). Another instance offers the Persian king Cambyses who is ἐκπεπληγμένος by the betrayal of Smerdis and the deadly wound caused by the accident with his sword (Herodotus, *Hist*. 3.64.5; Rosén 1987: 295), he is in a state of "madness" (Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella 2007: 463).

[398] Brown 1977: 475; Fitzmyer 1981a: 442, though Fitzmyer allows that ἐκπλλήσσομαι is a strong verb. Cf. also Laurentin 1966: 33–34.

[399] Luke 4:32; 9:43; Acts 13:12. On the use of the aorist here, cf. Jeremias 1980: 101.

The word ὀδυνώμενοι, "vexed," deserves closer attention. The verb ὀδυνάομαι, "to sorrow, suffer torment," occurs four times in NT, only in Luke-Acts. In the story of The Rich Man and Lazarus, the same verb is used to denote the pains of hell fire experienced by the rich man, when after his death he perceives the unbridgeable gap between him and the poor Lazarus in Abraham's lap (Luke 16:24–25). The verb is also used to denote the feelings of the people in Miletus who said farewell to Paul, weeping and kissing him because they realised they would never see him again (Acts 20:38). The emotions of "saying farewell forever" and "really missing" seem preeminent in this word. As Brown remarks, "it implies mental and spiritual pain or sadness, and in Luke 16:24–25 and Acts 20:38 the anguish concerns life itself" (Brown 1977: 475). Likewise, especially the passive tense is used in classical literature to denote the feeling of suffering or pain.[400]

What type of loss would Jesus' parents have experienced when they found Jesus in the temple? Words of enquiry and gentle rebuke are not exactly in place in the context of the verb ὀδυνάομαι. I would suggest that Mary with the words Τέκνον, τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως; expresses her insight that she has lost her child, who correspondingly answers that he must attend to the things of his father (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου, Luke 2:49). Whether the temple is meant or an occupation,[401] or whether his father is God or Abraham—questions discussed in the previous chapter—does not really matter in this context.[402] At this point it suffices to conclude that Mary realises that she has lost her child.[403]

In this passage, Jesus has come of age. When Jesus continues to live with his parents, he does so of his own accord: καὶ κατέβη μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ναζαρὲθ, καὶ ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς, "and he came with them and went to Nazareth and he was obedient to them" (2:51). Jesus chooses to be obedient to his parents, which is, according to Colleen Conway, the distinctive sign of his manliness, in addition to his earlier shown competence in speech and wisdom.[404] It is Jesus' self-chosen obedience that makes him to a new ideal type of manliness. From now on, Jesus takes over as the subject of the verbs. This makes the passage into a hinge

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[400] Democr. 159; Hipppocrates, *Epid*. 4.12; Sophocles, *Electra*. 804; Aristophanes, *Vespae* 283, *Ranae* 650; Plato, *Respublica* 583d and *passim*.

[401] Weinert 1983: 119–122; Seim 1994b: 143. Fitzmyer (1981a: 443–444) recognises the ambivalence, but sticks to the traditional reading "in my Father's house," already preferred by Creed 1930: 46.

[402] God: Moore 1992: 122–123 and the literature cited in 123n38; Seim 1994b: 69; Hans Klein 2006: 155. Abraham: Hemelsoet and Monshouwer 1997: 45.

[403] Cf. also Seim 1994b: 69, who speaks of "Jesus' distancing from his parents."

[404] Cf. Laurentin 1966: 135–141. Acccording to Reinmuth (1994: 163 n. 43) and Lips (1990: 441) Jesus' σύνεσις is a sign of his wisdom (σοφία). Cf. Green 1997: 155 and n8 for the biblical passages concerning divine wisdom Jesus is here responding to. On his heroic character, cf. Green 1997: 155, referring to Josephus, *Life* 9 and De Jonge 1978: 340–342.

story between the birth narratives in Luke 1–2 and Luke 3, where Jesus autonomously takes up his ministry.

3.3 "Soll ich dich so bald verlieren?"

The composer Johann Sebastian Bach wrote his Cantata 32, "Liebster Jesu mein Verlangen" in 1726, to be sung on the Sunday after Epiphany, 13 January. The text was taken from a collection of cantata texts, written by Georg Christian Lehms, a librarian from Darmstadt, and published in 1711. Lehms' text corresponds with the traditional gospel lecture of the Sunday under the octave of Epiphany, the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in de temple, Luke 2: 41–52. Lehms' text can be read as a creative reception of Luke's narrative, as he tells the story of a mother searching for her child, put in the allegorical frame of the soul of the believer, who searches for Christ. In the following dialogue, Mary/the soul is searching for Christ:

> Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen,
> Sage mir, wo find ich dich?
> Soll ich dich so bald verlieren
> Und nicht ferner bei mir spüren?
> Ach! mein Hort, erfreue mich,
> Laß dich höchst vergnügt umfangen.
>
> Dearest Jesus, my desire,
> Tell me, where can I find you?
> Shall I lose you so soon
> And no longer feel you with me?
> Oh! my hoard, give me joy,
> Let yourself be embraced most amiably.

Reading this cantata text, it strikes me that Lehms has so accurately given voice to the sense of impending loss. This is, as I have argued, a pertinent semantic register in the story. At the same time, Lehms has succeeded in making the theme accessible to a larger audience. Returning to my own memories, I now understand that my mother must have had the feeling of losing me. Indeed, she more than once confided to me that she wept and prayed to God and dedicated me to God as I was beyond her reach. Judging from the words of Lehms, I am not the only one who

is acquainted with such an experience, connected to τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως. Josef Ernst, commenting on these same words in Luke 2:48 in psychological terms speaks about "den eigenwilligen und selbstbewussten heranwachsenden Sohn" and "ein 'normaler' Generationenkonflikt," finally about "das Bild der besorgten Mutter" (Ernst 1993: 99). In this context also the Augustine and Monica subtext already mentioned in the previous readerly exercise, returns, as Monica wept for her son who threatened to go astray, and prayed to God. Augustine confesses that "pro me fleret ad te mea mater, fidelis tua, amplius quam flent matres corporea funera," "my mother, your faithful, wept for me, more than mothers weep for a physical death" (Aug. *Conf*. 3.11.19). Monica lamented on behalf of her son to bishop Ambrose, who responded that a son of so many tears cannot possibly be lost, "fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrimarum pereat," "it is not possible that a son of so many tears will be lost," (Aug. *Conf*. 3.12.21). These are, as far as I can remember, precisely the words with which our parish priest and bishop tried to console my mother.

Digging deeper, however, it occurs to me that my mother and my father as well, had reason to do as they did. The fear of losing a child must have been of a traumatic kind, as they did actually lose an earlier child a few days after his birth. One of the first words spoken to me after my birth, were "You shall not go, you must stay with me." The fear of losing a child was there all the time, in my childhood and early adolescent years. It is through the lens of my rereading of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple that I have started to see my parents' anxiety in a much milder way, accepting their distress without carrying feelings of guilt or shortcoming.

Returning once more to the happy holy family and its feast day, institutionalised by Pope Benedict XV, I suggest that the gospel lecture set for the feast day, the passage of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple in Luke, is after all not such a bad choice. That is, provided that we strip off the layers of superficial gentleness and holiness, and accept, like the early Greek and Latin interpreters, and like the painter Ernst, that a child's growing up goes together with experiences of despair and loss. Maybe Ernst was not so blasphemous as his contemporaries thought, and just wanted to get rid of the happy halo, to show that Jesus was, indeed, humanly embodied in all respects.

3.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have used autobiography in a heuristic way. Writing my early childhood memories opened my eyes to the fact that there is in the text of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the

temple a semantic register circling around the sense of loss. The heuristic approach worked both ways, for my rereading of the text helped me to better understand what happened between my parents and me, and to rewrite the consciousness of my memories. This was added to by calling in the help of a third text, the Max Ernst painting. There is even a transformative aspect, as painful memories turned into a mild awareness of what it means to reach a mature judgement. As Brenner has remarked, "this is the value of autobiographical criticism for me: it makes you re-consider, as you get on; it makes you incorporate your life into your work, and *vice versa*." (Brenner 2002: 112)

As to the insight gained in the text, I have argued in the previous chapter, that the section on the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple represents a shift regarding the f/Father. The pun of the narrative lies in a misunderstanding concerning the words οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ ("his parents," Luke 2:41.43), ὁ πατήρ σου καὶ ἐγὼ ("your father and I," Luke 2:48) and τοῦ πατρός μου ("my father," Luke 2:49). Jesus shows his ability to handle the word, which shows him as a boy who comes of age. He is now a son of Torah. Put in Lacanian terms, the real father is substituted by the symbolic Father. Jesus demonstrates his successful entry into the symbolic order. He shows a superior ability to deal with the token of this order, Scripture, metonymically represented by its interpreters, the teachers. His young age as opposed to the supposedly much older teachers is what inspires us as modern readers with amazement. In line with this reading, the words "child, why have you treated us like this" are usually read as a sign of amazement at Jesus' act of youthful insubordination. In contrast to this reading, I argued that the fear of imminent loss comes much closer to what is at stake in these lines.

