Age Matters:
Age, Aging and Intergenerational Relationships in Early Christian Communities,
With a Focus on 1 Timothy 5

by

Mona Tokarek LaFosse

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for the Study of Religion

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Mona Tokarek LaFosse
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Abstract

Exploring age structure in Mediterranean cultures illuminates the social dynamics of intergenerational relationships that became more visible in late first and early second century early Christian texts, and especially in 1 Timothy 5. This was a time of crisis when those with a living memory of the foundations of the movement were almost gone, and the community was scrutinized by outsiders. Since we have relatively few clues related to aging and age structure in the extant texts, a model of generational stability and social change based on ethnographic data helps us to imagine culturally sensitive possibilities that we can then test out as we reread the texts in their Roman cultural context. In his fictive story of Paul and Timothy, the author of the heterographical (pseudepigraphical) letter of 1 Timothy establishes an ideal intergenerational relationship between “Paul” as an older man and “Timothy” as his adult “child.” When the fictive Paul directs Timothy to speak kindly to older people (5:1-2), he introduces a section on age-related issues. Behaviour that was causing concern for public reputation included adult children shirking filial duty (5:4, 8), young widows gadding about in public (5:11-15), and younger men accusing their elders (5:19). These behaviours threatened the reputation and honour of the community and may have been encouraged by the opposing faction. The author’s solution was to reject the opposing teachings and enforce behaviour that reflected proper age structure: adult children should fulfill their filial responsibilities and care for widowed mothers and grandmothers (5:4); young widows should be guided and supported by middle-aged women who were responsible for them in the age hierarchy among women (5:16); middle-aged women
should imitate the exemplary behaviour of the enlisted widows who were over 60 years old; and young men were to be rebuked in front of everyone for their disrespect toward elders (5:20). In the face of social change, the author advocates for behaviour reflective of the traditional age structure of Roman society.
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Note on Translations and Transliteration

Other than New Testament canonical texts, all quotations from ancient sources are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise noted. All translations of the Apostolic Fathers are from Bart Ehrman (2003). All translations of the Digest are from Watson 1985.

I transliterate all modern Greek and Arabic words into Roman script. For modern Greek, I follow the transliteration table at http://www.kypros.org/LearnGreek/roman_table.htm, found at
List of Abbreviations

BDAG = Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich
CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
HB = Hebrew Bible
IG = Inscriptiones Graecae
LSJ = Liddell, Scott and Jones
PE = Pastoral Epistles
NASB = New American Standard Bible
NRSV = New Revised Standard Version
NT = New Testament
SEG = Supplementum Epigraphicaum Graecum

Gen = Genesis
Ex = Exodus
Lev = Leviticus
2 Chron = 2 Chronicles
Prov = Proverbs
1 Macc = 1 Maccabees
2 Macc = 2 Maccabees

Matt = Matthew
Rom = Romans
1 Cor = 1 Corinthians
2 Cor = 2 Corinthians
Gal = Galatians
Eph = Ephesians
Phil = Philippians
Col = Colossians
1 Thess = 1 Thessalonians
2 Thess = 2 Thessalonians
1 Tim = 1 Timothy
2 Tim = 2 Timothy
Tit = Titus
Phlm = Philemon
Heb = Hebrews
Jas = James
1 Pet = 1 Peter
Rev = Revelation

1 Clem. = 1 Clement
Ign. Eph. = Ignatius Ephesians
Ign. Magn. = Ignatius Magnesians
Ign. Smyr. = Ignatius Smyrneans
Ign. Trall. = Ignatius Trallians
Polycarp Phil. = Polycarp Letter to the Philippians

Eccl. Hist. = Ecclesiastical History
P.Mich. = Papyrus Michigan
P.Oxy. = Papyrus Oxyrhyncus

m.Aboth = Misnah Aboth

Digest = Digest of Justinian
Chapter 1: Literature Review and Direction of Thesis

1. Introduction

Age structure is an important component of social relationships. “In all societies, the biological differentiation of sex and age provide criteria for the ordering of social relations in the family” (Campbell 1964:179), and “all cultures must resolve the question of how to structure age differences” (Fry 1980:6). Very little scholarship to date has examined the social context of age and aging in early Christian communities. Abraham J. Malherbe has commented that though old age is a “hot topic” in current academia, “one is struck by the fact that so little serious, extensive work on old age in the Bible has been done… it is fair to say that the subject still awaits intensive and imaginative study” (1994:197). Even now, more than fifteen years later, his statement appears to stand. The study of aging in historical context (e.g., Minois 1989; Johnson and Thane 1998) may serve to bridge a personal gap between “us” and the historical people we study because we have common ground: we all experience aging—the aging of the physical body, the propagation of a new generation, and caring for our parents and grandparents. In fact, studying age might be crucial for a holistic understanding of early Christianity: “adequate theories of society must take into account age and aging” (Keith and Kertzer 1997:21).

I begin this chapter with some brief definitions of age, aging and old age and how I orient my study with regard to age. I proceed with a review of literature that has engaged the topic of age and aging in early Christian studies. Finally, I describe the direction of the thesis on age, aging and intergenerational relationships in late first and early second century Christian communities, and how my work contributes to understanding the social world of the early Christians.
2. **Definitions and orientation**

Age, aging and old age are related terms, but are not the same. By “age” I mean the age structure that is specific to a given culture. Age structure involves the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to individuals at each stage of the life course. The duration and nature of the stages of the life course are culturally determined. “Aging” refers to an individual’s progress through the life course, which is largely determined by one’s cultural, social, and familial setting, as well as life circumstances (e.g., widowhood).1 “Old age” is also culturally defined, but essentially refers to the latter stage of adulthood, correlated with the final (but not necessarily inactive) stage of the life course.

My study does not focus on old age exclusively, but recognizes that studying old age is critical for understanding the life course as a whole. For instance, the experiences of one’s previous life stages influence the conditions and characteristics of old age. Also, age structure is based in part on how younger and older generations interact (ideally and in reality). In this study, I favour the perspective of the older generation.2 That is, I orient my research from the perspective of the last stage of the life course in order to explore the age structure, demographic realities and gender differences in the life course that were part of early Christian communities.

3. **Literature review**

In this literature review I summarize studies in the field of Christian origins that focus on old age, adult-child relationships, old men (elders), old women, age in the context of social hierarchy, and social aspects of age and old age. While age and aging in early Christianity

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1 How much influence individual decisions have on a person’s life course trajectory depends on cultural context. In modern Western culture, which is individual-oriented and encourages individuality, a person’s individual decisions highly influence one’s life course. In traditional Mediterranean cultures, which are group-oriented (Malina 2001:58-80) individual decisions are typically highly influenced, or even dictated, by social and family concerns (see especially Chapter 4).

2 In contrast, Peter Balla’s study of the adult-child relationship in early Christian communities favours the younger generation (adult children) rather than the older (2003; cf. Eyben 1993).
appears as a part of several related topics in the literature, there is no sustained study to date that engages the ancient Mediterranean cultural context of age and aging.

3.1. Surveys of old age in the Bible and/or in early Christianity

Several scholars have surveyed the topic of aging in biblical or early Christian texts. Some offer a notably pastoral perspective, endeavouring to apply the texts to contemporary attitudes toward the elderly. They often reflect overly positive interpretations, and offer little contextualization of older people in early Christian communities. Others, while engaging more of the ancient context, project later attitudes toward the aged onto early Christianity as represented in the canonical texts. These surveys are worth mentioning for their early attempts at observing certain themes and their occasional astute observations of texts related to old age and aging.

Jean Laporte’s essay on “The Elderly in the Life and Thought of the Early Church” (1981) covers the first five centuries of the Christian church. He focuses on the widows in need of assistance and the honourable status of older people in ministry, especially from the second century on. His ultimate goal is to apply the historical texts to today “as [the Church] searches to define its relationship to the elderly” (1981:37). Laporte offers little social context for what constituted “elderly” in the early Church, merely stating that sixty was considered old by Plato, Philo and 1 Timothy, and that the average age of death was younger than it is now (by which he means in Western society; 1981:38).

