

JILL E. MARSHALL

Women Praying and Prophesying in Corinth

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

448

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament · 2. Reihe

Herausgeber / Editor
Jörg Frey (Zürich)

Mitherausgeber / Associate Editors
Markus Bockmuehl (Oxford) · James A. Kelhoffer (Uppsala)
Hans-Josef Klauck (Chicago, IL) · Tobias Nicklas (Regensburg)
J. Ross Wagner (Durham, NC)

448



Jill E. Marshall

Women Praying and Prophecy in Corinth

Gender and Inspired Speech
in First Corinthians

Mohr Siebeck

JILL E. MARSHALL, born 1981; 2004 BA in History from Vanderbilt University; 2007 master's degree from Emory University; 2009 master's degree from Columbia Theological Seminary; 2015 PhD in Religion from Emory University.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-155504-6

ISBN 978-3-16-155503-9

ISSN 0340-9570 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2017 by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, Germany. www.mohr.de

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that permitted by copyright law) without the publisher's written permission. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

The book was printed by Laupp & Göbel in Gomaringen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

Preface

This book is a revision of my doctoral dissertation, submitted in May 2015 to the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University. I am grateful for the support of the faculty in New Testament and my committee for shepherding this project to completion. First, my advisor, Dr. Carl Holladay, helped me shape the project, from my initial ideas to the finished product. I am grateful for his encouragement to travel internationally to conduct and present my research. I also thank my committee, Dr. Vernon Robbins, Dr. Cynthia Patterson, and Dr. Susan Hylan, for their insightful critiques and for modeling how to be thoughtful scholars. Additional scholars at Emory – Dr. Luke Timothy Johnson, Dr. Walter Wilson, and Dr. Sandra Blakely – have guided me in various stages of my research and writing.

The Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry at Emory University awarded me a Dissertation Completion Fellowship that gave me the space and time to complete this research. I also received financial support from several institutions: the Crisler Library in Ephesos; the Southeastern Women's Studies Association; the American School for Classical Studies at Athens; the Rabbi Donald A. Tam Institute for Jewish Studies at Emory University; and the Laney Graduate School.

For accepting this manuscript for publication, I thank the editors and staff at Mohr Siebeck, especially Dr. Jörg Frey, Dr. James Kelhoffer, and Dr. Henning Ziebritzki.

My parents, Joe and Jan Marshall, supported my intellectual curiosity at every step along the way. I thank my mother, Jan Marshall, for her invaluable assistance in preparing this manuscript for publication and for her tireless support, encouragement, and love.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my father, Joe Marshall. He was always amazed by where I chose to spend my time and energy but was proud of everything I accomplished. His projects were quite different than this one: they involved wood, concrete, steel, and ambitious architectural vision. I hope, though, that the same spirit of creativity lives in my work.

Jill E. Marshall
Atlanta, August 2017

Table of Contents

Preface.....	V
List of Abbreviations.....	XII
Introduction	1
<i>I. From “Women Praying or Prophesying” to “Let Women Be Silent”</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>II. Project Plan.....</i>	<i>5</i>
Chapter 1. Interpreting Women’s Speech in Corinth: Rhetoric and Historical Reconstruction	9
<i>I. Reading 1 Corinthians and Reconstructing the Corinthian Situation.....</i>	<i>9</i>
A. Ferdinand Christian Baur’s Corinthian Factions	10
B. Sources of Problems: Gnosticism, Realized Eschatology, Paul’s Teachings	10
C. The Sociological Turn: Theissen, Meeks, and Schüssler Fiorenza.....	13
<i>II. Women in the Corinthian Assembly.....</i>	<i>16</i>
A. Men and Women in Worship and the Galatians 3:28 Connection.....	18
B. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Paul’s Ambivalent Impact for Women	21
C. Antoinette Clark Wire’s Corinthian Women Prophets	22
D. Jorunn Økland and the Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space	24
<i>III. Defining Prophecy and Prayer in Tongues</i>	<i>26</i>
A. Origins and Backgrounds for Prophecy and Tongues	27
B. Form and Content of Prophecy and Tongues.....	28
C. The Question of Mental States and Ecstasy.....	30