4. Third Readerly Exercise: Seeking Transformation

After an explanatory autobiographical reading and a heuristic autobiographical reading, I will now turn to a transformative autobiographical reading. This third readerly exercise consists of two main parts. First, I will explain what I mean by a transformative reading, mainly on the basis of Ricoeur's hermeneutical self-understanding (section 4.1). Next, I will my transformative reading in which I will explore my inner drive to deal with gender and religion (section 4.2).

4.1 Reading as Transformative Self-Understanding

Paul Ricoeur, in his discussion of the various dimensions of the notion of the text, argues that "the text is the medium through which we understand ourselves" (1991: 87). As Ricoeur explains, one of the characteristics of a text is that it addresses someone. Since there is not someone standing in front of us who speaks to us (with the text being the medium) when we are reading a text, the dialogue with the text takes place, as it were, "in front of the text." Understanding, then, is not finding meaning in the text, but "exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self" (88). This concept of an enlarged self offers an opportunity for a transformation of the self. In his "Intellectual Autobiography" Ricoeur has given an "exercise in self-understanding" (1995: 3). As an example of self-understanding, however, I find this intellectual autobiography a bit disappointing. Ricoeur posits himself vis-à-vis his own work (as I believe "in front of his work") to enlarge his self-understanding, but although he announces that "only those events of my private life likely to shed light on it will be mentioned" (ibid.), these elements do not visibly contribute to an enlarged self-understanding. I find this disappointing, because the way biographic elements of his youth interfered with his later philosophical work really calls for exploration, to mention only the most obvious ones: his mother having died at his birth, his father shortly after being killed during World War I, the boy himself being brought up as an orphan as a "child of the nation" with books as companions, his disappointment when he discovered at the age of eleven or twelve that his father had died for nothing. These elements, related by himself, must have informed his self-understanding considerably. He even, at some point, stops speaking about himself as an "I," turning to the objectifying "the child" instead (4–5). As a whole his intellectual autobiography is a narrativised bibliography with some personal explanatory elements in it, rather than an exercise in enlarged self-understanding.

A more promising clue can be found in an earlier essay, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (1974), in which Ricoeur addresses the relation between the conscious and the unconscious.[405] In his critique of the Freudian concept of the unconscious, Ricoeur argues that the unconscious is not a kind of reality of its own, exercising autonomously its own silent drives. The unconscious is only there in so far as it is perceived and interpreted (104–105). The unconscious is not really an unconscious, it is what has been made conscious and is in retrospect called unconscious. This notion appeals to me, for it would mean that a transformative reading of the unconscious should be possible. We should be able, in the dialogue "before the text," in the surplus of meaning that opens itself in the encounter, to find the metonymical extension of ourselves, what was already there but was not put well into words. Bringing this metonymical extension to the foreground, could indeed be a transformative enterprise. We would be able to re-narrate our self-understanding in such a way that we take responsibility for our self-understanding, resisting for instance the tendency to frame our lives in terms of helplessness and victimhood, or resisting the tendency to seek fault with ourselves in oppressive situations. The transformation reached in this way must be distinguished from the therapeutic effect. Precisely because the unconscious is only accessible as a conscious, a third witness-consciousness (as Ricoeur calls it) remains needed to help us change our perspective. With the therapeutic effect, however, I have reached the limits of what you can do with autobiographical criticism. It is especially the field of narrative pastoral counselling that could take over at this point.[406]

What could a readerly exercise that seeks to find a transformative reading look like? It would be a very careful approach, in which explanatory and heuristic modes are implied, and in which I would seek to enlarge my self-understanding by gradually following the metonymical potential of my initial self-understanding. I propose to start where I left off, the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple.

4.2 Enlarging Self-Understanding

I ended my second readerly exercise with the idea that two narratives merged: the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, and the narrative of myself at twelve or thirteen years. The meeting of these two narratives led to insight and knowledge. Nevertheless something

[405] Ricoeur, in his essay "Consciousness and the Unconscious," in Ricoeur 1974: 97–117.

[406] Much literature has appeared on narrative pastoral counselling. I would like to pick out just two. In the Netherlands, there is the comprehensive manual by Ganzevoort and Visser 2007, with a survey of the hermeneutical-philosophical aspects of this approach. In English, there is an article by Truter and Kotzé (2005), who give a good oversight with references, and who also give attention to feminist-theological aspects.

remained, drew my attention, and left me pondering and reflecting about something. When it was finally there, ready to be written down, I did not know how to put it in a line of argument. I decided to make an excursus of it, an associative piece of work, sensible in itself, but metonymically connected to my line of argument. I present it here.

4.2.1 Excursus on an Eleven-Year-Old Girl

On 4 February 1877, in the small town of Den Helder, at the time a fisherman's village and naval base in the north of North-Holland, my great-grandmother Maria Theresia Deelder received an old, small church book printed in 1787.[407] In the Old Catholic community in which she was brought up, a small church which still called itself Roman Catholic despite one and a half century of separation from main-stream Roman Catholicism, personal attention to church services was highly valued, faithful to the Port-Royalist attitude cherished in this church. Accordingly, people were required, when attending the Latin mass, to read along with the priest all the prayers of the mass and the lectures from the lectionary, in translation. The little book, "Evangelien en Apostolische Lessen" provided these translations, along with catechetical teachings and prayers during the day. Education, understanding, and learning to live the Christian life, is what this little book was about. The title page shows a delightful engraving of the twelve-year-old Jesus sitting among the teachers, the moment he was found by his parents (ill. 20). The Dutch text reads: "Zij vonden Jesus in den Tempel in het midden der Leeraren. Luc. II", "They found Jesus in the temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctours," Luke 2.[408] On the opposite site, my great-grandmother, then a young girl, wrote her name (or had her name written) probably on the occasion of her first communion, with the addition "Oud 11 Jaar", "11 years old."

Could she have been aware of the parallel that arose in this way, a parallel between an eleven-year-old girl, just about to enter the church's religious discourse, and the twelve-year-old boy, who was having discussions with the teachers of his religion? Somehow I like to explore the metaphorical potential of this little gift book, and imagine the girl, seated in Jesus' place, among the teachers, growing in wisdom and knowledge. According to my grandmother, her mother was such a woman, serious and profoundly religious. I like to imagine myself working my way through generations of religious upbringing, to come upon this book that has lived a shelf life for

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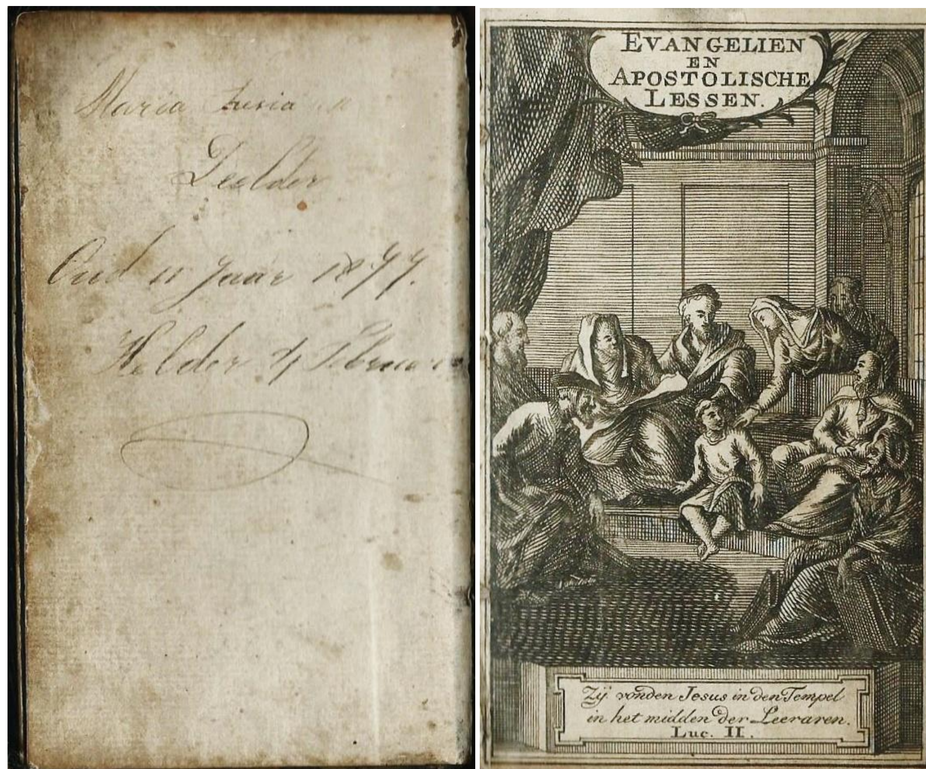
[407] *Evangelien en Apostolische Lessen, Die, volgens het Roomsch Misboek, door 't geheele Jaer in de Kerke op de Zondagen en de voornaemste Feestdagen des Heiligen, als ook op de Quatertemperdagen en Assche Woensdag onder den H. Dienst der isse geleezen worden; Met het Gebed, Collecta genaemd, 't welk voor de Lesse geleezen word. Nieuwe druk, met toevoeging van een Kort Geloofsbegrip* (Utrecht: J. Schelling, 1787).