Frank Stagg’s (1981) treatment of old age in the HB and the NT is basically a treatise against contemporary ageism (e.g., 1981:176-77). He argues that in the NT the acceptance of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{3} Stagg sets out to inquire about “various questions bearing on age, aging and agism [sic]” (1981:6). The term “ageism” was first used by gerontologist Robert N. Butler, comparing discrimination against and stereotypes of old people to similar actions and attitudes present in racism and sexism (1969). He honed his definition of ageism to include attitudes, practices and institutional policies that discriminate against older persons because of their age. Thus ageism reflects a perception of aging as a social problem rather than as a natural process (Butler 1980; see} \]
the elderly is implicit in Jesus’ special concern for the neglected and disadvantaged (1981:133), and in Paul’s insistence on equality of all persons based on grace (e.g., Gal 3:28; 1981:152). Stagg’s interpretation emphasizes the “strength and beauty” of old people (e.g., Luke 1-2; 2 Tim 4:6-8; 1981:136, 164), but this positive stereotype addresses little in terms of real social behaviour and status in the ancient world. While he intends to ask questions about the social aspects behind the texts (e.g., perceptions of age from the young and the old, privileges and disadvantages of being old, evidence of ageism; 1981:6), his perspective is decidedly pastoral, with an ultimate concern for how the texts can be applied to contemporary life. In one noteworthy insight on the exhortations to older people in Tit 2:2, he states that they are both “vulnerable to negative qualities” and called to “special responsibilities which come with age” (1981:156). He does not expound on the social relevance or implications of either statement.

Stephen Sapp (1987) also highlights aging in the biblical texts as a way to inform contemporary attitudes about and treatment of the elderly. His chapter on the NT generally applies theological themes to the process of aging (e.g., the difference between the “flesh” and the “body” in Paul’s theology as a way to encourage people to live moral lives as they age, 1987:101-4). He imagines that Jesus would have been especially concerned for the elderly as disadvantaged people, even though the gospels do not contain any stories illustrating this concern. For Sapp, various NT texts emphasize respect towards elders (e.g., 1 Pet 5:5, Phlm 9, 1 Tim 5:1-2). In addition, Jesus condemned those who used the notion of “Corban” (a religious vow in which one handed over one’s property “to God”) in order to avoid the material support of one’s parents (Mark 7:11-12); thus, Jesus affirmed one’s obligation toward caring for elderly parents (1987:120). On the other hand, Sapp notes that older men often held leadership positions. He notably suggests a connection between greatness and age in Luke 22:26: “let the

also Wilkinson and Ferraro 2002:339). Ageism is most commonly associated with modern, Western views of elderly people.
greatest among you become like the youngest.” For Sapp this reflects an attitude of respect for older people in Jewish society of Jesus’ day (1987:114), yet he overlooks the reversal of traditional age valuation in this Lukan redaction. 4 Similar to Stagg, Sapp’s portrait of the elderly in early Christian communities is idealized, emphasizing positive interpretations of relevant texts.

J. Gordon Harris’ study of the elderly in the Bible (1987) incorporates social insights from other ancient cultures and literature, but is also ultimately theological in purpose. He states: “Theologians must challenge the presuppositions of ageism on biblical grounds… Ancient, family-oriented societies offer correctives for a throwaway, futuristic culture” (1987:3). As with Stagg, the bulk of Harris’ study engages HB texts. 5 Also like Stagg and Sapp, Harris idealizes ancient attitudes of respect toward the aged as a corrective for ageism in contemporary society, arguing that “such behaviour helps stabilize and preserve social structures” (1987:18).

Harris interprets attitudes toward the elderly in the NT in rather conflicting terms. He comments on the “general silence on matters of aging” in Christian texts of the first and second centuries (1987:76), noting: “Jesus and Paul speak passionately for human dignity, unity and justice, but hardly deal with aging issues. This silence may indicate that Christianity largely shared the tenets of respect for the older generation assumed in most cultures from that period” (my emphasis; 1987:77). On the other hand, he equates the new Christian movement with millenarianism, describing it as rebelling against the tradition of the older generation, including family structure and caring for aging parents. The Synoptic gospels devalue the biological

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4 See John H. Elliott 1970 for a more sophisticated analysis of this text with regard to age.

5 Harris’ article on “Old Age” in the Anchor Bible Dictionary (1992) mirrors the introduction of his 1987 study, focusing primarily on the HB and incorporating a few NT references. Briefly, he finds that old age in the Bible can be associated with wisdom and used to teach the younger generation, and is often a sign of God’s favour. It is also a time of physical and social vulnerability so that the biblical texts require the younger generation to respect and care for their elders.
family, though Jesus also condemns those who evade the responsibility of caring for their parents (Mark 7:5-13; 1992:12; cf. 1987:80-81; Sapp 1987:120). Later scholars have tackled this tension in the gospel texts regarding obligation to and rejection of family with more nuanced insights (see below, §3.3.1). Harris applies the word “old,” as associated with being worn out and sinful (e.g., old wineskins, Mark 2:22 par.), to elderly people. This is a strange and unnecessary interpretive leap, especially in light of positive images of old people (e.g., Luke 1-2). Harris also points out that in the Gospels the Jewish “elders” rally against the new Jesus movement and “disqualify themselves from their deserved respect,” yet in Acts, Christian “elders” arise (1987:82-83). The identity and development of “elder” as a leadership role in the early church has been an on-going debate for many decades in critical scholarship (see below, §3.2.1, and Chapter 12, §2.1). Finally, Harris notes that when “normalcy returned,” and the church became more “settled,” traditional ideas about family responsibilities were resumed, as reflected in John, the Pauline letters and the post-Pauline letters. Respect, dignity and leadership roles were “restored” to the elderly at this time. These ideas reveal common assumptions about the evolution of the Christian community that I will challenge below.

Lindsey P. Pherigo (1989) outlines various references to older persons in the New Testament texts, focusing on them as models of faith and having “continuing significance” (1989:76; “significance” in what sense is not clear). These vague positive stereotypes do not explore the real social situations and responsibilities of old people. Her article applies these texts in a devotional sense, particularly for teaching elderly people. She does little critical analysis of the texts, but her insight that the elderly and the rest of the community were in some sense interdependent is suggestive (1989:78).

Stagg makes a similar observation, arguing that the age of the elders in the Gospels did not disqualify them, but their “‘establishment’ stance” did (1981:138). This analysis seems to reflect an interpretive identification of the Jewish leaders with religious hierarchy and institutionalization—an undesirable stage of Christian development Protestant scholars have rejected (implicitly) in favour of an interpretation of Jesus’ intended church based on charisma (see Burtchaell 1992:1-184; Campbell 1997:11-17).
Whereas theological treatments of old age and the elderly in the NT have tended to be overly positive, Georges Minois tends the other way (1987). Within his wide historical study of old age (antiquity to renaissance), early Christianity comprises a few references embedded in the attitudes of the “Hebraic world,” when old age was “desacrilized and trivialized” because of the influence of Hellenism (1987:38). Though Jewish attitudes also fell into this category, he singles out Christians as especially harsh in their treatment of the elderly because in the NT the elderly play an “insignificant role, and it was easier there to skip into indifference towards or mockery of the old” (1987:42). Minois’ evaluation that early Christians were indifferent to the old could potentially be justified by how few references there are to the elderly in the NT, though this is really an argument from silence. But his contention that they are mocked is not supported at all. Minois interprets the admonitions to the older generation to be virtuous in 1 Tim and Titus as evidence that they are in need of being exhorted. He argues that Christians no longer connected wisdom with old age, thereby usurping a role that the elderly previously had held exclusively (1987:9, 38). Minois points out that the word “elder” continued its reputation in a symbolic sense of divine wisdom (e.g., the twenty-four elders in Revelation). It is rather curious that he evaluates the Roman attitudes of the first and second centuries as balanced and tolerant toward the elderly, yet applies only the negative attitudes of the Greek and early Roman period to the early Christians. Minois projects anachronistically onto early Christianity the negative attitudes toward the elderly that he finds in medieval Christian thought (the fourth century on). His portrayal of old people in first and second century Christian communities is therefore largely based on negative stereotypes rather than informed historical context.

A similar anachronistic view undergirds the NT section of an article on old age by Christian Gnilka (1983). Gnilka’s survey begins with old age in the ancient world; the second section on old age in Christianity is comprised of a comparatively short section on the NT
(1983:1052-1057) and a longer section on the Church Fathers (1983:1057-1093). This breakdown itself betrays Gnilka’s main focus, which is the later phase of the church—a phase which contains much richer resources from which to draw conclusions about old age in the Christianity of late antiquity.