D. Paul's Rhetorical Goals in Defining Inspired Speech.....	31
<i>IV. Women Prophets in Ancient Mediterranean Divination</i>	32
A. Cataloging and Defining Divination.....	33
B. The Anthropological Turn: Jean-Pierre Vernant and Followers	34
C. Gender Dynamics in Oracular Institutions.....	36
<i>V. Summary of Research and Questions Remaining</i>	39
Chapter 2. Women Praying and Prophesying: Archaeological Evidence from Corinth	43
<i>I. Introducing Corinth</i>	43
A. History and Archaeology	43
B. Temples and Religious Spaces in Roman Corinth	47
<i>II. Women's Presence in the Roman Forum: Inscriptions</i>	48
<i>III. Women Praying: Devotion to Demeter and Isis</i>	51
A. The Sanctuary of Demeter in the Roman Period	51
1. Earliest Use: Curse Tablets on the Lower Terrace.....	52
2. Temple Construction in the Late First Century.....	58
B. Sanctuaries for Isis in Corinth and Kenchreai	61
1. Literary Evidence: Pausanias and Apuleius	61
2. Archaeological Evidence	61
3. Apuleius's Isis Festival in Kenchreai (<i>Metamorphoses</i> , Book XI).....	63
<i>IV. Women Prophesying: Corinth and Oracular Temples of Apollo</i>	66
A. Connections to Trans-Regional Oracles	66
B. Apollo Temples and Images in Corinth	69
<i>V. Conclusion</i>	70
Chapter 3. Ambivalence toward Women's Speech: Livy, Philo, and Plutarch	73
<i>I. Livy's History: Roman Matrons Speaking in the Forum</i>	75

<i>II. Philo of Alexandria: Women and the Female Part of the Soul</i>	82
A. Philo's Gender Dualism.....	83
B. <i>De specialibus legibus</i> 3.169–80: Spaces for Women's Speech.....	85
C. <i>De vita contemplativa</i> : Men, Women, and Ecstatic Speech.....	89
<i>III. Plutarch: Virtue and Speech in State and Household</i>	98
A. Women's Form, Fame, and Speech in <i>Virtues of Women</i>	99
B. Women Inside and Outside of the Home in <i>Conjugalia Praecepta</i>	102
<i>IV. Conclusion</i>	107
Chapter 4. Women Prophets in Philosophical, Poetic, and Oracular Literature	109
<i>I. Philosophical Traditions</i>	113
A. History and Philosophy: Interrogating Communication with Gods.....	113
1. Herodotus's <i>History</i>	114
2. Plato's Three Forms of Madness.....	115
B. The Pythia in Plutarch's <i>De defectu oracularum</i> and <i>De Pythiae oraculis</i>	117
<i>II. Poetic Traditions</i>	126
A. Poetry: Dramatizing Communication with Gods.....	126
1. Athenian Drama	127
2. Latin Epic Poetry	130
B. The Sacrifice of the Pythia in Lucan's <i>De bello civili</i>	133
<i>III. Oracular Traditions</i>	141
A. Prophecy: Recording Communication with Gods	141
1. Male and Female Prophets in the Hebrew Bible.....	141
2. Sibylline Collections in Greek and Roman Traditions.....	145
B. The Sibyl's Embodiment of Apocalyptic Prophecy in the <i>Sibylline Oracles</i>	146
<i>IV. Conclusion</i>	155

Chapter 5. Women Praying or Prophecy: The Ambivalent Argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16	157
<i>I. The Structure and Difficulties of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16</i>	159
<i>II. The Situation: Keeping Traditions, Praying, and Prophecy (11:2)</i> ..	160
<i>III. Theological Premise: Heads and Bodies (11:3)</i>	162
<i>IV. Cultural Norms of Gender Differentiation (11:4–6)</i>	165
<i>V. Creation Narratives and Gender Identity (11:7–12)</i>	168
<i>VI. More Cultural Arguments: Propriety, Nature, and Custom (11:13–16)</i>	176
<i>VII. Conclusion</i>	178
Chapter 6. Voiceless Idols, Voiceless Women: The Argument from 1 Corinthians 11:16 to 14:40	181
<i>I. Argumentative Movements in 11:17–14:25</i>	181
A. The Ritual Meal in Assembly: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34	182
B. Voiceless Idols, One Speaking Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:1–11	185
C. The Body of Christ: 1 Corinthians 12:12–31	189
D. A Better Way: 1 Corinthians 13:1–13	193
E. Defining Prophecy and Praying in Tongues: 1 Corinthians 14:1–25	195
1. Pursue Prophecy in Order to Build Up (14:1–5).....	195
2. The Limited Efficacy of Speaking in Tongues (14:6–12).....	197
3. Mindlessness of Speaking in Tongues (14:13–19).....	198
4. Responses of Outsiders to Inspired Speech (14:20–25).....	199
<i>II. Instructions for Order for Praying or Prophecy (14:26–40)</i>	203
A. The Textual Integrity of 14:34–35.....	203
B. The Rhetorical Integrity of 14:26–40	207
<i>III. Conclusion</i>	213

Conclusion 215

I. The Gender Dynamics of Inspired Speech 215

II. Implications of this Research..... 219

Bibliography 221

Index of Ancient Sources 241

Subject Index..... 253

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for journals, series, presses, and biblical and classical texts follow The SBL Handbook of Style, second edition (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