[408] English translation in the KJV 1611, with the archaic spelling of Doctours, in order to render the old fashioned Dutch.

so many years, now holding it in my hand, meeting through it the girl who once held it and with whom I identify, still growing in wisdom and years.



Ill. 20
Evangelien en Apostolische Lessen. Utrecht: J. Schelling, 1787.

The attentive reader will have noticed that something remarkable happened in this excursus. Although I had previously argued that there are two stories, the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus and the story of my youth at twelve or thirteen, suddenly a third story came up, in which an eleven-year-old girl with a church book in her hands took the place of the twelve-year-old Jesus. Thus, out of the meeting between two stories, a third story emerged. The story of the eleven-year-old girl emerged from both stories, as it were as a metonymy of both stories. The story of Jesus led via the little church book to my great-grandmother as a young girl, about to start the Christian life and Christian knowledge. The story of my youth led via my mother and our commitment to the life and history of our small church, to this same church book and this same great-grandmother who as it were left this commitment as a legacy to me.

How to evaluate this new text? Or what could it mean? To me, this new story of the eleven-year-old girl shows the way out of an oppressive ambiguity. Caught in the Jesus (or Augustine) role (more or less forced upon me by my mother), I tried to find a way out, without

having to lose the deeply felt notion of continuity through generations, represented by my mother. The little 1787 church book in my hands, with the name of my great-grandmother written opposite the sitting Jesus, who in his turn addresses his mother (and dares to teach his mother), enables me to envision the girl in his place, that is, in my place. It is, after all, the girl that my mother professed not to like, as she repeatedly praised herself happy for having only boys, together with the associated gender role. Here is my own uneasiness with gender roles. It is time to explore this aspect in the following section.

4.2.2 "Hey, a Man!"

When I think about gender and the way I experienced gender roles, an experience during my theological studies in Utrecht comes to my mind.

When I was a student in theology at Utrecht University in the 1980s, I happened to work for a couple of months as an assistant in the women's studies department of the Faculty of Arts. Though I realised that it was not a naturalness for a man to work in a women's studies department in those years of second-wave feminism, it nevertheless felt as something natural. One day, when I was working alone at the department, preparing the festivities surrounding the inaugural lecture of Mieke Bal as professor for women's studies, checking the list of invited guests and preparing the programme for a small symposium, it happened that someone knocked on the door. A woman entered, looked at me and asked, "Hey, a man … Isn't this the women's studies department?" The situation is of course perfectly understandable, though it may sound perhaps somewhat hilarious after so many years. The basic point, however, remained written in my mind as an experience that to so many, especially women and people of colour, will sound all too familiar: first face signification based on visual outward characteristics.

As far as I can remember, I have always been puzzled by the naturalness and the speed with which we attribute gender at face value and continue to attach behavioural expectations to it. "Hey, you are a man, so you are not expected to sit here." It is a kind of all-pervasive natural fallacy, from a natural *is* inevitably follows a behavioural *ought*. This is of course an experience most women and people of colour and in many cases LGBTQ+ people are too well acquainted with. Gloria Wekker, in her book *White Innocence* (2016) has given some striking examples, for instance this one:

> A black woman enters, hangs up her coat on the pegs on the wall, walks toward one of the groups, and extends her hand to one of the men standing closest to her. He bends over the chair where he has just hung his jacket, takes it, and hands it to her. The moment seems frozen in time. Then she says, "I am not working in the cloakroom. I am the representative of the Ministry of Well-Being, Health, and Culture and my name is Gloria Wekker." (Wekker 2016: 57–58)

Wekker argued that it is about time that those who do not directly suffer under this mechanism, and who indulge in their own pretended innocence, accept their complicity. Likewise, it is a responsibility of critical biblical exegesis to finally dispose of pretended innocence regarding gender, race and class, and other prerogatives on all levels. With regard to the level of interpretation, I would like to cite just two examples from Luke, the one taken from the annunciations to Zachariah and Mary, the other from the virginal conception.

When we compare the two annunciation scenes in Luke, the one to Zachariah, the other to Mary, we find that their answers to the angel are almost literally the same. Nevertheless the angel reacts differently, and naturally so, it seems, for Zachariah is a man and Mary a woman. As I have explained, however, this is not really the point. The text contains a subtle wordplay which explains the angel's different response. Nevertheless, modern scholarly readers often prefer to read along the gender code. It is as if they cannot allow Zachariah to fail in his manly role. His objections, sexualised as they may be (thus he misses most of the angel's message) and his subsequent inability to speak, are nicely ascribed to a sense of religious awe and amazement. So according to Creed "the priest's dumbness … was the natural effect of a supernatural vision" (1930: 12). Unfortunately, Creed does not explain why Mary did not suffer under the natural effect of this same supernatural vision. A different explanation is offered by Fitzmyer according to whom "God himself closes the lips of Zechariah to conceal from human beings what he is about" (1981a: 328). Apparently, and happily so, in the case of Mary God had more confidence that she would keep His words silently in her heart. After all, that is what the gospel says in Luke 2:19.

The other instance of the way a behavioural *ought* is inferred from the bodily *is*, is the so-called virginal conception. Although in the case of an old woman like Elisabeth, no one, to the best of my knowledge, has cared to speculate about the way she conceived her child, a young woman like Mary leaves the floor to a wealth of speculative suggestions. Somewhere there must have been a man, be it through one or other illegitimate pregnancy, be it, preferably, through a

kind of divine insemination, even when such a reading would come down to assuming a unique sexual meaning of the verb ἐπισκίαζω, contrary to an overwhelming evidence of a non-sexual semantic field. The feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman already poked fun of this "somewhere-there-must-be-a-man" position in het utopian novel *Herland*.[409] In this novel, three North-American men explorers by chance arrive at an unknown hidden country. The country appears to be Herland, inhabited by a society consisting solely of women. One of the most remarkable phenomena, at least in the men's eyes, is that these women give birth solely to girls, without the interference of men. This is a fact the male visitors find extremely hard to accept. Somewhere in this country, they insist, there must be men. When the women, at their turn, ask the men to tell them about the country they come from, the men set off to tell some of the master narratives of their own culture. When mentioning the biblical story of the virgin birth, the three men have to admit that such a thing does not exactly mean a miracle to these women. In fact, as they perceive, "the story of the virgin birth *naturally* did not astonish her" (Gilman 1979: 110, emphasis added).[410] Gilman's novel is a thought experiment, to illustrate how difficult it is to imagine a society in which a behavioural *ought* cannot simply be inferred from the bodily *is*. The "somewhere-there-must-be-a-man-position" is emblematic for this difficulty. We must try to find the source of gender, not in the body, but in ourselves.

4.2.3 "A Cold Commanding Eye": The Gaze of Gender

What happened to the twelve or thirteen-year-old boy, who after so many years found solace in the book held by the eleven-year-old girl, showing the picture of the twelve-year-old boy in which he recognised himself, discussing with his mother?

As far as I can remember, I always had a strong feeling of not belonging to those who made the game, the popular ones who lived in a self-evident world and were never in need to explain. I was not one of the boys, did not even fully understand their language and jokes. Being bullied by grown up men, when as a five-year-old boy I was in hospital for surgery close to my heart, did not really help to develop a sense of desire to participate in the kind of behaviour I had learned to understand as male. The Freudian father figure, however, the metaphor that according to theory

[409] Written in 1915 and serialised in Gilman's monthly magazine, *The Forerunner*, vol. 6 (1915). First published separately as Gilman 1979. See also Gilman 1928; 1981: 189; 1989. A recent discussion in Beard 2017a; 2017b.