Gnilka’s explanation of NT material on old age is somewhat ambiguous. Gnilka compares Tit 2:2-4, which describes typical vices and virtues attributed to old men and old women, with Col 3:21 and Eph 6:4 (directing parents not to discourage their children, but train them in the Lord). He briefly asserts that Jesus refers to age in his sayings about how no one can change his hair to white or black (Matt 5:36), and no one can add a day to his life (Mark 6:27, Luke 12:25). For Gnilka, these sayings highlight human weakness and a warning not to be presumptuous of the future (cf. Jas 4:13-15; 1 Pet 1:24), but he does not make a clear connection to old age (1983:1056-57). On the other hand, Gnilka does suggest that old age has a higher value in the NT than it does in later Christianity, based on the value given old age in Greco-Roman antiquity and ancient Judaism. Respect for the old can be seen in 1 Tim 5:1 (treat older men and women like fathers and mothers), based on Christ’s command to love one’s neighbour and the Hebrew commandment to obey one’s parents. He notes the overlapping function of the word πρεσβύτεροι (elders) as both office and age, and states that “die Führer der Gemeinden waren in der Regel ältere Männer [as a rule the leaders of the community were old men]” (1983:1054), though he does not offer any suggestions for how old is “old.” He mentions Papias and Irenaeus who comment on the older generation as the guarantors of tradition, and parallels the white haired Son of Man in Rev 1:14 with God as “the aged one” in Dan 7:9.

Despite these instances of positive valuation of old age, Gnilka concludes that the virtues of old age (namely, wisdom and spiritual maturity) quickly became metaphorical for the early church. That is, a younger person’s spiritual maturity, wisdom and virtue became a more
important qualification for prominent roles in the community than an older person’s moral and intellectual maturity developed over a lifetime. For Gnilka, this shift meant a devaluation of actual old age. He observes the beginning of this devaluation in the words of Paul, arguing that Paul “spiritualizes” the term “old.” Furthermore, even though he understands 1 Tim 5:1 as reflective of traditional respect for the elderly (above), Gnilka interprets 1 Tim 4:12 as precedent-setting for other young leaders in the future.

Gnilka’s supposed clues for this trend in NT texts are unconvincing. First, Gnilka highlights Paul’s contrasting terms νήπιον (childish) and τελειος (mature), a contrast that highlights the maturity of adulthood, but not old age per se. In fact, Paul never uses terms for “old” (except in Phlm 9 where the word πρεσβύτερος is not “spiritualized”). Second, while the reference to Timothy being young and exemplary may reflect eventual younger leadership in the Christianity of late antiquity, at the time of 2 Timothy (say, the late first century), the portrayal of the young Timothy is an exception that proves the rule that most leaders are older (Barclay 2007:238-39; Harvey 1974:328). In both instances, Gnilka’s assertion appears to be based on an anachronistic assumption similar to that of Minois: since later Christianity gave precedence to “God-given” wisdom over age, it must have had roots in the earliest Christian generations. This assumption does not engage seriously the social setting of Christian communities in the late first and early second centuries.

Gnilka’s anachronistic view is clear when he utilizes the interpretation of the church fathers in his analysis of John 21:20-23. He claims that the witness of Irenaeus and Clement of

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7 "Gerade dieser Gesichtspunkt wurde von den Vätern stark entfaltet (s. Sp. 1072-8), wobei die durch den Sprachgebrauch der paulinischen Briefe vorgebildete Spiritualizierung der Altersnamen [NT references] diese Entwicklung beförderte" (1983:1057). (Just this point of view [virtue and the grace of God trumps chronological age for precedence, as in 1 Tim 4:12] became highly developed for the Fathers [see columns 1072-8], whereby the spiritualizing of the term old conveyed this development, represented through the linguistic usage of the Pauline letters.)

8 “Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (NRSV).
Alexandria demonstrate that John grew old, living into the time of Trajan. However, the
Johannine text does not explicitly refer to the Beloved Disciple growing old, but to Jesus’ return
and whether or not this disciple would be alive. Perhaps the Beloved Disciple’s old age is
implied, but the church fathers’ explicit record of his age is their concern rather than the gospel
writer’s.

In sum, while he has some worthwhile insights, Gnilka’s ideas about old age in the NT
reflect little of a late first century and early second century social context. His argument that
maturity gained from lived chronological years is superseded by spiritual maturity is not readily
evident in Pauline Christianity. His analysis is led too much by his patristic sources, which are
primarily concerned with doctrine and orthodoxy rather than the social implications of age
status. He addresses little in terms of actual behaviour of and toward old people in the early
Christian texts themselves.

In an edited volume on aging in antiquity, Elisabeth Hermann-Otto explores care for the
elderly in early Christianity (2003). She concludes that early Christians had an ambivalent
valuation of elders. On the one hand, Christian texts reflect the respect given older people in the
hierarchical structure of Roman family; on the other hand, Christianity offered opportunities for
the young since wisdom was separated from this structure through an “ascetic wise life, outside
of the old traditional family unit” (2003:208). Hermann-Otto offers more nuanced and detailed
arguments than Gnilka, but her conclusion reflects similar anachronistic ideas from later
Christian attitudes toward age.

Finally, Warren Carter’s “Survey of Recent Scholarship on the New Testament and
Aging and Suggestions for Future Research” (1995) reviews several of the studies outlined
above (Laporte, Sapp, Harris, Stagg, Minois, Pherigo). Carter finds that the majority of these

9 Carter appears to be unaware of Gnilka’s important work.
studies view the honour and respect toward the elderly found in the HB as continuing into the NT, noting that Minois has an unfavourable view of old age in the NT. Carter concludes that though the Judean context\(^\text{10}\) of the NT is important, more work must be done in the Graeco-Roman context of the elderly, especially the social contexts of family and household.

In conclusion, studies focused on old age in early Christianity have fallen into two broad categories, both of which have anachronistic foundations. First, studies by Laporte, Stagg, Sapp, Pherigo and, to a lesser extent, Harris, are too governed by contemporary pastoral or societal concerns regarding elderly people in our society to successfully pursue the ancient social context of age and aging. Second, though focused more on historical context, Minois, Gnilka and Hermann-Otto do not develop a culturally sensitive understanding of age categories, nor do they take seriously enough the first and early second century social, physical and familial contexts of the aging process. Without this context, the modern reader is apt to substitute her or his own cultural views of age and aging when reading early Christian texts.

3.2. Age and gender

I now turn to studies that incorporate ideas about age in discussions about older men and older women. The two terms most frequently used in ancient Greek for old person are ὁ γέρων and ὁ πρεσβύτερος (and their derivatives, including the feminine forms used for old women). In early Christian writings the first is used on occasion,\(^\text{11}\) but the latter is most common (used

\(^{10}\) Following the arguments of Phillip Frances Esler (2003:63-74), Steve Mason (2007) and Elliott (2007), the term "Judean" as a label of ethnic identity is to be preferred over the anachronistic religious term "Jew" and "Judaism" for the Greek Ἰουδαίος. In the first century, when ethnic labels were strongly geographical, even diaspora Judeans were connected to Judea, the temple and its cultic associations. The terms "Jew" and "Jewish" are associated with historical events after the first century up until the modern era (Esler 2003:66-67).

\(^{11}\) In the NT, there are five instances of ὁ γέρων and its derivatives:

- Luke 1:36: Elizabeth conceived in her old age (ἐν γήρει)
- Acts 5:21: the high priest "called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel" (NRSV; τὸ συνεδρίον καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν ὕσον Ἰσραήλ)
- John 3:4: Nicodemus asks how anyone can be born after growing old (γέρων)
- John 21:18: "when you grow old (γηράσῃς), you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you, and take you where you do not wish to go" (NRSV)
over seventy times in the NT, for example). Discussions about age and older men center around the role of “elder.” Discussions about older women are much briefer and more diverse, with widowhood as an important focus.

### 3.2.1. Old men (elders)

The term ὁ πρεσβύτερος can mean “old man” (with reference to age) or “elder” (a role and title of authority and/or leadership). The distinction between the two meanings is not always clear. The term certainly developed in the Christian church to become the title for a distinct “office,” but when this development occurred and how this title relates to other “offices” (especially that of overseer, or ἐπίσκοπος) has been a matter of much debate (see Chapter 12, §2.1). Even given the ambiguity of the term “elder” (πρεσβύτερος) and its association with age, age is often dismissed as of little importance in the development of leadership roles since Christian communities eventually came to recognize people’s leadership ability through gifting rather than age (cf. Minois 1989 and Gnilka 1983; §3.1). Here I review several studies that have highlighted age in their discussions of the role of “elder” as “old man.”

A.E. Harvey has challenged a widely held view that Christian elders were derived from the elders of the Jewish synagogue. He argues that the “elders” mentioned in Jewish contexts of the NT (namely the gospels and Acts) were not office holders in the synagogue, but leaders imbued with authority who could offer counsel to local communities on the basis of their age,

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12 The development of offices in the early church has received much attention in scholarship since the late 19th century, often strongly coloured (however implicitly) by scholars’ diverging Protestant and Catholic views of leadership (see discussions in Burtchaell 1992:1-184; Campbell 1997:11-17). In this section I refer exclusively to male leadership. Bonnie Thurston’s study on the order of widows (1989) arguably belongs to a discussion of old age and leadership, but I will discuss her work in the section on women (see below, §3.2.2).