ARGU	Arbeiten zur Religionsgeschichte des Urchristentums
ASCSA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
BAGD	Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
Corinth 1.2	Stillwell, Richard. <i>Architecture</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 1.2. Cambridge, MA: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1941.
Corinth 1.4	Broneer, Oscar. <i>The South Stoa and Its Roman Successors</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 1.4. Cambridge, MA: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1954.
Corinth 4.2	Broneer, Oscar. <i>Terracotta Lamps</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 4.2. Cambridge, MA: ASCSA, 1930.
Corinth 8.1	Meritt, Benjamin Dean. <i>Greek Inscriptions, 1896–1927</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 8.1. Cambridge, MA: ASCSA, 1931
Corinth 8.2	West, Allen Brown. <i>Latin Inscriptions, 1896–1926</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 8.2. Cambridge, MA: ASCSA, 1931.
Corinth 8.3	Kent, John Harvey. <i>The Inscriptions, 1926–1950</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 8.3. Princeton: ASCSA, 1966.
Corinth 9.1	Johnson, Franklin Plotinus. <i>Sculpture, 1896–1923</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 9.1. Cambridge, MA: ASCSA, 1931.
Corinth 12	Davidson, Gladys R. <i>The Minor Objects</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 12. Princeton: ASCSA, 1952.
Corinth 18.3	Bookidis, Nancy, and Ronald S. Stroud. <i>The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Topography and Architecture</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 18.3. Princeton: ASCSA, 1997.
Corinth 18.6	Stroud, Ronald S. <i>The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: The Inscriptions</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 18.6. Princeton: ASCSA, 2013.
Corinth 20	Williams, Charles K., and Nancy Bookidis, eds. <i>Corinth, The Centenary, 1896–1996</i> . Corinth: Results of Excavations 20. Princeton: ASCSA, 2003.

- F Fontenrose, Joseph Eddy. *The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations, with a Catalogue of Responses*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Kenchreai 1 Scranton, Robert, Joseph W. Shaw, and Leila Ibrahim. *Topography and Architecture*. Kenchreai, Eastern Port of Corinth: Results of Investigations by the University of Chicago and Indiana University for the ASCSA 1. Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- Kenchreai 2 Ibrahim, Leila, Robert Scranton, and R. Brill. *The Panels of Opus Sectile in Glass*. Kenchreai, Eastern Port of Corinth: Results of Investigations by the University of Chicago and Indiana University for the ASCSA 2. Leiden: Brill, 1976.
- LSJ Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Johns. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- NA²⁸ Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
- ÖJh *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes*
- PW Parke, Herbert W., and D. E. W. Wormell. *The Delphic Oracle*. 2 vols. Oxford: Blackwell, 1956.

Introduction

“Let women be silent in the church,” writes Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. This is a stark, seemingly univocal statement, but Paul’s views on women’s speech are more complex than this instruction alone. Earlier in the same letter, he crafts a difficult argument about whether men and women should cover their heads when “praying or prophesying” (1 Cor 11:2–16). He seems to advocate for maintaining outward distinctions between men and women: While speaking in gatherings, women should cover their heads, but men should not. He does not recommend that men or women abstain from prayer or prophecy. Then, after a lengthy discussion about different modes of religious speech – prophecy and prayer in tongues – Paul instructs women to be silent and subordinate to men (1 Cor 14:34–35). Should women cover their heads while they speak, or should they remain silent? Do the intervening arguments about inspired speech cause Paul to modify his earlier acceptance of women praying and prophesying? What would these modes of speaking look like to an observer, and would Paul and the Corinthians view such communication with God differently if voiced by a man or a woman?

These questions begin my investigation into gender and inspired speech in First Corinthians and its ancient Mediterranean context. In part, this project examines the differences in how ancient writers perceived prophetic speech when voiced by a man or a woman. Does gender differentiation play a role in how authors understand and describe oracular and ecstatic religious phenomena? Plutarch, writing about fifty years after Paul, asked a similar question in a treatise written for a female colleague and priestess at Delphi: “The poetic or prophetic art is not one art when practiced by men and another when practiced by women, is it?” (*Mulier. virt.* 243B). I take up Plutarch’s question and ask whether expectations about what women are and how women speak influence the way authors like Paul and Plutarch wrote about prophetic speech – its linguistic forms, sources of authority, and physical manifestations. I argue that gender is a central issue throughout 1 Corinthians 11–14 and the religious speaking practices in Corinth that prompted it. The tension in Paul’s instructions, seen in the apparent contradiction between 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, exhibits the dual and opposing tendency of ancient authors to limit women’s speech in public settings yet to view women as particularly adept at communicating with the gods. For Paul, differentiating men from women in

physical appearance, situating women as subordinate to men, and working through arguments about divine communication together create the cognitive and rhetorical space for prohibiting women from speaking in the assembly.