[410] Gilman uses the term "virgin birth" where the term "virginal conception" would have been more precise. The terms, however, are often used interchangeably. See the definitions given in my Introduction, section 2.1.

should warrant this order and offer me the true goal of maturity, was written in neat blue letters in my father's agenda book, words that were there as long as I could remember, right until his untimely death. It was a poem that represented to me who my father was, and that reminded me of what was expected of me. A loving father who really cared, he showed a strong sense of duty. The poem, called "The Best Friend," by the nineteenth-century Dutch poet P. A. De Génestet, started with these lines: "I have a friend with iron hand / and cold commanding eye…" and ended with the words "what is his name? Duty."[411] *With my now deceased five years older brother I silently competed to win our father's appreciation. The tragic side of my brother's life was his feeling, not justified as I have good reason to believe, that he failed in gaining his father's appreciation. On the other hand, I was prepared to do whatever had to be done.*

I was prepared to do what had to be done. I competed, silently, with my brother. That is, where he seemed to fail, I felt I had to do better. The eleven-year-old girl vanished. There was always this cold commanding eye, judging me and calling me to do better. I loved my brother, but still I blamed him for not doing things the way they should be done. In silence I reproached him for escaping the gaze of gender, but I really wanted to escape myself. He went his own way, time and again causing a world of unrest. When I look back on the little scholarly work I produced, it occurs to me that research on the subject of two competing brothers is a recurrent theme. Could it be that I unwittingly was concerned with the subject?

In my master's thesis at Utrecht University (Troost 1988), I explored the story of Gen 21:1–21 on the reversal between Ishmael and Isaac, compared with Origen's exegesis of the passage in his *Homiliae in Genesim* 7. I was struck by the notion that the legitimacy of the one, Isaac, was reached at the expense of the other, Ishmael, who was eventually sent away. I called it "the politics of sending away." Next, I wrote an essay in the Feminist Companion series, edited by Athalya Brenner, on conventions and gender (Troost 1993), in which I compared the narrative of Gen 21:1–21 with the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11–31. This time, it struck me in particular that the way to assess the self was to associate the other with women. The elder brother, who apparently lived in full contiguity with his father, invented that his younger brother in the distant country must have spent his time with prostitutes (Luke 15:30), although the text does not say so when the younger brother actually is in the distant country. It is clearly the elder brother's imagination, and as such an instance of ancient sexual slander (a mechanism in

[411] Petrus Augustus de Génestet, a Dutch poet and theologian (1829–1861). The poem is called "De beste Vriend" (The Best Friend), and was first posthumously published by Tiele in the collection *Dichtwerken* (De Génestet 1869: 206–207): "Ik heb een vriend met ijzren hand / En koel gebiedend oog … Hoe is zijn naam? De Plicht." Translation a.t.

antiquity used to accuse the other of moral depravity, described by Knust 2016). The point remains, however, that the construction of male gender and issues of legitimacy are closely connected at the expense of the female presence. Therefore, to some scholars this is really the parable of the father's love,[412] while Jane Schaberg called it rightly "the parable of the missing mother" (Schaberg 1992: 282). The elder brother himself fulfils his father's wishes in all respects, as an example of the ancient virtue of piety, but at what costs?

In another essay in the Feminist Companion series, I decided to put the matter into a broader context, and explored the so-called substitution by reversal paradigm (Troost 1996). In this literary paradigm, there is a reversal in a narrative pair in which the one takes over the position of the other. I argued that the narrative structure of the John/Jesus relationship in the Third Gospel is very similar to narrative pairs in which two brothers change places, beginning with Cain and Abel, and going from there to Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Josef and his brothers, right to the parable of the Prodigal Son.[413] Although John and Jesus are not brothers, I made a case that the narrative structure is in their case very similar. Finally, I decided in my MDiv master's thesis submitted to the Dutch Protestant Theological University (Troost 1997), to investigate the way the reversal in Luke 15:11–32 is represented in the paintings and drawings on the subject by Rembrandt. I used the Rembrandt instance as a case study to make a point of the reversal between brothers on the basis of exemplary gender behaviour, showing that we have here a persistent biased exegetical pattern which has to be fought.

Overseeing all this, I can only conclude that it was a theme of my youth that I sought to elucidate. The choice of your favourite exegetical subject matter is perhaps not so neutral as we would like it to have in the scholarly world. What really drew my attention, however, is that a struggle between brothers, gender invested as it may be, is not the real issue. The real issue is the quest for fatherly acceptance. It is this search for fatherly acceptance that has made the girl vanish, though reinforced by my mother's happiness at having only boys. Faced with this inevitable call to manliness, there was the neatly written call for duty, commanding faithfulness and courage. The gaze of gender was always there. It is a sad thing that I only after my brother's untimely death learned of his lifelong struggle, the way he had to conceal his sexuality, his

[412] E.g., Jeremias 1962: 128; Patte 1976: 140–141.

[413] Cf. Derret 1967: 68–70; Scott 1977: 62; Bovon 1975: 303; Fuchs 1985, Brenner 1986, Troost 1993. York (1991) has examined the reversals in Luke, including the prodigal son (York 1991: 145–154). I suggested to classify these stories within a Substitution by Reversal Paradigm: "The Substitution by Reversal Paradigm ... is stereotyped by a master-plot, in which two children (or two groups of children) change places in relation to their father. Their substitution is acted out through a reference to their mothers by means of various literary strategies, especially the 'annunciation type-scene' (Fuchs 1985) and the 'Birth of the Hero Paradigm' (Brenner 1986). The plot is characterised by a problematical relationship between the father and his heir, but usually ends up by the father's acceptance of the younger son by means of an enacted fatherly rebirth of the younger son" (Troost 1993: 265).

longing for acceptance preceding his coming out, just a few years before his death. Gender, when forced upon you because of the body, may indeed be a source of unhappiness. But then, this counts as much for behaviour forced upon you because of colour, religious clothing etc. It is perfectly understandable that people choose to outvoice themselves and find a way to compensate for their unhappiness. I for one am happy that I have met the eleven-year-old girl in the temple. I must confess she means quite a lot to me. It is not surprising that I already seem to have known her for a very long time, she is part of myself.

It may be objected that my work, now I have arrived at this stage, ceases to be really exegetical and has become so hyper-personal that it is almost immune to good scholarly critique. This objection is understandable, although I would like to say in my defence that good scholarship will always be personally informed. Maybe an author is not inclined to say so, as he would refrain from making himself vulnerable. It remains, however, a moral obligation for scholarship to be aware of your personal drives. According to Susan Neiman (2014), to be aware of the way the pieces of your life's story fit together is part of a mature attitude. Fulfilling the moral obligation to relate the self and the text in what I have called autobiographical criticism, we remain responsible for what we have done. Maybe we are called to explain what the text teaches us to believe, as Montesquieu's librarian would advise, but the text always and only speaks through actual real readers who read with their life and body. We can never say with absolute certainty what is "in" the text, but we can and must have good arguments to account for the way we read.

4.3 Conclusion

Seeking a transformative reading, theoretically based on a hermeneutical self-understanding such as described by Ricoeur, has led me to explore the extent of the image that arose before my eyes, when I compared the two stories, the one of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, the other of the twelve or thirteen-year-old boy I was when my mother addressed me in precisely the same words as mother Mary spoke to Jesus. The image spoke to me of a girl sitting among the teachers, and connected me with my own commitment to the church she was so much committed to. An enlarged self-understanding arose, in which I gradually understood the effect of gender-roles forced upon you, condensed in the fear to lose appreciation, to fail in your duties, not doing the things of your father.

I also understood that a transformative reading is a responsible reading. Ricoeur already argued that an enlarged self-understanding implies a critique of ideology (1974: 97–117).

Likewise, Wekker (2015) called for a self-critical attitude. You must be aware of the effect of your own prerogatives as you may continue oppressive patterns, even when you suffer from it. Looking back I am aware that my work may not be entirely free from gender biases. When I recall for instance the ancient virtues of self-continence and duty, I must admit that the poem by De Génestet the way I have read it, could be seen as a eulogy on precisely these same virtues as the best friends you could possibly have. Besides, I wonder what could be more hypaethral than writing a dissertation as a way to seek transformation.