13 The typical view of the development of the “three-fold” ministry of bishop, deacon and elder is probably best exemplified by Hans von Campenhausen (1969). In this view, when the church became less apocalyptic and more “settled” in the late first century, charismatic gifts that functioned in harmony in Pauline churches (as exemplified by traveling apostles and prophets) were replaced by offices of leadership. For von Campenhausen, the roles of bishop and deacon derived from Pauline communities (mentioned in Phil 1:1), while the role of elder derived from the Jewish synagogue. Generally this “settled” phase is considered a degeneration of the original intention of Jesus and Paul, and the institutionalization of the church an unfortunate, but inevitable, stage of the early church (reflecting Weberian notions of charismatic community development).
senior status, and likely social status (heads of prominent families) in the community (1974:325). While he rejects attempts to treat the Jewish elders as a straightforward model of early Christian “elders,” Harvey contends that the title of “elders” is a reference to “older men” often with connotations of seniority within the church (based on 1 Tim 5:1, 1 Pet 5:1-4, 1 Clem. 1:3; he contrasts the “young men” in Acts 5:6 as a group). Not all older men had specific duties, but some did, as in 1 Tim 5:17. Thus, elders were not “appointed,” but certain ones (perhaps the first converts and most senior members) were chosen for special responsibilities, namely the responsibility of bishop or “overseeing” (Tit 1:5-7; Acts 16:23; 1 Clem. 44; cf. 1 Clem. 47:6, 55:1).

In sum, Harvey suggests that in the late first century and early second centuries eldership did not constitute an office derived from the Judean synagogue, but a designation of respect and authority based on age, seniority and succession. While he does not engage the ancient Mediterranean cultural context of aging directly, he does move toward considering the social value of deference to older people in ancient Mediterranean societies.

In his comments on 1 Pet 5:1-5, John H. Elliott suggests that the πρεσβύτεροι were leaders in the Christian community who were not necessarily old in “natural age” but had seniority in the community. The νεώτεροι, who were, for Elliott, recent converts rather than young men, are exhorted to submit to the elders (5:5) to keep “order” in the community so that they could remain distinct from the society around them and retain solidarity within (1981:69, 14 “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching” (NRSV).

15 Harvey’s brief explanation of how the word “elder” transitioned in to a term for leadership apart from age is unconvincing, since neither the young Timothy of 1 Tim 4:12 nor Demas, the young bishop of Magnesia (Ignatius Magn. 3), are referred to as “elders” (1974:328). This is especially problematic since he admits that “church order” likely developed differently in different regions (1974:331).
Elliott states: “Age conferred status and eligibility for leadership. Leaders in turn could be ascribed the status of ‘elder’ which in other instances was attained by virtue of advanced age” (1981:191). To corroborate this argument, Elliott points out that although the word πρεσβύτερος does not appear in Paul’s letters, in 1 Cor 16:15-16 Stephanas and his household are named as “first converts” (ἀπαρχή) and the church is to “be subject” (ὑποτάσσω) to them (Elliott assumes they are to be subject to Stephanas in particular; 1970:381-82). This is not a “natural or social order,” according to Elliott, but subordination to those in authority (based on seniority) because of their length of time functioning in the faith community (cf. MacDonald 1988:217).\(^\text{17}\)

One difficulty with Elliott’s argument about seniority in the Christian community is that he does not clearly define what roles of seniority (or leadership roles) entailed, nor what “subordination” of younger members meant. He suggests that seniority would help distinguish some older members from others, for not all older people would likely be involved in leadership per se (cf. 1 Tim 5:17). While age itself would not entitle a person to a leadership role, age would sustain one’s authority in a leadership role. The cultural norms of age hierarchy would dictate that younger people behave respectfully toward older people in senior positions, especially in a public forum.

Perhaps more importantly, a person who attained seniority in the ancient context—that is, one who had gained the experience necessary to be considered “senior”—must also have

\(^\text{16}\) But see David Balch (1981), for example, who argues such “order” had an apologetic function. In his reading of 1 Peter, Balch argues that by arguing that the Christian community should reflect the typical Roman household, it will demonstrate its legitimacy to outsiders. Both paradigms are based on the analogy of the household.

\(^\text{17}\) In a previous study, Elliott expounds his arguments for why age-related terms in 1 Pet 5:1-5 relate to seniority within the community rather than “natural age” (1970). He makes a case for an oral baptismal tradition that informs both 1 Pet 5:1-5 and various gospel texts, most notably Luke 22:24-27. According to Elliott, the tradition includes a distinction between leaders and νεώτεροι, which he understands neither as “young men” nor as “ministers of lower rank,” but as “neophytes” in the community (the newly baptized; 1970:390). He asserts that 1 Peter and parts of the gospels reflect developed church order. For example, in 1 Pet 5:5 the νεώτεροι are told to submit to the elders and in Luke 22:26, Jesus says, “let the greatest among you become like the youngest (νεώτεροι).”
attained a relatively advanced chronological age related to those around him/her. Consider
Elliot’s example of Stephanas, of whose age we know very little, expect that he was old enough
to be the head of a household. If Paul wrote 1 Cor only three or four years after his visit to
Corinth, Stephanas would not have grown “old” in those few years, but was recognized as
“senior” nonetheless. Certainly the fact that Paul singles out Stephanas as part of the group from
its inception suggests that his involvement afforded him seniority status. But considering the
cultural context in which authority normally came with age (explored in later chapters of this
study), the group would be unlikely to recognize his authority if he was young. In other words,
given the cultural context, probably he would be granted seniority status in Paul’s eyes (and the
Corinthians’ eyes) only if he was considered to have the social authority of an older man.

Similarly, John M.G. Barclay points out two examples that serve as exceptions that
prove the rule. Demas appeared to have seniority in his position as overseer, but Ignatius needed
to defend his young age, insisting that he was capable despite his relative youth (Ignatius Magn.
3). Similarly, the author of 1 Timothy chose to present his ostensible recipient Timothy as a
younger man, arguing that he was capable despite his age (1 Tim 4:12; Barclay 2007:238-39). In
both cases, it was age, and not experience, that seemed to be at issue. The pseudepigraphical
nature of the letter to Timothy complicates the latter example. Malherbe makes a case that the
author of 1 Timothy portrays himself as an older Paul (1994), advising his junior, Timothy,
about how to deal with problems in the community, one of which was a challenge to age
hierarchy. Thus, the rhetoric of a senior advising a respectable junior in matters of leadership
actually demonstrates and models the kind of relationship that reflects proper behaviour (see
also Chapter 12, §4.3).
In sum, seniority normally had some correlation with age, which suggests that Elliott’s idea of seniority within the movement usurping age is not culturally sensitive with regard to age structure.

Similar to Harvey, R. Alastair Campbell focuses on “elders” as a reference to both seniority and old age (1994:2). His goal is to understand the “nature and origin of the office of the elders in the Christian church, and its relationship to that of overseers” (1994:3), particularly in light of recent scholarship on the social setting of early Christianity. Ultimately, he understands elders as those in “seniority” roles in the household, which he argues parallel the basic structure of the early church (following Verner 1983 and Maier 1991). Campbell’s starting point is drawn from the work of Rudolph Sohm (1892), who posited that the term elder was not originally an office; rather elders were a group of men honoured for their senior status and proven character in the community. Official positions, such as that of overseer, were drawn from this group.18

Campbell argues the role of elders was continuous from the Judean and Greco-Roman social roots of Christianity to the emergence of the proto-orthodox19 Christian community leadership structure in the late first and early second centuries.20 The term “elders” denoted honour and respect, applying to senior men of noble or influential households in both Judean and Graeco-Roman communities. Collectively, these leaders were called “the elders,” a title of

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18 The most common legacy of Rudolph Sohm is his Protestant-driven dichotomy between charisma and office—the “decline” from Pauline spirit-filled communities to church organization and structured leadership positions, as found in von Campenhausen (1969).

19 “Proto-orthodox” is defined by Bart D.Ehrman as “a form of Christianity endorsed by some Christians of the second and third centuries (including the Apostolic Fathers), which promoted doctrines that were declared ‘orthodox’ in the fourth and later centuries by the victorious Christian party, in opposition to such groups as the Ebionites, the Marcionites, and the Gnostics” (2008:510). It is not a label that early Christians used for themselves, but rather a way for scholars to distinguish between the form of Christianity that became dominant in the fourth century and the other forms of Christianity extant in the first to third centuries (2008:7).