I. From “Women Praying or Prophesying” to “Let Women be Silent”

The placement of these two passages at the beginning and end of Paul’s discussion about speaking in the assembly indicates the prominence of women in Corinthian spirit-filled speaking practices and the problems Paul seeks to correct. These passages, individually and together, raise a host of exegetical questions that influence historical reconstructions of the earliest Corinthian assembly. First, 1 Cor 11:2–16 is a notoriously difficult argument. The precise practical issue of head coverings or hairstyles that Paul addresses in vv. 4–6 and 13–15 is unclear, as is the solution he proposes. He modifies his conclusion of vv. 7–9, woman is dependent on man, with his statements in vv. 11–12, man and woman are interdependent. The meaning of Paul’s recommendation for women in v. 10 – “woman ought to have authority (ἐξουσία) upon the head” – is unclear, as are the rationales for the instruction. What is Paul telling the “women praying or prophesying” to do? What assumptions concerning women and their speech underlie his practical conclusions?

Three chapters later, Paul’s instructions in 1 Cor 14:34–35 further complicate his view of men, women, and speech in the assembly. Whatever his conclusions about gender differentiation and head coverings are, in 11:2–16 Paul does not argue against women and men praying and prophesying in the ἐκκλησία. In 14:34–35, however, he instructs women to be silent in the assembly, citing as support “the law” and custom “in all the assemblies.” This silencing follows two conditional instructions in vv. 28 and 30 that silence individual prophets and speakers in tongues to preserve communal order.

In v. 34, however, the unconditional silencing of the plural addressee “women” breaks the rhetorical pattern. His instructions shift the place, recipient, and purpose of women’s speech: She should speak in the home, to her husband, and for the purpose of learning. For women, Paul’s concern is different: He wants them to avoid shame (14:35). Why does addressing women’s speech elicit language of shame?

The movement from the argument in Chapter 11, which allows men and women to speak in the assembly, to prohibiting women’s speech in Chapter 14 raises further questions. Is Paul addressing the same individuals or groups in both places? Are the same speech acts in view in 14:34–35 as in 11:2–16 and/or in the rest of Chapter 14? Some scholars have argued that 14:34–35

(or 33b–36) is a non-Pauline interpolation, Pauline marginal gloss, or Paul's quotation of a Corinthian slogan. The textual evidence for interpolation theories is limited. There are linguistic and rhetorical links to what precedes and follows these verses in Chapter 14, as well as links to 11:2–16 in the term "shame" (11:6; 14:35) and in the reference to "all the assemblies" (11:16; 14:33, 34).¹ The argument that 14:34–35 is an interpolation, gloss, or slogan is an attempt to smooth over a problematic, even offensive, passage. These solutions, however, eliminate a passage that suggests, due to its connection to the entire section of 1 Cor 11:2–14:40, the presence and prominence of women in Corinthian inspired speaking practices. The discussion of prayer and prophecy is framed by statements about women.

These two passages raise the question: Why was women's speech contested ground in Corinth and for Paul? Answers to this question often characterize the first-century Greek world as patriarchal and constraining women's speech, and Paul as a man influenced by Jewish religion, Greek culture, and Roman values. He defers, therefore, to the dominant culture with regard to gender, whether because he agrees with its values or because he advocates an egalitarian movement but wants his communities to fit into the world rather than disturb it. Some Corinthian women and men, by contrast, informed by a new Christian reality, take a subversive stance to societal and cultural norms, blur gender boundaries, and break rules concerning women's speech and action.² These answers emerge in historical-critical scholarship before and after the growth of feminist hermeneutics in mainstream interpretation. Scholars differ in where they place error – whether on the Corinthians for being disruptive or on Paul for being restrictive.³

¹ See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 529–30. See my discussion in Chapter 6.

² Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 38, describes women's gradual subordination in early Christianity as assimilation to Hellenistic culture. Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), develops a model of resistance to patriarchalizing ecclesiastical tendencies in the Apocryphal Acts in comparison to the Pastoral Epistles.

³ This type of judgment occurs in discussions of Corinthian "errors" outside of the question of women's speech in the assembly. John C. Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), for example, argues that the Corinthians followed Paul's teachings but Paul changed his views, which necessitated his writing. Anthony Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24.4 (1978): 510–26, by contrast, places blame on the Corinthian enthusiastic distortion of Paul's eschatological views. Feminist interpreters tend to view Paul as restrictive toward women in 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36. See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A*

These answers, however, are problematic for two reasons. First, they are reductive since they are built on partial readings of parallel materials, in which little attention is given to the rhetorical goals of the texts in question. Second, they distort the reality of women in the ancient Mediterranean world. Social norms and cultural commonplaces constrained women's speech more than men's speech. Men excluded women from certain settings in which political and judicial decision-making occurred. Women did, however, speak openly for various audiences in religious settings. Women were priestesses and participants who engaged in prayer and prophecy on behalf of their communities. These activities, in turn, influenced the political world of men.⁴