This can probably not be avoided, as the hermeneutical circle will always remain closed to a certain extent. Much work remains to be done. This should be done, however, in a broader context, in which a diversity of contexts and their intersections are addressed. Smit, Creangă and Van Klinken (2015) have noticed that research into the way (modern) masculinities are constructed in interaction with scriptural traditions is still in its infancy. Calling for further research in what turns out to be a contextual approach in biblical criticism, they especially underscore the need for multidisciplinarity, the need to demonstrate hermeneutical self-awareness, and the need to broaden our scope to Qur'an and Muslim cultures, as well as newly emerging forms of Christianity in the global South. Multidisciplinarity, hermeneutical self-understanding, and broadening our scope to other cultures are the ingredients for further transformation.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the possibilities offered by the newly emerged approach of autobiographical biblical criticism. After a critical assessment of what exactly should be the criteria for a real autobiographical biblical criticism in order to respond to the needs of a critical self-understanding, I have outlined three approaches, methodologically separated but really more or less overlapping: an explanatory approach, a heuristic approach, and a transformative approach. An explanatory approach is useful in order to explain why you have read the text the way you did. By means of this approach I was able to account for the way I read Zachariah's priesthood. Initially I took for granted that a priest was someone like the ideal (hypaethral) priest described by my mother, based on her reading of Van der Meer (1957), who presented a very specific image of a priest based on his reading of Augustine. It would have been better, in retrospect, to explore priesthood in ancient Judaism. In view of the Third Gospel's dialogue with ancient virtuous manliness this would probably lead to a considerable change in perspective.

The heuristic approach helped me to explore the similarities between text and autobiography and to notice elements in the text I had not noticed before, as well as aspects of my autobiography I was not yet fully aware of. The narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus went into dialogue with the story of myself as a twelve-year-old boy. Thus I was able to hear voices of sorrow at the imminent loss of someone you love. It helped me to understand what happened in those days between my parents and me, that is, a transformative aspect was already there. By means of a "third text," the little church book of an eleven-year-old girl, I was able to describe the influence of gender in my youth. Gendered behaviour based on the body was intricately woven into the relationship between me and my brother and father. Quite an amount of study I devoted over the years to the way this theme is dealt with in the Bible. It is a pity that I did not have the opportunity to share with my brother what I believe was our common struggle, fitting the pieces of your life together so as to reach maturity. For me personally, rereading the twelve-year-old Jesus from the perspective of the eleven-year-old girl has helped me considerably, transforming my perception of the text and of myself. *Pace* Montesquieu's reverend librarian.

Conclusions

In three chapters I have explored questions of authorship, text, and readerly positions in the process of interpretation of Luke 1–2, seen from the perspective of gender. Author, text, and reader are, although theoretically clearly distinguished entities, from a hermeneutical point of view just angles of approach. Reflection on the identity of an anonymous or pseudonymous author easily leads to a selection and examination of textual characteristics that would be reducible to this author. As readers, we do not only represent locations of criticism in which we participate, we also bring to the text our own presuppositions as well as personal drives, allowing these to interfere with the text and in return to contribute to the way we represent ourselves, that is, our mental autobiography. Author, text, and reader, therefore, are in this study in the first place starting points for reflection on the hermeneutical process.

1. Author

In my first chapter I have dealt with questions of gendered authorship. We are used to read anonymous or pseudonymous texts stemming from antiquity with the silent hypothesis of a male author, unless we find evidence of a female author. As a result, we are reading and evaluating the text according to our own presuppositions of how a man or a woman would write. What if we assumed that the author a biblical text such as the Third Gospel was a woman? This would at least force us to become aware of our presuppositions. Besides, this hypothesis would work in a heuristic way, bringing to the fore elements that otherwise might have passed unnoticed. Actually the hypothesis of a female author of a section of the Third Gospel has been tried before during the debate on the original language of Luke 1–2, which stirred the minds of scholars in the history of religions school in the early 1900s in Germany. Examining this debate, it appeared that these scholars imagined a female author who was quite close to their own state of mind. Mary for instance appeared as a kind of bourgeois woman, who used to confide her most personal domestic experiences to her practitioner.

Searching for a way to imagine a woman author without falling into such pitfalls as parontocentrism ("Mary confidentially talking to her practitioner") or essentialism ("after all, this is how a woman would write") I tried to imagine an embodied and situated author. What would it have been like to live such and such a body (you do not have body, you live a body, say, a woman's body, a man's body, a body of colour, a disabled body etc.), situated there and then (in the countryside of Roman occupied Judea)? Immediately its corollary question popped up, How

could I, living a modern white western man's body ever hope to understand such an embodied life there and then? I tried to imagine an embodied and situated author by bringing a section of *The Color Purple,* an epistolary novel written by the womanist author Alice Walker, to bear on the text of Luke 1:34–35, following the experience of the black girl Celie, who, having been raped by her stepfather, avoided the answer to the question who had fathered her child by answering "I don't know. It is God's." I suggested that the dialogue between Mary and the angel Gabriel evolves precisely around this point, that we should not want to know who fathered the child or by what means of procreative technology this child was generated. My implied presupposition is that a Gospel is not—and cannot be—about technologies of procreation: a Gospel is about the fulfilment of Torah and divine protection offered to the lowly. I argued that the angel offers protection to a child and his mother in an otherwise humiliating and life-threatening situation. The angel does so in a biblical voice, reflecting LXX worded prophetic and exodus overtones. I concluded that there is no need to read a sexualised code in these words, although I can understand how the text came to be read this way, especially in view of the ambiguous ("obese") word for "to know." I also concluded that it is, unfortunately, not possible to decide positively on a woman as author of the text, although in view of the embodied experiences voiced by the text such an author is not altogether improbable.

2. Text

The question I wanted to address in the second chapter was, How is gender constructed in the text? There is a fundamental problem involved in this, as we are used to read for gender from a modern concept in which the attribution of gender is based on the perception of the body. I argued that this concept does not apply to the ancient world, that is, it is a parontocentric concept. When we try to understand gender in the ancient world, we will have to imagine a different paradigm, in which what we would want to call gender is really a set of values circling around the idea of Romanness, in which the ideal of Roman manly virtuousness takes priority. It testifies to the preponderance of this Roman manly virtuousness, that the body was perceived, understood, and represented, either textually or in visual arts, based on the way virtuousness was lived. Gender (as we would want to call it) was dependent primarily on behaviour, not on the body. The reason for this must be sought in the ancient (medical) notion of bodily coherence, due to which the body was thought unstable and reflecting a person's behaviour. In short, representation followed behaviour, while what we call gender was constituted to a large degree by behaviour.

Research on the way Roman manliness developed has resulted in the awareness that there are at least two types of manliness, one stemming from the Roman republican period centring on the notion of martial manliness, another one developed during the transition from Roman late republic to early imperial rule promoting a virtuous manliness. Both types of manliness have coexisted for a considerable time. Based on my reading of the introduction to Vitruvius' work on architecture, a work in which corporeality and morals go together, I argued that the way gender was constructed during early imperial rule may be sketched along two intersecting axes, one ranging from martial masculine manliness to youthful female versatility, the other one ranging from bodily ambiguity to hypaethral elusive moral manliness based on the concept of Romanness.

What is fundamental to early imperial virtuousness is the elite experience of Romanness versus everything deviant, strange, and ambiguous, such as women, slaves, children, foreign people, disabled people, people of colour, etc. The concept of intersectionality as defined by Crenshaw (1989) seems to apply pre-eminently to the effects of this Roman elite virtuous self-understanding. As a consequence, what we would call Roman "manliness" is fundamentally Romanness, and therefore a state identifying moral concept, as much connected with what we call class and race as with gender. A Judean girl for instance is not at a par with a Judean man. A Judean man is not at a par with a Judean priest. A Judean priest, however, is not at a par with an (elite) Roman woman, while a Roman woman does not equal a Roman man. Here we have, I suggested, the basic trouble underlying the issue of the double message regarding men's and women's gender scripts in the Third Gospel (as described by Seim 1994a; 1994b). On the one hand, there is no such double message at all, as there is only one clear message, that is, the ideal of virtuous manliness which Judeans, foreigners, strangers, slaves, poor and disabled people, be it men or women, are invited by the Third Gospel to understand. On the other hand, however, as various axes of virtuousness are intersecting, such as physical sexuality, bodily integrity, social standing, and religious piety, there are various messages. For it matters whether the addressee is a Roman official, or a Roman soldier, a Jewish priest, a Jewish teacher in the temple, an Ethiopian eunuch, a bent woman, or a Judean teenage mother.