20 Thus, along with Harvey, Campbell challenges the Campenhausenian notion that the elders developed from Judean Christianity (carrying their conservative tradition and proclivity toward the Law), to merge later with the Pauline church development of overseer and deacon.
honour that did not start to denote a function until the second generation of the church (1994:126). Thus, overseer and elder were not mutually exclusive categories because leaders in specific roles (e.g., overseer) were chosen from among the elders. 21

Campbell develops the idea that Paul’s communities would have included “elders” who functioned in leadership. This parallels Elliott’s notion of men with “seniority” in Pauline communities, like Stephanas in Corinth (1970:381-82; cf. MacDonald 1988:217). Campbell posits an existing hierarchy in Pauline communities based at least in part on age. Not all aged people would have been leaders because their wealth, status and/or influence would have contributed to whether or not they were leaders. Campbell reasonably assumes that attitudes toward the elderly were relatively stable through the first several generations of the church.

Though critiqued by Elliott for not being rigorous enough in a social-scientific manner (2003), Campbell’s study takes a significant step toward considering age as a social category in early Christian communities. Campbell’s work on elders is based on social history, demonstrating that “respect for old age was a deeply entrenched assumption” (1994:81). His research takes into account attitudes toward old age in second temple Judaism as well as Greco-Roman paganism 22 in order to establish that in both settings the elderly were generally honoured

21 In Campbell’s reconstruction, the first generation of Christians (as found in the Pauline letters and Acts) were household churches, most likely were led by the senior male of the hosting household. His position would be one of “overseer.” When several of these leaders came together as representatives of their communities, they would be referred to as “elders.” In the late first century, as house churches grew, it became necessary to organize larger meetings. One of these men was chosen to be “overseer” over what had been several house churches (the monopolarchic episcopate, as depicted in Ignatius) in order to establish continuity in the absence of traveling, authoritative apostles. Those not chosen to be “overseer” were referred to as elders. Campbell argues that this sort of organization began to be prescribed in the letters to Timothy and Titus, and in Ignatius. He argues a backlash against this progression toward one overseer is evident in 1 Clement where the action was seen as usurping the authority of elders.

22 Campbell outlines what he calls the “Greco-Roman” attitude toward old age, justifying his blending of the two by saying that the Romans inherited basically the same attitude as the Greeks. While this might be true in broad terms, there were certainly some significant differences. For instance, Greek law required children to care for aging parents. Though Roman custom dictated this obligation, the Romans had no such law. Campbell utilizes the following primary sources: Aristotle Politics, Aristophanes, Plato Republic, Laws, Xenophon Memorabilia, Aeschines, and Plutarch. Surprisingly, he does not mention Cicero’s treatise on old age. This limited list of primary sources is especially slim on texts dated closer to the first century.
because of their age. His work confirms the importance of understanding early Christian households and family dynamics in an examination of social aspects of aging.

There are, however, several weaknesses in Campbell’s work. First, the basis of Campbell’s theory is a logical progression of leadership culminating in the monarchial episcopate. The evidence for this single overseer is based on the perspective of Ignatius in several of his letters (e.g., Magn. 6.1-2; Eph. 4.1, 5.3, 6.1; Smyr. 8.1, 9.1). We cannot know if this leadership structure was pervasive (as Campbell seems to assume), the idiosyncratic desire of Ignatius himself, or something in between. The uncertainty of this particular pattern of leadership renders Campbell’s argument unsound. Second, Campbell’s goal is not to examine aging, but to reveal the patterns of leadership in the early church which incorporated a group of people called “elders.” Thus, his work on the social context of aging is only pushed so far.

In a short interjection, Campbell employs a modern cross-cultural study on aging and modernity (Cowgill and Holmes 1972) to suggest that there are parallels between modernization and social changes in the Greco-Roman world (1997:90-95). D.O. Cowgill and L.D. Holmes define “modernization” based on technology, urbanization, rate of social change and westernization (1972:2). Campbell argues that urbanization, mobility and social change in the ancient world also can be associated with a decline in the status of the elderly, but that the lack of retirement in the ancient world, and the extended Greco-Roman household, provided continued roles and family membership that mitigated status loss for elderly people (1994:90-95). Social change in the Roman Empire had some similarities to modernization, including urbanization, relatively advanced technology, spread of cultural and religious ideas, and roads and sea-faring ships that allowed for distant travel and migration. But there was no parallel

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23 He quotes W.K. Lacey (1968) here, so I assume he means the Greek household from the heyday of ancient Greek, through the Roman period and beyond, but I remain unsure why he focuses on Greece. Greek and Roman attitudes should not necessarily be assumed to be the same (see Chapter 2, §3.2).
process to modernization since the Greeks and Romans lacked the mechanization, consumerism and cultural hegemony that characterizes modernization. Campbell’s brief foray into the anthropology of aging is suggestive, but does little to inform his textual work.

Campbell’s work says very little about elderly men who were not “leaders.” He focuses on the positive aspects of old age, particularly with respect to honour, to the neglect of potentially negative attitudes toward old age and the elderly reflected in early Christianity. His work does suggest that a more thorough and critical application of cross-cultural work could offer more insight into aging.

The studies on old men by Harvey, Elliott and Campbell incorporate ideas about old age, especially tracing the development of particular leadership roles in early Christianity related to the term πρεσβύτερος. However, age and its cultural context in early Christian communities is neither their focus, nor a source of substantial insight. The flexibility of the term πρεσβύτερος should be considered further in light of the cultural context.

3.2.2. Old women

Old women in early Christianity generally have received less attention than old men. Because of gender differentiation in Greek and Roman cultures, including stark gender differences in old age, old women require separate treatment. In the secondary literature, beyond standard explanations of Greco-Roman stereotypes of old women and some attempts to explain the reference to widows who are at least sixty in 1 Tim 5:9 (mostly in commentaries), the significance of old Christian women has been a cursory concern.

One could argue that the Hellenistic influence of Alexander the Great was a kind of cultural hegemony that continued into the era of the Roman Empire. The Romans themselves, however, were quite eclectic and tolerant of the cultural ways of their subjects, except when it threatened political stability.

Old women appear explicitly in several early Christian texts: in 1 Tim 5:1 (treat older women like mothers), 5:9 (widows must be at least sixty to be “enrolled”), and in Titus 2:3 (older women are to be good role models and teach younger women). Anna, the elderly prophetess who blesses the infant Jesus, is a model univira (a woman who does not remarry after her husband dies; see discussion in Chapter 10, §5.2; Luke 2:36-38), and Elizabeth, who miraculously gives birth to John the Baptist as a woman beyond childbearing years (Luke 1:18, 36), parallels her
For example, Dennis R. MacDonald highlights the phrase “old wives’ tales” as a rhetorical device for dismissing the activities and beliefs of women in 1 Timothy (4:7; 1983:13-15). His focus is on polemic rather than real “old women” who supposedly told tales.

In her seminal study of early Christian women, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza characterizes the church organization of the letters to Timothy and Titus as “stratified according to ‘natural’ age and gender divisions,” replacing what she understands as the former egalitarian qualifications for leadership based on “giftedness” (1983:288-89). Instead of considering the women in Tit 2:3 as “older women,” Fiorenza prefers the notion of “women presbyters” whose previously extensive duties become restricted to teaching women only (1983:290). She also relates the reference to the widows who should be at least sixty (1 Tim 5:9) to Roman laws rather than age per se, stating that the law specifies a woman can remain unmarried past “fifty or sixty of years of age” (1983:311).

Fiorenza adapts the “degeneration” theory of the development of the early church, as exemplified by Hans von Campenhausen (1969; and others), to women. That is, in her view, women were considered equal in the beginning of the Jesus movement, but when the movement degenerated into social hierarchy, it oppressed women. This theory reflects more about Fiorenza’s modern feminist notions of religion than it does about early Christian history. Her choice to translate the older women in Tit 2 as “women presbyters” is based on insubstantial evidence and wishful thinking. This choice does not take into account the stark differences between men’s and women’s life courses and responsibilities in older age, but is based on modern values (or wishes) of women in traditionally male positions. Finally, Fiorenza erroneously suggests that fifty or sixty was the legal age at which a woman no longer was required to marry. The Augustan marriage laws specify that women past age fifty and men past

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HB counterpart, Sarah (Gen 17:17, 18:11, 21:7). The personified church appears to Hermas in three visions as an old woman who grows progressively younger (Shepherd of Hermas, Visions 2 [I.2], 18-21 [III.10-13]).
age sixty are no longer bound by law to remarry. Thus her statement does not adequately explain why women in 1 Tim 5:9 should be at least sixty. In sum, Fiorenza’s work reflects more about her modern feminist agenda than about culturally accurate views of old women in the early Christian context.