In particular, the religious phenomenon of women who speak prophetically is telling for the situation in Corinth. Much of Paul's rhetorical strategy in 1 Corinthians 12–14 focuses on dissociating prophecy from speaking in tongues and elevating prophecy above other forms of speaking in the ἐκκλησία. It is not clear, however, what Paul has in mind when discussing either form of speech. For this reason, it is worth considering how he and his audience would have encountered prophetic speech in their Corinthian setting. Female prophets dominated inspired divination in the prominent Greek oracles at Delphi, Didyma, and Dodona. The fascination with these prophets and their communication with the gods, especially the Pythia at Delphi, continued into the first century CE, when Paul founded communities in Greece and Asia Minor. In the Roman context, the Sibyl and her collected oracles provided written guidance for imperial rulers to consult in crisis, as well as lore and images of female prophets for the collective imagination. Drawing

Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). See discussion of this scholarship in Chapter 1.

⁴ Scholars of Greek and Roman culture and religion have questioned the standard image of women as secluded, silent, and subordinate, and have discussed women's consciousness of their place in society and their important public and vocal roles in ritual and cult. See David Cohen, "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," *GR*, 2nd Series, 36.1 (1989): 3–15; John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Barbara Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); André Lardinois and Laura McClure, eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); John Bodel, ed., *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Susan G. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Joan B. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Maryline G. Parca and Angeliki Tzanetou, eds., *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Celia Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Sarolta Takács, *Vestal Virgins, Sibyls, and Matrons: Women in Roman Religion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

upon this vibrant cultural lore, Jewish and Christian authors appropriated the name and image of the Sibyl to voice oracles for their own communities in crisis.

Placing Paul's statements about whether and how women and men should speak in conversation with these religious phenomena provides a window into how gender expectations influenced inspired speech in the ancient Mediterranean world. Is prophecy different – in practice or perception – when a man speaks compared to when a woman speaks? Do texts configure the authority, style, content, interpretation, or goals of prophecy differently when the prophet is female? Furthermore, does the difference between men and women prophesying in texts reflect historical experiences of prophecy, or is the difference rhetorical? Do male authors discuss female prophets to argue for a particular view of women's speech? Finally, how might this potential gender difference influence Paul's response to how women and men were praying and prophesying in Corinth?

The inquiry into prophetic speech is not meant to provide sources for the speech and actions of the Corinthian female and male prophets. Rather, I examine how gender differences surface in one form of religious, public speech, prophecy. I ask whether these conceptions of gender and speech clarify the issues at stake in Corinth and how Paul responds, often in ambiguous and contradictory ways. I argue against uncritically accepting ancient Mediterranean descriptions of women prophets who were "frenzied" or "raving" or "mad" as evidence for women's activity in Corinth. In the cultural situation of Paul's letter and other near-contemporary texts, both gender and prophecy are essentially performances. Judith Butler has argued that gender is not an ontological state but is culturally created in daily, stylized, and repeated actions – it is a performance.⁵ Likewise, prophecy is a performance of stylized speech that communicates the will and authority of the god(s). In ancient Mediterranean cultures, often the performance of "woman" and of "prophet" simultaneously aligned and clashed, causing the tension evident in Paul's First Corinthians.

II. Project Plan

Why was women's speech contested ground in Corinth and for Paul? This project seeks a nuanced answer to this question by placing 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 within ancient Mediterranean discourse about women's speech. One particular focus is gender dynamics in prophetic speech, since Paul goes to lengths to differentiate men from women and prophecy from speaking in tongues.

⁵ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519–31.

Exegetical questions about 1 Corinthians 11–14 form the impetus for my inquiry: What does Paul tell men and women to do in 11:2–16? What is the connection between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35? Is there contradiction, or do the preceding arguments anticipate the conclusion of Chapter 14? My exegetical contribution is to integrate interpretation of 11:2–16 – a passage most often treated on its own or in relation to other Pauline “woman passages” – with the discussion of inspired speech in Chapters 12–14. My exegesis leads to socio-historical questions about the audience in Corinth: How did rhetoric about women’s speech relate to the realities of women who spoke? What was the range of responses to Paul’s arguments possible for women in Corinth who engaged in prophetic speech? To answer these questions, I analyze discourse concerning women and their speaking in public and inspired modes. The similarities and differences between how texts configure women, men, speech, and communication with gods illuminate Paul’s arguments and provide entry into how women in Corinth may have understood the letter and their own religious speech. By examining Paul’s discourse about women and speech in the context of broader discussions of women’s religious and prophetic speech, I clarify Paul’s argument of 11:2–16, the tension between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, and the role of women in inspired speaking practices at Corinth.