Starting from the hypothesis that the Third Gospel and early imperial notions of Roman manly virtuousness are at home in the shared space of a well educated audience in the Greco-Roman world, I proceeded by reading the first two chapters of the Third Gospel through the lens of my Vitruvian model. I concluded that contemporary Judaism offered a different ideal of virtuousness, as opposed to Romanness, or as a modification of it. The Third Gospel's preface already paves the way for virtuous understanding. The reader is called to understand that what

is related, what has been witnessed, is reliable, that is, stable. The reader is addressed by a Roman official's title, which is funny as the Roman officials in the narrative time and again fail to understand. It seems clear that the real addressee is the one who understands and thus in a sense deserves this high ranking title. The following narratives are coherent in this respect, that they continue to call for the reader's understanding. It is as if the reader is taken by the hand and guided through the narratives as in an online course, to grow in understanding level by level. This is apparent on a textual level, where we find an overwhelming amount of verbs denoting speaking and being silent, hearing, seeing and writing, thus offering as it were a catalogue of ways to deal with "the word." On a narrative level too, the reader is guided towards understanding. The narratives of Luke 1 focus on the understanding of characters who through their representation evoke the world of LXX. This serves to set the reader's mind on the right track of biblical understanding. Thus we see characters such as Elisabeth and Mary who are competent in understanding and on their way to a hypaethral position. Luke 2 offers a couple of stories in which Jesus is presented to various groups of participants: the shepherds near Bethlehem, two elderly people in the temple, and the teachers in the temple. In each of these narratives, the understanding of the witnesses is the main theme, leading the reader to the question whether she, too, understands. In the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, understanding is personified by Jesus, as he appears as the impersonation of the female Wisdom. It may be argued that throughout the whole of the Third Gospel, understanding is one of the main themes, each time exemplified by representatives of different groups that usually are excluded from Roman manly virtuousness.

In all this, the body plays a remarkable role. Although we may expect bodily integrity to be an important marker of virtuousness, the story of Jesus presents a deviant aspect in that Jesus' bodily integrity is violated in a humiliating way (Colleen Conway 2008). In a sense, this may be understood as a renegotiation within the paradigm, when we accept that Jesus offers his body voluntarily on behalf of his friends. What draws attention, however, is the suggestion that there will be a new body. If virtue really shapes the body, we must expect that virtuous understanding entails a reshaped body. Further research will be necessary, especially on baptism narratives such as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–40), Saul/Paul (Acts 9:3–18), and the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1–47). I venture that baptism is a token of understanding and that through it a new body is established. Maybe the much discussed words of Paul in Galatians 3:27–28 should be understood in the context of ancient body-behaviour reflection: "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (ESV).

Indeed, there is no male and female. There is a new Christ-body, but this body is fundamentally a manly body, be it an evasive hypaethral beyond-manly body.

3. Reader

In my third chapter, I worked from the vantage point of the reader. If the reader inevitably brings her own (mental) autobiography to the text, how could we put this hermeneutical given to good use? After a survey of literature on positioned and autobiographical criticism, I proposed a definition of autobiographical criticism: autobiographical criticism is a way of reading a text in which you systematically search for similarities and differences between the way you read the text on the one hand, and the way you understand your own life's experiences on the other, so as to account for your interpretation in terms of intersubjectivity and ethics, and at the same time to extend your self-understanding as well. This definition has led me through three readerly exercises in which I was personally present as an embodied situated reader.

First, I presented an explanatory approach. I used parts of my autobiography as a means to understand and explain why I have read sections of the text of Luke 1–2 the way I did, in particular the narrative of Zachariah entering the temple to fulfil his priestly duties. Apparently, ancient notions concerning catholic priesthood, taught to me in my youth, hampered me in my perception of Zachariah. I continued with a heuristic approach, in which I used parts of my autobiography to find elements in the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus. Reversely, reading the narrative of the twelve-year-old Jesus helped me to better understand what happened in my youth between my mother and me. I concluded that Jesus in the temple showed himself already as the example of high virtuous behaviour, through his Wisdom-like representation of Torah and his voluntary obedience towards his parents. At the same time I remembered the way my mother used the words of Mary to blame me for her distress, as a result of which I eventually at the age of about twelve sought refuge in the church. Finally, in my third readerly exercise I proposed a transformative reading. The remembrance of the second readerly exercise connected me with my Old Catholic roots in which my great-grandmother at the age of eleven was, metaphorically, seated among the teachers of Scripture. This girl, almost as old as I was in those days, helped me to understand my troubles with gender, guiding me from my mother to my father and brother. I realised that many years of biblical research, done by me especially on the biblical theme of the two brothers as a narrative pair envisaged precisely this: resisting the iron gaze of gender. I believe that I succeeded to let the eleven-year-old girl finally speak to me on who I am.

As I readily admit that these three readerly exercises may be somewhat unusual in the field of biblical discourse, at least so in Dutch academy, I would like to underscore that my readerly exercises do not exactly represent a new approach. Everyone who is used to work with the Bible in a context in which scholarly exegesis is brought to bear on pastoral practice or homiletics, will recognise the triad of explanation, heuristics, and transformation. I would prefer to claim, therefore, that the real value of my readerly exercises lies in the methodical awareness of the role played by the reader, and especially by the gendered reader, in exegetical discourse, and in the moral evaluation that goes with it.

Appendix: "And Elisabeth said"—Luke 1:46

Three Old Latin versions of the New Testament attribute the Magnificat to Elisabeth, reading in 1:46a: *et ait Elisabeth,* "and Elisabeth said." A survey of the discussion can be found especially in Benko 1967 and Kloha 2014. The occurrence of these *variae lectiones* suggests an old tradition. The manuscripts concerned are Vercellensis (a) and Veronensis (b), from the fourth or fifth century, and Rehdigeranus (l), from the seventh or eighth century. Vercellensis and Veronensis represent the "European text" and show some smaller deviations (b reading `*Elisabel*'). Rehdigeranus is less important as it is heavily influenced by Jerome's Vulgate translation (Aland and Aland 1989: 193). Nevertheless it is first hand in this passage, which seems to indicate a persistent tradition. Despite this old tradition, no traces of it have been found in Greek or other New Testament versions. The Bohairic and Sahidic Coptic versions, for instance, also read Mary (Horner 1898:14–15; 1911:16–17).

Reference to Elisabeth as the enunciator of the Magnificat is also found in a few patristic textual witnesses. The most important of these is the Latin version of Origen's *Homiliae in Lucam,* from the first half of the third century. In *Hom. Luc.* 7.3, on the Visitation, Origen refers to codices attributing the Magnificat to Elisabeth. The name of the blessed Mary, the Homily says, stands here in Luke 1:46a "in some copies," while "according to other manuscripts" it is Elisabeth who prophesies.[414] This explicit reference is problematical. The Homily, originally written in Greek, is only known to us in Latin translation. All of Origen's other references to the Magnificat, in both the Latin versions and extant Greek fragments of these Homilies read Mary as its enunciator.[415] Therefore many scholars regarded the passage on Elisabeth in *Hom. Luc.* 7.3 as an interpolation by Origen's Latin translator Jerome (end fourth, beginning fifth century).[416] Bruce Metzger, however, on the basis of an inventory of explicit references in the works of Origen to variant readings in the New Testament, concluded that here, like "in the majority of cases, he [Origen] was content merely to make the observation that certain other copies present a different reading, without indicating his preference for one or the other variant" (Metzger 1963: 102). Metzger did not regard Origen's remarks as an interpolation by Jerome, the interpolation theory is missing in Metzger's study on Jerome's references (1979).

[414] *"Invenitur beata Maria, sicut in aliquantis exemplaribus repperimus, prophetare. Non enim ignoramus, quod secundum alios codices et haec verba Elisabeth vaticinetur."* Origenes, *Hom. Luc.* 7.3 (Rauer 1959: 43.10; Crouzel, Fournier, and Périchon 1962: 156–157). Also listed by Metzger 1963.

[415] Origenes, *Hom. Luc.* 7.8 and 8 (Rauer 1959: 46,22; 47,6; 47,17f; 48,7; 49,7; 50,1f); Origenes, *Fragmenta e catenis in Lucam* 37, 39 and 40 (Rauer 1959: 242,3f; 243,3; 243,1).

[416] Tischendorf 1894; Bardenhewer 1901: 192; Zahn 1911: 253–268; Zahn 1913: 748–749; Rauer 1931: 47–48; Rauer 1959: 43.10; Rousseau 1965 (100:2): 456; Nautin 1977: 255; Kloha 2014: 204.

The suggestion of a Latin interpolation by Jerome is not without reason. Rufinus of Aquileia criticised Jerome for the alterations in his translation of these *Homilies*.[417] But the value of Rufinus' remark is dubious. Rufinus in turn was attacked by Jerome for his free rendering of Origen's major work *De principiis* (Περὶ Αρχῶν), and Rufinus admitted that he himself frequently added to some of Origen's homilies.[418] The passage could be Origen's, since Origen is known for his text-critical work. It seems strange, however, that this remark is not handed over in the fragments and *catenae* based on the Greek text, nor, indeed, in any Greek textual witness. It seems, therefore, possible, as Theodor Zahn (1911: 266) argued, that Jerome inserted this reference in view of a Latin public that was somehow acquainted with this *varia lectio*, including the Roman ladies Paula and Eustochium who ordered the translation, although I would not exclude the possibility that Hieronymus just wanted to discredit Origen in view of his controversy with Rufinus on the orthodoxy of Origen.