Bonnie Thurston traces the “order of widows” as an ecclesiastical office from the late first century (based on the “enrolled” widows of 1 Tim 5:9) to the third century (when the “order” was well established). According to Thurston, the main requirement for enrollment was need, not age (1989:41), yet she equates the order of widows with old women. Thurston explains that being at least sixty years old meant that the “enrolled” widows were old by ancient standards, mature, less prone to sexual peril, and perhaps less mobile (but admits that their active service contradicts this last possibility; 1989:47). Their special duties included teaching younger women about proper household roles (Tit 2). Wealthy widows who functioned as patrons would not have been “enrolled” as they had no financial need (1989:53). Limiting the number of enrolled widows in part helped to reduce the phenomenon of old women “telling tales” (i.e., spreading false teaching, 1 Tim 4:7; 1989:54). She also discusses the importance of women acting properly for the sake of the community at large, and suggests that, in this sense, the prescriptions for enrolled widows in 1 Timothy were limiting an existing institution rather than creating a new one (1989:54).

Thurston’s view has several weaknesses. First, she reflects the common assumption that the old 60+ widows in 1 Tim 5:9 are the “real widows” (5:3, 5, 16) who are in need. I discuss the problems with this assumption in Chapter 10 (§4.2). Second, I am unconvinced that the eventual “order of widows” was already established by the time of 1 Timothy. Thurston

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26 “But one group of women is still largely ignored: old women. If women were marginal in church history, widows were invisible!” (1989:7). Thurston mentions two other groups of widows: those who are not enrolled and the younger widows. These women receive comparatively little attention in her study.
parallels the special ministry of the “order of widows” with male leaders in 1 Timothy and Titus, namely overseers. The parallel is not sound because eligible widows (those not cared for by family members, 5:5) would qualify not by character (the basis for choosing a suitable overseer, 3:1-7), but by circumstance (namely, poverty). Other leadership roles in these letters are based on qualities of character (1 Tim 3). Thurston does note that a qualifying widow must be “dependent on God and not persons” because she is alone, and she is therefore faithful and chaste (1989:46). These are qualities of character, but still qualities arising out of circumstances. One could argue that the qualities of an overseer also arise out of circumstances, since he must be a house owner with a wife and children (cf. Campbell 1994), but most of his qualities are related to character. In addition, the overseer and widow are described in separate sections of the letter (3:1-7 and 5:3-16, respectively), suggesting that the author did not consider them parallel positions.

Thurston does offer some worthwhile insights about old women. According to ancient non-Christian sources, old widows might enjoy freedom of movement, management of their own households, support from their children, and/or possibilities to make some income (e.g., mourner, midwife, weaving myrtle wreaths; 1989:11). However, Thurston’s main focus is on the development of the “order” of widows, not old women per se.

As a context for the exhortation of children to care for their parents in 1 Tim 5:4 and 5:8, Bruce W. Winter outlines an adult son’s obligations to his widowed mother according to ancient dowry laws. He assumes that the financial aid for all widows described in Acts 6:1 is the model being modified in 1 Tim 5. Winter argues that the “real” widow, without family to support her, and who has been a “benefactor” (in her “good works”), qualifies for care, or benefactions, from

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27 Thurston erroneously mentions support for widows from the state, which is rare before Christian ideals of such support merge with the state centuries later.
the church in her old age (1993:73). Winter assumes his chapter is about old widows (see 2003:12), but discusses little about their age.\footnote{One exception is his guess that the author includes the age sixty because up to this age she was considered able to work (1993:72), but this is a weak suggestion. Thurston, for example, finds evidence that old women worked for financial survival (1989:11).}

Margaret Y. MacDonald highlights the old widows in Lucian of Samosata’s *The Passing of Peregrinus* (1996:74-82), but with more attention to their gender and widowhood than their age. MacDonald follows Thurston in assuming that widows of 1 Tim 5:9 form an “order of widows.” She also briefly mentions that older widows and older married women may have had similar duties with regard to modeling behaviour for and teaching younger women (1996:228). Carolyn Osiek along with MacDonald push this idea forward stating that young girls and women in Christian communities were educated and influenced primarily by both married and widowed older women, “women of the previous generation” (2006:90-92). Osiek and MacDonald also allude to older women as potentially respectable matrons (running a household), and/or patrons (2006: 155, 201, 208, 248), though often the maturity (relative age) of such women is only implicit in their study.

In her study of the function and rhetoric of gossip in the letters to Timothy and Titus, Marianne Bjelland Kartzow points out the importance of age as a social category (2009:22), especially among women. She suggests that the letters reflect the ideal of older women teaching family values to younger women, and disapprove of older women who influence poor behaviour (gossip, idleness) in younger women. Younger women are vulnerable to such influences (2009:149). Kartzow acknowledges the importance of age in the letters to Timothy and Titus, but does not engage age as a social category to a great extent.

Doubtless, there are other studies that mention old women, but none to my knowledge that deal extensively with ideas about their age.
3.3. Intergenerational relationships and age hierarchy in early Christian communities

Within early Christian studies of the family, there are two main topics that deal with intergenerational relationships and age hierarchy. First, scholars debate whether Jesus’ radical words about rejecting family were literal or metaphorical. Second, some scholars assume that earliest Christianity rejected traditional Roman family structure, but shifted toward this structure as the communities developed; others posit that hierarchical relationships were always the norm in early Christianity.

3.3.1. Jesus’ teachings on family

A controversial topic within early Christian social structure is the nature of relationships between adult children and their parents. The core of the debate is whether or not biological family members (especially parents) were valued by Jesus, and subsequently in the earliest Christian communities. Early tradition has Jesus speaking about dividing households rather than bringing peace (Q 12:51-53, based on Micah 7:6), and that if anyone does not “hate” his family (parent, spouse or child; Luke 14:25-27) or loves them more than he loves Jesus (Matt 10:37-39), Jesus does not consider them his disciples. In another pericope, Jesus dismisses the remark that his mother and brothers want to speak with him, then identifies those around him who hear and do the will (or word) of God as his mother and brother and sisters (Mark 3:31-35; Matt 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21). These are radical statements in a set of cultures in which one was expected to honour one’s parents. Respect for the elderly, especially for parents, was a cultural norm. This raises the question about whether Jesus challenged this cultural norm. Furthermore, since Paul is silent about such matters, one wonders whether he and his communities disregarded respect for parents.
Recent social analyses of early Christian families address the tension between filial
duty and Jesus’ exhortation to reject one’s biological family. Halvor Moxnes accounts for the
differences by suggesting that the Gospels in their Palestinian setting were counter-cultural in
social structure, while Paul and post-Pauline authors addressed concerns within family structure
in urban Hellenistic settings (1997:37). Barclay posits that Christianity challenged assumptions
of the family on one side (persisting later in asceticism), while making the household the main
avenue for gathering and growing urban churches (and later socializing children; 1997:72). On
the other hand, Stephen O. Barton understands the “anti-family” material to be “primarily a
rhetorically powerful metaphorical way of calling for displacement of every obstacle to true
discipleship of Jesus in the light of the imminent coming of the kingdom of God” (1997:81). In
this scenario, children would still be socially obligated to care for aging parents, unless this
somehow usurped their religious commitments (cf. Sapp 1987).

Carter addresses ideas about “Adult Children and Elderly Parents” (2001) by exploring
the social context of aged people. Philo, a first century Hellenistic Jew, interprets the
commandment to obey one’s parents as honouring parents by both obeying them and caring for
them in old age. According to Philo, parents are “God-like” in their authority over children;
such authority includes instruction and benefaction. Aristotle held similar ideas based on the
household: a parent (especially father) -child relationship was similar to that of a god and his
worshippers in that it was a hierarchical relationship to someone “good, and superior to
oneself.” Both Aristotle and Philo commanded that people respect the elderly of their parents’

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29 Sometimes exemplified by the fifth Hebrew commandment, to obey one’s parents (Ex 20:12.; Lev 19:3; Prov
19:26, 28:24). Filial duty, however, appears to be a pan-Mediterranean expectation in the ancient world.

30 Philo states: “parents are midway between the natures of God and man, and partake of both; the human obviously
because they have been born and will perish, the divine because they have brought others to the birth and have
raised not-being into being. Parents, in my opinion, are to their children what God is to the world…” (Special Laws
2.225).

31 “The affection of children for their parents, like that of men for the gods, is the affection for what is good, and
superior to oneself; their parents have bestowed on them the greatest benefits in being the cause of their existence
generation. Hierocles (2nd century CE) recorded the obligation of children to care for aging parents on a daily basis as a way of reciprocating the care they received when they were young. This means caring for physical needs as well as the “soul” (i.e., being cheerful and exhorting but not rebuking them; Hierocles *On Duties* 4.25.53). Carter notes that the NT offers two messages with regard to aging parents: rejection and acceptance of hierarchical structure. Carter’s pastoral (and rather weak) conclusion is that these conflicting messages give contemporary Christians options as well as create tensions.