The first chapter provides a history of interpretation of women and speech in First Corinthians. New Testament scholarship tends to address questions about women *or* inspired modes of speech. When scholars consider women prophesying within Greek and Roman cultural contexts, they often replicate ancient portrayals of female prophets. I argue that bringing together questions of speech and gender is a profitable way of addressing the difficulties of 1 Corinthians 11–14 and is an entry point into one important aspect of ancient religious experience.

In the second chapter, I examine archaeological evidence, supplemented by literary texts, for the religious landscape of Corinth. The ritual spaces, images, and inscriptions of the first-century Roman colony of Corinth provide material context for Paul’s statements about his Corinthian audience’s religious life, communication with gods in Corinth, and the possibilities of women’s speech in religious ritual activity. Since Paul and contemporary writers locate spaces and activities in which women’s speech is acceptable, I examine in depth a few aspects of the socio-cultural landscape: women’s presence in the inscriptions and monuments of the forum, praying in the Sanctuary of Demeter and temples of Isis, and evidence for Apollo devotion and oracular activity.

The next two chapters examine women’s speech in ancient Mediterranean contexts. The third chapter places women’s inspired speech, and Paul’s problematizing it, within the context of discourse that limits women’s speech in certain settings. Three authors – the Roman historian Livy, the Jewish philos-

opher Philo, and the Greek priest and philosopher Plutarch – demonstrate tension concerning women’s speech and identify spaces and settings in which women’s speech is acceptable. I analyze how the rhetoric of these texts configures gender difference, feminine virtues, and spaces that were open or closed to women. I argue that authority issues and ambivalence toward women speaking outside of the household occur when authors consider women’s roles in religion, which crosses boundaries between household and state and between humans and gods.

The fourth chapter analyzes depictions of one prominent form of women’s speech in religious settings: prophecy in oracular temples and by legendary prophets. Well-known female prophets, associated with temples or with written collections of oracles, possessed political influence. Because of this role, philosophical, poetic, and oracular texts exhibit fascination with female prophets. In the Roman period, after the classical apex of the Delphic Oracle, authors such as Cicero, Lucan, Plutarch, and Pausanias continued to discuss the history and plausibility of oracles. Legends about the Pythia and Sibyl exaggerated the image of the frenzied female prophet and sexualized the prophetic process, yet allowed writers to explore issues of divine communication and interaction with humanity. I discuss the rhetoric of three literary images of female prophets in three genres – philosophical treatise, epic poem, and prophetic collection. Dramatic images of women prophesying were prevalent in the collective imagination and allowed authors to experiment with ideas about how humans communicate with God(s).

The fifth and sixth chapters provide exegesis of 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 in light of the contexts that I have outlined in Chapters 2–4. I argue that the difficulties and ambiguities of 1 Cor 11:2–16 create a problem that Paul returns to and addresses more definitively in 14:34–35. First Corinthians 11:2–16 reflects Paul’s own conflict between his argument for an interdependent body that is the community and a bias toward gender differentiation and hierarchy. After working through his arguments that differentiate forms of inspired speech, Paul comes to a conclusion that is latent in 11:2–16, given his concerns for propriety and shame: Women should not speak in the assembly. I show how 11:2–16 and 14:26–40 are connected linguistically and rhetorically, how each of the arguments in 11:17–14:25 influence the argumentative progression from Chapter 11 to the end of Chapter 14, and how cultural perceptions of women’s speech and the setting of Corinth impact the argumentative movement.

The study of prophecy in ancient Mediterranean religions indicates a reality quite different from Paul’s voiceless idols (12:2): Gods spoke a lot, and often in the voice of a woman. Male-authored texts about women prophesying and speaking in civic and/or religious spaces indicate the connection between establishing gender difference and both prohibiting women’s speech and affirming women’s role in communication with the divine different – that

is, God or the gods. The tension in 11:2–16 exhibits this dual connection. Paul’s differentiating and hierarchalizing tendencies in Chapter 11, along with his working through arguments about divine communication, lead him to prohibit women’s speech.

This project contributes to studies of the New Testament, women in ancient Mediterranean religions, and feminist social history in several ways. First, I revisit complex Pauline passages, upon which much has been written, with the goal of integrating two topics – gender and prophetic speech – which will illuminate what Paul writes about each one. I read Paul’s statements about gender and speech within layers of surrounding discourse about the difference between men and women, women’s public speech, and women’s prophecy. My project, moreover, aligns with scholarly efforts to situate varieties of early Christianity within their local embodiments – in this case, Corinth – using material evidence. With this effort comes the assertion that the Corinthians did not see a radical change in their religious landscape after baptism, as is evident in the problems of 1 Corinthians, but made sense of new ideas and practices with reference to the familiar.