There are also indications of an attribution of the Magnificat to Elisabeth in a few Latin and Armenian versions of Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses*. Like the references found in Origen's homily, the references in the Latin Irenaeus are debated. Irenaeus' testimony is divided. In *Haer.* 3.10.2 the text reads in all the available Latin manuscripts that, "Mary shouted prophesying on behalf of the Church: My soul doth magnify the Lord,"[419] while *Haer.* 4.7.1 reads in the most reliable Latin manuscripts Claromontanus and Vossianus, "But Elisabeth also said: My soul doth magnify the Lord."[420] *Haer.* 4.7.1, however, reads "Maria" in the other Latin manuscripts.[421] Like the Latin text, the Armenian version of *Haer.* 4 reads Elisabeth, while an Armenian version of *Haer.* 3 is not known. According to E. Ter-Minassiantz (1906: 191–192) a correction by a Latin translator or copyist is possible, since the Latin versions show several particularities difficult to explain on basis of a Greek original. It may be that Irenaeus contradicted himself.[422] The instance of *Haer*. 3.14.3 is debated, uncertain whether the Magnificat is meant here (Kloha 2014:202–203).

Finally, the reading Elisabeth in Luke 1:46 is attested by two passages of a Latin sermon by the fourth-century bishop Nicetas of Remesiana, *De utilitate hymnorum* (previously referred to as *De psalmodiae bono*). In *Ut. Hym.* 9.13–16, the text runs "Therefore, one finds in the gospel

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[417] Rufinus, *Apologia in Hieronymum*, II, 27 (Simonetti 1961); cf. Zahn 1911: 256.

[418] Rufinus, *Epilogus in explanationem Origenis super epistulam Pauli ad Romanos* (Simonetti 1961: 276, 8–16). See also the discussion of Rufinus' translation technique in Origen's *Commentary on Romans* in Hammond 1985.

[419] *"Maria clamabat pro ecclesia prophetans: Magnificat anima mea dominum."* Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.10.2.

[420] *"Sed et Elisabeth ait: Magnificat anima mea Dominum."* Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.7.1.

[421] Namely Arundelianus, Vaticanus lat. 187, Salmaticensis lat. 202 and Erasmus' editio princeps (Rousseau 1965: 456–457; Rousseau and Doutreleau 1974: 118–119).

[422] Rousseau 1965: 123–128, 211–112; Rousseau and Doutreleau 1974 (210): 269.

first Zachariah, the father of the great John, who after that long silence prophesied in hymnic voice, while Elisabeth, who was for a long time barren, after the son of promise went forth did not stop magnifying God with her soul."[423] And in *Ut. Hym.* 11.11 the text reads "when Elisabeth magnified the Lord with our soul."[424] Nicetas' text was relatively recently added to the list of textual witnesses. The edition of Nicetas by D'Achery of 1723, in use until G. Morin's 1897 edition of the full text of Nicetas' sermon according to Cod. Vaticanus 5729 (Morin 1897b), was a shorter version (in fact ascribed to a different Nicetas) in which these passages did not occur. It was actually the publication of this first edition of the full text by Morin, in which these two passages were included, that triggered the debate whether the Magnificat was originally ascribed to Elisabeth.[425] Preceding his edition of Nicetas' sermon (in 1897b) Morin asked attention (in 1897a) for two passages in the text, one of which was the 11.11 passage on Elisabeth quoted above.[426] The discussion was taken up by François Jacobé (1897, pseudonym for Alfred Loisy) and by Adolf Harnack (1900b; 1901: 53–57), almost at the same time, but apparently independently from each other. Jacobé referred to Morin's edition of Nicetas, while Harnack did not refer to Nicetas. Regarding Irenaeus, Harnack at first expressed his doubts, but afterwards he was convinced by Burkitt (1906) that Irenaeus, too, reads “Elisabeth” (Harnack 1906:79 n. 2).

The ascription of the Magnificat to Elisabeth is obviously an old tradition, but difficult to place. The evidence of the Old Latin codices, together with the evidence of the Latin writer Nicetas, concerns the Latin, “European text.” The tradition would gain in importance if it could be traced back to an early Greek tradition. The importance of the discussion on Irenaeus and Origen lies especially in whether or not the Irenaeus and Origen passages represent a Latin tradition or an early Greek tradition. Therefore, some authors have searched for traces of an Elisabeth tradition in the Eastern regions of the Mediterranean. Thomas Barns (1906) suggested that the fourth century bishop Cyril of Jerusalem was also acquainted with the tradition that put the Magnificat in the mouth of Elisabeth. Metzger accepted the occurrence of a reference in Cyril of Jerusalem as an established fact, writing that “among extant witnesses 'Elisabeth' is read by only [next to Origen^{lat}] *a b l** Iren^{lat}, Nicetas of Remesiana, and Cyril of Jerusalem” (1963: 95, 103).

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423 *“Ergo in euangelio inuenies primum Zacchariam, patrem magni Iohannis, post longum illud silentium in hymnis uoce prophetasse, nec Helisabeth, diu sterelis, edito de repromissione filio Deum de ipsa anima magnificare cessauit.”* Nicetas of Remesiana, *Ut. Hym.* 9.13–16 (Turner 1923: 238–239).

424 *“[C]um Helisabeth Dominum anima nostra magnificat”* Nicetas of Remesiana, *Ut. Hym.* 11.11 (Turner 1923: 238–239).

425 Bardenhewer 1901: 190. A review of this debate gives Benko 1967. A bibliography gives Laurentin 1957a: 15–23. See also Harris 1929, 1930; J.G. Davies 1964; recently Kloha 2013, Kloha 2014: 204–205.

426 Bardenhewer 1901: 190, n.1.

In the discussion on the age and location of the Elisabeth tradition, one should bear in mind a methodological remark by Metzger:

> It should be noted, however, that what Origen [sic] indicates to be the proportion of manuscripts current in the third century for or against a reading is not always the same as the proportion among extant manuscripts today. For example, the reading "Elizabeth" as the subject who speaks the Magnificat […] is supported today, outside of Origen and other patristic witnesses […], only by old Latin manuscripts […]. In these cases our knowledge of the existence and circulation of such variant is carried back several hundreds of years earlier than the date of the non-Origenian witnesses. (Metzger [1963] 1968: 102–103)

Provided that we do not have here a non-Origenian interpolation, there is a spatio-temporal lapse in tradition that cannot be satisfactorily solved with the historical material at our disposal. The Elisabeth tradition remains an isolated Old Latin phenomenon, with the suggestion of Greek roots as early as the beginning of the third century.

In order to decide on the original reading, solutions have been sought in various directions. The approach initiated by Harnack (1900b) assumed that the Magnificat was originally introduced by καὶ εἶπεν, "and [she] said," and that in view of the context Elisabeth must be meant. This argument is based on the observation that the Song of Hanna in 1 Sam 2:1–10 LXX and the Magnificat are close parallels. Both Hannah and Elisabeth are characterised as pious women, living according to the Law, but nevertheless remaining childless. Elizabeth Blair (1962), for instance, was quite firm in this respect, commenting that "this song, so like that of Hannah in 1 Sam 2:1–10, in some respects is more appropriately ascribed to the former [*sc.* Elisabeth] than to the latter [*sc.* Maria]." Another line of argument, equally initiated by Harnack, says that the grammatical antecedent of καὶ εἶπεν (1:46) is Elizabeth. To have the subject shift towards Mary, the text should have read εἶπεν δὲ Μαριάμ. Likewise, the sequel in 1:56 Ἔμεινεν δὲ Μαριὰμ σὺν αὐτῇ, "and Mary stayed with her," would require that the subject of the previous Magnificat is Elisabeth. A third line of argument introduced by Harnack resides in the discreet character of Mary and Joseph, as opposed to the prophetic utterances of Elisabeth and Zachariah.

More recent research, for instance by Gueuret (1977), Laurentin (1982), and Farris (1995) is quite cautious, insofar as the question remains how it is textually possible that either

Mary or Elisabeth can be read as enunciators of the Magnificat, without going so far as to prefer to read Elisabeth. Kloha, however, has strengthened Harnack's line of argument by highlighting the character of the Magnificat as a song in the mouth of the righteous of Israel (Kloha 2014: 207–211). Elisabeth sings the song "as one of the righteous of Israel who waited in hope for salvation, and when it becomes clear that the Lord is now acting she joins other righteous elders in voicing praise" while "the reading καὶ εἶπεν matches the structure of the other announcement scenes in Luke 1 as well as Luke's use of λέγω with καί and δέ" (Kloha 2014: 218). It is clear that this discussion would not make much sense without the possibility of substituting "Elisabeth" for "Mary" or *vice versa*. I propose that the textual variants, and the discussion at large, are just an indication of this interchangeability, the value of which resides in the readerly interests that are brought to the text, such as dogmatic or liturgical traditions.