Peter Balla is interested in the adult child’s perspective of the child-parent relationship in various NT texts (2003). His sketch of the ancient context of this relationship necessarily discusses parents as the older generation, thus overlapping notions of parenthood with seniority and the old in general. His discussion begins with Greek and Roman ideal expectations of how to treat parents and the older generation, that is with honour, reverence, gratitude and obedience. The basis of honouring one’s parents was the gods’ ordering of society; parents were superior to children due to their age. Children were expected to obey their parents, and provide for them in old age and death (with a suitable funeral), as well as venerate them after death. The reasons for this behaviour include fear of the gods, repaying parents for their efforts at raising their children, legal ramifications for neglect (in Greek society), the anticipation of inheritance and the idea that it was “natural.” He also notes limitations to one’s duty to parents, based on parental neglect or insanity. Some schools of thought seemed to place philosophy above parental duty. However, Balla follows Barton’s suggestion that such sentiments may be more rhetorical than practical, citing the Stoic Epictetus who places philosophy above respect for parents (*Discourses* 3.3.5-6)

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32 “We should pay to all our seniors the honour due to their age (τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ τιμῆ τῆς καθ’ ἥλικίας), by rising when they enter, offering them a seat, and so on” (*Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics* 9.2.9). For Philo, “parents are… seniors and instructors and benefactors and rulers and masters” (*Special Laws* 2.237).

and rearing, and later of their education” (*Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12.5). “Honour (τιμή) also is due to parents, as it is to the gods” (9.2.8).
yet lists the care of parents as a fundamental duty (3.7.25-28; 2003:61). Balla also finds that Judean notions of duty to parents are strikingly similar to those of Greco-Roman notions. Roughly following Gerd Theissen’s depiction of early Christianity as comprising charismatic itinerants and settled communities (1982), Balla concludes that Jesus’ radical sayings about leaving parents (associated with charismatic itinerants) served to order their priorities toward God (especially in an apocalyptic setting), but did not necessarily negate people’s real commitment to the societal norm of an expectation of duty to their parents. His analysis of Pauline letters (undisputed and disputed) suggests that children’s duty to parents followed societal norms for behaviour as well as reasons for this behaviour (e.g., God’s order, moral obligation). Paul’s silence on the issue of “leaving parents” helps Balla to confirm that Jesus’ words were not literally acted upon in these communities. Moreover, in these and other NT texts, parent-child language is often used in a metaphorical sense, especially in exhortations for loving one another based on God as father, and fellow Christians as children of God and siblings.  

In sum, Balla denies that Jesus’ radical counter-cultural statement about the parent-child relationship actually changed the societal norm of children’s duty toward their parents, providing solid ancient evidence for this conclusion. He says relatively little about old age in the early Christian communities, apart from the parallels to societal norms regarding aging parents (e.g., 1 Tim 5:4, 8).  

His survey of disputed and undisputed Pauline letters focuses on the literal and metaphorical use of parent-child familial language, but does not provide a thorough analysis

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33 Reidar Aasgaard’s more nuanced assessment of parent-child language in Paul’s undisputed letters more accurately reflects the cultural realities of ancient Mediterranean family dynamics (2004:285-95). He understands the Pauline metaphor of parent-child as a strategy for Paul to assert authority within the realm of parental-type affection and love for the communities he founded.

34 His analysis of the letters to Timothy and Titus melds the three letters together. He highlights the parallels of children’s duties to their parents with those of society at large (1 Tim 5:4, 8), parental duty to raise faithful children and keep them obedient (1 Tim 3:4-5, 12; Tit 1:6), and parents as teachers of their children, both literally, as with Timothy’s mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5), and metaphorically, as with Timothy’s “spiritual” father, Paul (2 Tim 1:2). Combining the three letters is common in scholarship, but methodologically suspect (see §4).
of age-related material in these texts. He also makes no distinction between private and public intergenerational behaviour (see Chapter 5).

Whether or not early Christian communities took literally Jesus’ sayings on rejecting family is debatable. The studies on child-parent relationships summarized above, both literal and metaphorical, engage the realities of intergenerational obligation and conflict in the ancient world. While Carter is indecisive about the evidence, the conclusions of Moxnes and Barclay suggest that how one acted toward one’s parents in early Christian communities changed over time, whereas Barton and Balla suggest that grown adult-child relationships reflected a continuity of the cultural norm of filial duty.

3.3.2. Age-related behaviour: change or continuity?

Other scholars have commented on whether or not age-related behaviour changed over the course of the first several decades of the Christian movement. For example, Harris assumes that traditional ideas around respect for and leadership positions given to elders resumed when the church settled into a more family-centered phase after Paul’s time (1987:84-85). He observes a continuity of respect for the elderly (as reflected in the gospel presentations of Jesus’ condemnation of neglecting parents in the form of Corban), but also a lack of respect reflective of the millenarian aspect of the Jesus movement. He then posits a “restoration” of respect for old people in later texts (including the Pauline letters, even though they have virtually no allusions to old age).

James T. Burtchaell considers “elders” the steady force behind the communities’ many changes. He argues that the term πρεσβύτερος underwent several significant shifts in the early church. Among Greek-speaking Judeans using the term, wealth and status replaced the idea of age. The earliest Christians borrowed this use of the term for leaders of satellite communities. Later, second-century Christians “restored” the meaning of age, referring to those who were
“old” and provided a “living link” to the apostolic generation (e.g., Papias, Irenaeus). For Burtchaell, this illustrates that functions may change, but the title remains the same (1992:276).

In his study of the letters to Timothy and Titus, David C. Verner correlates the development of the church with an increased interest in age structure. For example, in his study on the social background of the household in the letters to Timothy and Titus, he traces a progression of the *Haustafeln* (household codes) from Colossians and Ephesians with references to biological and matrimonial family relations, to references in the letters to Timothy and Titus about non-kin relationships in the Christian community that are based on intergenerational relationships. Thus in Titus 2, “household relationships have been replaced by relationships in the Christian community” (1983:171) such that older men, younger men, older women and younger women are addressed rather than the *Haustafeln* pairings of husband-wife and parent-child in Ephesians and Colossians.

Reidar Aasgaard argues that after Paul’s time “the new family of Christians has superseded the old family” in the “christianized household of the Pastorals” (2004:312). The post-Pauline letters represent a time when Christian communities returned to traditional family structures, especially hierarchical elements based on age (as well as class and gender), as in 1 Tim 5:1-2. Thus the sibling metaphor of Paul is “toned down” after Paul (2005:302-3), and the forms of authority and power in the church (for Paul certainly had authority of a kind) shifted to reflect social norms found in the household.35

Barclay highlights a number of post-Pauline texts related to age alongside the paucity of age related topics in Paul, and concludes that age was not relevant to Paul (2007). He assumes

35 While Aasgaard emphasizes the transformation of community in Paul’s day, the next phase after Paul, may have represented an even more profound social transformation. They presumably had “new” converts continuing to join the movement, the children who grew up in Christian families at this point were the first age cohort to be socialized within the community.
that the age categories so important in society were disregarded by Paul, then remerged as the
cchurch developed out of its charismatic phase.

There are several possible explanations for age becoming more visible in the latter phase
of the early Christian community: it was a *resurgence* of age categories, as Barclay asserts; it
was *restoration* of the original meaning, as Burtchaell and Harris argue; or it was a *shift in
emphasis* in the continuing social relationships in early Christian communities. The answer
depends in part on whether the nascent Christian movement was “egalitarian” and then became
hierarchical like the society around it. This is a matter of debate. Fiorenza, for instance, posits
that as the community’s apocalyptic fervour waned, some kinds of social structure and
interaction were “restored” to reflect the cultural values around them (1983). Similarly, in a
discussion on the decline of sibling language in Pauline communities, David G. Horrell ascribes
the change to a shift from egalitarian to hierarchical relationships (2001). With regard to
Burtachell’s argument of social change, it is difficult to imagine how the term πρεσβύτερος
could change so radically within such a short period of time (fifty years or so), especially if its
original meaning appears to be “restored.” It is worth considering that the original meaning of
“old man” actually remained continuous during these phases of social change, whether or not
other connotations or functions might have nuanced the use of the term in various contexts.