Questions about ancient history, gender, and religion intersect in my project, and I deal with elusive subject matter: In ancient texts, how do we read, on the one hand, religious experiences and, on the other, experiences of women who did not often write? Recent scholarly work on cultural phenomena in early Christianity and the ancient world has expanded paradigms for viewing women in ancient contexts and provided nuance to how scholars use texts and archaeology to discuss gender, religion, culture, and rhetoric. I provide a similarly nuanced discussion of women in another range of activities – inspired speech, prayer, and prophecy. My approach – combining analysis of argumentative patterns about women in ancient texts and archaeological evidence of religious practices – allows me to interpret how ancient authors defined women and their religious speech and to evaluate the distance between rhetoric and reality in these definitions.

Chapter 1

Interpreting Women's Speech in Corinth: Rhetoric and Historical Reconstruction

This chapter provides a history of the interpretation of women and religious speech in First Corinthians. Scholarship tends to address questions about either gender or inspired modes of speech. I argue that integrating questions of speech and gender is a profitable way of interpreting the exegetical difficulties of 1 Corinthians 11–14 and of examining one range of ancient religious activities – inspired speech, prayer, and prophecy.

Tension between describing ancient authors' rhetorical aims and reconstructing historical practices of real individuals and groups has existed in scholarship on First Corinthians since the emergence of historical-critical interpretation. As I recount the history of interpretation, I attend to scholars' assumptions about epistolary integrity and authorial consistency, their approach to rhetoric, and their own socio-cultural positions, and how these three issues influence how scholars reconstruct Corinthian history, in general and with specific reference to women or inspired speech.

I. Reading 1 Corinthians and Reconstructing the Corinthian Situation

Since the Corinthian correspondence is an extended conversation between Paul and an ἐκκλησία that he founded, revisited, and nurtured through his written word, these letters provide evidence about the formation, practices, and conflicts of early Christian communities. The one-sidedness of what was a multi-sided and ongoing conversation invites the interpreter to consider the voices of the people who asked Paul about practical issues, including prophetic modes of speaking in the assembly. Historical reconstruction of this community and their practices is not a neutral scholarly activity. Scholarly reconstructions highlight how modes of reading and cultural biases influence how scholars construct narratives about the Corinthian congregation and early Christianity.

A. Ferdinand Christian Baur's Corinthian Factions

In his influential 1831 essay, Ferdinand Christian Baur considered the conflict in the Corinthian correspondence in order to sketch a history of early Christianity.¹ He begins with 1 Cor 1:12, in which Paul names four figures, who represent “parties” in the Corinthian conflict. Baur formulates two questions about these parties that scholars after him continue to debate: First, are these clear factions in the Corinthian community? Second, what are the sources of conflict and theological perspectives of the factions? Baur answers these questions with reference to his interpretation of the conflict in the letter to the Galatians. In both letters, two parties are in conflict: a “Judaizing” party, associated with Peter and Christ, and a “Gentile” faction, associated with Paul and Apollos. Baur suspects that Judaizing missionaries, like those in Galatia who advocated circumcision and separation from Gentiles, appeared in Corinth after Paul.

Three interrelated tendencies mark this reconstruction. First, Baur's goal is less about Corinthian history and more about the history of the origins and development of Christianity as a whole. Second, this tendency allows Baur to reconstruct the situation based on another Pauline text, Galatians. Third, his reconstruction identifies an early Christian dialectical process: The thesis – Peter and Jewish Christianity – and the antithesis – Paul and Gentile Christianity – meld into the synthesis of catholic Christianity in Acts and later documents. This developmental model became entrenched in historical-critical scholarship.

Baur attends to the language of 1 Corinthians 1–4, but he does not explain the conflicts in the rest of the letter. For him, all of the practical issues in Chapters 5–16 – including head covering, speaking in tongues, and prophesying – are separate from the issue of party strife.² He thus adds a third question for subsequent interpreters: How do the differing views among the Corinthians influence the practical issues, social and religious, at stake in 1 Corinthians?

B. Sources of Problems: Gnosticism, Realized Eschatology, or Paul's Teachings

Two general approaches to this question persisted into the twentieth century. Some scholars took a *religionsgeschichtlicher* approach and looked to outside influence from Hellenistic or Jewish culture to explain the sources of Corin-

¹ Ferdinand Christian Baur, “Die Christus Partei in der korinthischen Gemeinde,” *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 5 (1831): 61–206. See also Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi: sein Leben und Werke, seine Briefe und seine Lehre*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Becher & Müller, 1845).

² See Baur, *Paulus*, 1:331.

thian theology, while others argued that one need not look further than Paul's teaching. Representative of the first argument is the Corinthian Gnosticism hypothesis, proposed by Wilhelm Lütgert and argued by Ulrich Wilckens and Walter Schmithals.³ The opponents of Paul in Corinth adhered to a Hellenistic-Jewish Gnosticism, a "heresy" that entered Corinth from outside the community after Paul left. Schmithals makes the argument about Gnosticism in Corinth based on a literary partition theory, which assigns sections of 1 and 2 Corinthians to different letters at different times in the life of the community.