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Summary (Dutch)

Het exegetische proces van bijbelse teksten speelt zich af, conform de geldende hermeneutiek van Gadamer, in een hermeneutische cirkel. Op basis van het communicatiemodel van Jakobson kunnen in de hermeneutische cirkel drie momenten worden aangewezen waarop betekenisgeving plaatsvindt: de auteur, de tekst en de lezeres. Hoewel het in de bijbelse exegese gebruikelijk is de auteur te beschouwen als degene die een bepaalde boodschap wil overbrengen, waarbij de tekst met name op betrouwbaarheid, structuur en semantiek dient te worden onderzocht, terwijl de lezeres in de eerste plaats moet trachten de boodschap van de tekst te achterhalen in het licht van de moderne vragen die aan de tekst gesteld worden, verloopt het feitelijke proces van betekenisgeving toch omgekeerd. Het is de lezeres die mede vanuit eigen vragen, belangen en vooronderstellingen (die verbonden zijn met "communities of interpretation") en mede vanuit de eigen biografie, de tekst benadert en in zekere zin tot stand brengt, waarop vooronderstellingen ten aanzien van de auteur (sekse, gender, "location," religie enz.) van invloed zijn.

Het voorliggende onderzoek probeert ten aanzien van auteur, tekst en lezeres te beschrijven en vast te stellen hoe vooronderstelde kennis ten aanzien van de auteur (met name in het geval van anonimiteit of pseudepigrafie), vermeende kennis van de tekst (lexicaal vastgelegd en uitgewerkt in commentaren) en de autobiografie van de lezeres (de biografie zoals die door de lezeres is opgesteld, waarmee zij zich inschrijft in tradities van interpretatie) samenkomen in de uiteindelijke betekenisgeving. Deze betekenisgeving is daarmee geenszins neutraal, maar dient bewust of onbewust een bepaald doel. Dit mag op zich wellicht onvermijdelijk zijn, de stilte daarover is wetenschappelijk gezien onwenselijk. Het belang van het beschrijven van vooronderstellingen, aannames en bewuste of onbewuste doelstellingen ligt in de bewustwording als deel van het geven van rekenschap over de wijze waarop een tekst wordt geïnterpreteerd. In het geval van bijbelse teksten, waarbij het gebruik gemotiveerd wordt door expliciet autoritatief gebruik (met name maar zeker niet uitsluitend in kerkelijke kring) of door mythologisch gebruik (vooral als onderbouwing van bredere culturele processen) is deze verantwoording een morele verplichting.

Dit onderzoek wil aan de hand van een "case study"—Lukas 1–2 als een tekst die zeer grote invloed heeft gehad in de geschiedenis van kerk, theologie en cultuur, met name door het verhaal van de maagdelijke geboorte—de rol en functie van auteur, tekst en lezeres onderzoeken. Ten aanzien van de auteur is de focus gericht op het belang van de gender van de auteur als iemand van wie we feitelijk vrijwel niets weten. Ten aanzien van de tekst is de focus

gericht op de wijze waarop in de tekst gender tot stand gebracht wordt of kan worden. Uitgangspunt daarbij is theorie dat de tekst van Lukas 1–2 een "dubbele boodschap" (Seim) bevat ten aanzien van de rollen van mannen en vrouwen. Met betrekking tot de lezeres is de focus met name gericht op de rol die de eigen autobiografie speelt in het hermeneutische proces. Daarbij wordt autobiografie niet verstaan als een genrebegrip, maar als een aanduiding voor de wijze waarop de lezeres haar eigen biografie voor zichzelf expliciteert.

Het belang van dit onderzoek is op het gebied van genoemde deelstudies drieledig. (1) De rol van kennis ten aanzien van de gender van de auteur wordt systematisch onderzocht, met name waar deze van invloed is op de betekenis die aan de tekst wordt toegekend. Daarbij wordt gebruik gemaakt van de hypothese van een vrouw als auteur. De voornaamste conclusie is dat er geen reden is, narratief noch semantisch, in het verhaal van de aankondiging van Maria een maagdelijke geboorte te lezen. Meer voor de hand liggend is de tekst te lezen als de toezegging van goddelijke bescherming in een situatie van uiterste vernedering en bedreiging. Deze conclusie sluit aan bij eerdere conclusies van Schaberg. (2) De rol van gender in de tekst wordt onderzocht, met name waar vermoed kan worden dat gender een parontocentrisch gegeven is, dat wil zeggen dat gender een modern concept is dat niet, of niet volledig, recht doet aan de wijze waarop de tekst patronen van gedrag beschrijft die wij als "gender scripts" zouden willen aanduiden. Op basis van literatuuronderzoek kan worden vastgesteld dat gender in de oudheid niet zozeer met het lichaam te maken heeft als wel met gedrag. Dit gedrag is gebaseerd op de beoefening van deugden, die uiteindelijk bijdragen tot de stabiliteit van de Romeinse staat en die convergeren met mannelijkheid. Op basis van een onderzoek naar teksten van onder andere Vitruvius kan worden vastgesteld dat ambiguïteit in de oudheid een problematische factor is. Aan de ene kant is ambiguïteit iets dat overwonnen moet worden, aan de andere kant wordt ambiguïteit ook benut om tot een helder en hoger verstaan te komen. Het gepropageerde ideaal van mannelijkheid is dan een mannelijkheid die zichzelf overstijgt en in zekere zin onzichtbaar en ongrijpbaar wordt. De tekst van Lukas 1–2 participeert hierin door de lezers uit te nodigen tot een hoger inzicht te komen, waarbij zowel vrouwen als mannen deel gaan uitmaken van een zichzelf overstijgende mannelijkheid. De "dubbele boodschap" in Lukas is dan ook maar schijn. (3) Autobiografisch bijbellezen is een veelbelovende werkwijze die recent is opgekomen en die nog niet tot een voldoende systematisering is gekomen. Dit onderzoek probeert op basis van literatuuronderzoek tot een afbakening en definitie te komen, waarna drie leesoefeningen de mogelijkheden laten zien van autobiografisch bijbellezen als verklarende, als heuristische en als transformatieve werkwijze, waarbij tekstgedeelten van Lukas 1–2 in gesprek gebracht worden met afbeeldingen en teksten aan ene kant en autobiografische elementen van de onderzoeker

aan de andere kant. Ook de betekenis van de autobiografie van de onderzoeker zelf wordt onderzocht, met name waar de autobiografie interfereert met de tekst, of omgekeerd, waar het lezen van de tekst bijdraagt tot transformatie van de autobiografie.

Op ieder van deze drie deelgebieden wordt een concreet methodisch voorstel gedaan. Ten aanzien van de auteur wordt een wijze van "embodied reading" voorgesteld, waarbij de leidende vraag is hoe het zou zijn in een specifieke situatie te leven met een bepaald lichaam (vrouwelijk, mannelijk, licht, donker, jong, oud, gebrekkig enz. in diverse combinaties). Ten aanzien van de tekst wordt een gendermodel voorgesteld dat dichter bij de semantiek van de oude teksten ligt dan het moderne genderbegrip, en dat als heuristisch model gebruikt kan worden bij het onderzoek naar wat we gender zouden willen noemen, ook in andere teksten uit de oudheid. Ten aanzien van de lezeres wordt een definitie voorgesteld van autobiografisch bijbellezen, met daarbij een methodische drieslag van verklarend lezen, heuristisch lezen en transformatief lezen. Deze drieslag kan uiteindelijk de exegetische discipline verbinden met andere, verwante gebieden als homiletiek en narratief pastoraat.

Overkoepelend in dit onderzoek is het belang van gender bij het lezen van bijbelse teksten in kerkelijke en maatschappelijke vertogen. Dat kerk en theologie enerzijds en het brede maatschappelijke vertoog anderzijds, juist waar het gaat over gender, in levendige wisselwerking staan, mag onder meer blijken uit de recente discussies over het geslacht van Jezus of over de rol van transgenders binnen kerk en theologie, en de bijdrage (of juist belemmering) die kerk en theologie aan het maatschappelijk vertoog hierover leveren. Ook het verzet van officieel Rooms Katholieke zijde tegen "gender theory" (een begrip dat door dit verzet overigens zelf is geconstrueerd) en het verzet van conservatief reformatorische zijde blijkens het zgn. Nashville document, tonen aan dat het lezen van bijbelse teksten met de focus op gender van eminent belang is. Wetenschappelijk verantwoorde exegese kan zich niet afzijdig houden nu deze vragen maatschappelijk breed ter discussie staan, maar dient deze morele verantwoordelijkheid op te nemen. Dit onderzoek, hoewel het slechts om een "case study" gaat, heeft deze brede dialoog op het oog.

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