First Corinthians 12:1–3 is central to Schmithals's argument.⁴ He asks whether anyone would have actually voiced the phrase ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς in the assembly, and if so, who were they and why would they have cursed Jesus? Schmithals argues that they were Gnostic Christians who rejected a connection between the spiritual Christ and the human Jesus. Cursing Jesus represented this division and meant nothing to Christ, the object of spiritual worship. Schmithals discusses this unusual speech-act within the context of religious speech in Corinth. Spirit-inspired speech was not unique to Christianity, as many cults that thrived in Corinth – of Isis, Sarapis, and Cybele, for instance – engaged in ecstatic worship practices.⁵

A second approach questions Schmithals's use of Gnosticism and describes the Corinthian perspective by analyzing the correspondence in its literary integrity. Hans Conzelmann argues that the features of 1 Corinthians that Schmithals considered "Gnostic" were the products of popular philosophy and syncretistic religious tendencies and that the Corinthians were perhaps "proto-Gnostics" with enthusiastic and libertine tendencies.⁶ For other scholars, Corinthian enthusiasm for wisdom and spirit was the error of over-realized eschatology.⁷ Anthony Thiselton shows how realized eschatology

³ D. Wilhelm Lütgert, *Freiheitspredigt und Schwarmgeister in Korinth*, BFCT 12.3 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1908); Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit: eine exegetisch-religions-geschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Kor. 1 und 2*, BHT 26 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959); Walter Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth: eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen*, FRLANT 66 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

⁴ Part of "Epistle B." Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth*, 117–24.

⁵ Schmithals, *Die Gnosis in Korinth*, 117–18. See Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for SBL, 1973). For Pearson, Gnosticism is a matter not of certain terminology, as it is for Schmithals and Wilckens, but of hermeneutic approaches to traditional terms and ideas.

⁶ Hans Conzelmann, *Erster Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 28–31.

⁷ Ernst Käsemann, "Zum Thema der christlichen Apokalyptik," *ZTK* 59 (1962): 272–74; Nils A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 332–33; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on*

caused every practical problem Paul addresses, including enthusiastic worship practices.⁸

In Thiselton's view, the Corinthians are in error. John C. Hurd, on the other hand, argues that the Corinthians were not "over-doing it" but that Paul changed his teaching. Working from 1 Corinthians to Paul's original preaching in Corinth, Hurd reconstructs stages of Corinthian communication based on the letter itself. In the first movement from 1 Corinthians to the Corinthians' letter, Hurd differentiates material from oral reports and from the letter based on the *περὶ δέ* introductions (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). He identifies different tone and content in sections that stem from written questions compared to oral reports.⁹ Within this argument, Hurd sees 11:2–14:40 as a unified section on the topic of worship. Both 11:2 and 12:1 indicate responses to Corinthian questions. The reference to keeping Paul's "traditions" (*παράδοσις*) in 11:2 and the *περὶ δέ* in 12:1 indicate responses to prior written communication. Hurd calls 14:33b–36 "an afterthought about the first topic [11:2–16] after dealing with the second [12:1–14:33a]," a common pattern for Paul.¹⁰ Hurd sees references to Paul's original time with them in the questions that lie behind 11:2–16 and 12:1–14:40. The Corinthians ask something like, "When you were with us, women worshipped without veils, and you spoke in tongues. But now you advocate other practices. What should we do?" A single question sparks the discussion in 12:1–14:40: "Concerning spiritual men, how can we test the Spirit when he speaks?"¹¹ Within this reading, Hurd does not posit an outside influence and real speech-act to explain 12:3. Rather, Paul pens a hypothetical, unreasonable saying – *ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς* – to illustrate how spirits are tested by the content of their utterances.¹²

The contrasts between arguments about Gnosticism, realized eschatology, and Paul's changing teachings highlight three difficulties in reconstructing the Corinthian situation. First is the issue of parallels: When is it necessary to look outside of Paul's letters for explanations for Corinthian viewpoints? What material is appropriate? Is this evidence originating or comparative material? Hurd and Thiselton acknowledge the probability that outside sources influenced the Corinthians, but they are skeptical about their ability to articulate that influence.¹³ They are, however, confident in the possibility of reconstructing the Corinthian perspective based on literary analysis of 1

the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Black, 1971), 109; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 49–50.

⁸ Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 510–26.

⁹ Hurd, *Origin*, 65. Margaret M. Mitchell, "Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 31 (1989): 229–56, questions this function of *περὶ δέ*.

¹⁰ Hurd, *Origin*, 182.

¹¹ Hurd, *Origin*, 194.

¹² Hurd, *Origin*, 71.

¹³ Hurd, *Origin*, xv–xvi; Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 510.