On the other hand, Campbell argues that the senior men of the households who assumed
leadership from the beginning were collectively known as elders (1994). This agrees with Gerd
Theissen’s foundational work on love-patriarchalism, where mutual love and respect ruled
relationships in the Pauline letters, but those who were “strong” (that is, those with higher social
class and status) continued to have precedence over the “weak.” This is reflective of ancient
social norms, and assumes a “willing acceptance of given inequalities” (based on Troeltch in
Theissen 1982:14). Theissen argues that the new religious movement of Christianity existed and
functioned within an existing cultural setting, including this sort of hierarchy (1982:8). The difference is that they promoted “love” as a mediating factor—which of course assumes there was friction between the “strong” and the “weak.” In other words, in agreement with Balla, Campbell suggests that while there may have been some shifts in how hierarchy functioned in the community, hierarchy was always a reality. Aasgaard convincingly argues that in the honour-based culture of the ancient Mediterranean, the concept of “egalitarianism” was virtually non-existent.36

A continuity of social hierarchy seems to fit the ancient evidence more consistently when we consider age. Age nearly always had hierarchical connotations, whether in the family or the public realm, and the hierarchy functioned along gender lines (see especially Chapter 4). In general, older age was associated with greater status (combined with considerations of gender and social class). Thus, because of the cultural value of deference to age, many older men and women in the Christian community likely had some kind of social precedence from the beginning of the movement. In other words, while age hierarchies seem to have become more visible in the late first century, they could hardly have been irrelevant in the earlier phase of the movement.

3.4. Demographic realities

The demography of the ancient world is a crucial, though often somewhat elusive, element of understanding age and aging. This is particularly true since it was so different from our own. Demographics are rarely mentioned by early Christian scholars. I offer several

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36 He argues that sibling language was hierarchical, not “egalitarian” (2004). John S. Kloppenborg suggests that rather than compare modern “egalitarianism” to the situation of Pauline communities, we should examine ancient analogies, such as voluntary associations. He posits that Pauline communities, similar to some associations, were “egalitarian” in that they accepted a variety of people into the group (i.e., men and women; slaves and free; people of different social status). However, this variety did not negate the social differences between members. Hierarchy continued to be a reality, but tension was mediated, perhaps most strongly by sibling language (1996b:252, 258-59). Aasgaard argues that even this language did not promote egalitarianism, but concord (2004).
examples of “guesses” about age that could benefit from considering demographic context of the ancient world.

First, on the basis of the seven stages of life outlined in Philo (On the Creation 103-5), Lev 27:2-7 (where an old man’s monetary value drops after age 60), and a rabbinical list of ages (m. Aboth 5.21), Jerome Murphy-O’Connor equates Paul’s self-identifying term in Phlm 9 πρεσβύτης with the age of 60, so that in his opinion, Paul was born around ca. 6 CE (1996:1-4, 8). Such evidence only takes into account elite, male, largely contrived categories of age (Philo and the rabbinical list), and the economic value of Hebrew slaves of a different cultural setting (Leviticus). These are literary ideals of age. They are not reliable as evidence of exact age categories and can hardly be used to date specific events, such as Paul’s date of birth.

A second example of “age guessing” comes from 1 Clem. 63:3: those “who have lived blamelessly among us from youth to old age (ἀπὸ νεότητος ἀνασταραφέντας ἕως γήρους ἀμέμπτως ἐν ἡμίν),” bore this letter from Rome to the Corinthians. Ehrman notes that the phrase “from youth to old age” “must make [the letter-bearers] older than their mid-40s” (2003:1.25). He gives no substantiation for asserting this particular age, but evidently it is based on a mistaken belief that average age at death is equivalent to “old age.”

Finally, in the introduction to a collection of essays on using social sciences in early Christian studies, Richard L. Rohrbaugh employs age structure in an attempt to contrast ancient culture with our own. His portrayal of ancient life, full of disease, threatening malnutrition,

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37 Within his longer treatise of why seven (the number of days of creation according to the Hebrew myth) is important in nature, mathematics and astronomy (On the Creation 89-128), Philo outlines ten stages of human growth of seven year intervals (103). As confirmation of these stages, he cites Solon “the lawgiver of the Athenians” (104). Philo then lists seven ages (little boy, boy, lad, young man, man, elderly man, old man; παιδός, μειρακίου, νεανίσκου, ἀνδρός, πρεσβύτου, γέροντος) from Hippocrates “the physician” (105).

38 See Chapter 4, §4.1.1.

39 He cites demographic figures from T.F. Carney, which are now considered out of date. Carney suggests less than 3 percent of the population would be age 60 or over (1975:88).
parasites, dental problems and visual impairment, is likely to be quite fair. However, his interpretation of life expectancy at birth is misleading. He states:

A poor person born in the city of Rome in the year one had a life expectancy [at birth] of only twenty years... At 32 or 33 years of age, if indeed he lived that long, Jesus would have been older than perhaps 80 percent of his hearers, who would have been ridden with disease, malnourished, and looking at a decade or less of life expectancy. Since few poor people lived out their thirties, we may also have to revise our picture of Jesus. He was hardly one who died in the prime of life. (1996:5)

While this may be true statistically, it does not mean that a person expected to die at twenty or thirty. Indeed, having survived his childhood, Jesus actually did die in the prime of life if he died in his early thirties, for he could have expected to live another twenty-five years or more.  

On the basis of inscriptions, census material and osteological data, demographers of the ancient Roman world have established that average life expectancy at birth was 20-30 years.  

However, this figure is somewhat misleading because the extremely high infant and early childhood mortality rate skews the average. Rohrbaugh’s attempt to consider age in its own

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40 If life expectancy at birth was 25 years, a 30 year old might, on average, expect to live another 26.2 years (that is, until the age of 56.2) and 35 year old might expect to live another 23.7 years (that is, until the age of 58.7) according to the Coale-Demney Level 3 West Female model life table (see Appendix 1 and Chapter 3). There is, of course, no way to know Jesus’ exact age at death. The figure of 30 is derived from the reference in Luke 3:23 following Jesus’ baptism: “Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work.” Since Luke was particularly (and peculiarly!) interested in chronological ages, we should probably be suspicious of this age reference. The only other early reference to Jesus’ age is John 8:57 where the Judeans question Jesus, saying, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” This second reference may tell us more about age assumptions: if Jesus was under 50, perhaps he commanded less respect from his fellow Judeans. This may have affected early Christian views of age and age structure. In his late second century treatise Against Heresies Irenaeus reflects sentiments about age that agree with the model life table life expectancy mentioned above, suggesting Jesus was closer to fifty when his ministry ended. Irenaeus states that Jesus was thirty when he was baptized, thus “possessing the full age of a master” (2.22.4). He goes on to say that Jesus passed through all of the ages (infant, child, youth and old age) in order to sanctify people of all ages. “So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise” (2.22.4). Irenaeus refutes his opponents, who believe that Jesus died at the age of thirty, stating they “[rob Jesus] of that age which is both more necessary and more honourable than any other; that more advanced age, I mean, during which also as a teacher He excelled all others” (2.22.5). By advanced age, Irenaeus means fifty years old: “Now, that the first stage of early life embraces thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify” (2.22.5), suggesting if Jesus was thirty, the Judeans in John 8:57 would have said “not yet forty” rather than “not yet fifty” (2.22.6). Mark J. Edwards suggests that the Johannine reference to Jesus being “not yet fifty” relates to the period of time between Jubilees (an interval of 50 years; 1994), but this view has been refuted by George Wesley Buchanan (1995).

cultural context is laudable, but fails to represent an accurate expectation of aging. His comments overlook the presence and activity of older people within the age structure of the ancient world.\textsuperscript{42}

\textbf{3.5. Social views of old age and aging in early Christianity}

Several brief studies focus on social aspects of old age and aging in early Christianity with varying levels of breadth and success.

\textbf{3.5.1. Paul as an old man}

Ronald F. Hock (1995) argues that in Phlm 9, the word \textit{πρεσβύτης}, translated “old man,” is a better rhetorical and social choice than the variant \textit{πρεσβευτής}, translated “ambassador.”\textsuperscript{43} He reviews Roman literature, especially romantic comedy, to find analogies for social cues and norms related to old age. He finds that older people are typically portrayed as miserable and in need of support, especially the support of children. Hock argues that Paul portrays himself an aged parent who needs his (adopted) child, Onesimus (Philemon’s slave), to care for him. Paul uses this relationship as leverage with Philemon to strengthen his plea for Onesimus’ release.

Murphy-O’Connor agrees with this picture of Paul as an old man at the end of his life, stating that a reference to his age in Phlm 9 fits well with the letter’s argument (1996:1). Murphy-O’Connor argues that Paul “presents himself as a pathetic figure” (1996:4).\textsuperscript{44}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{42} See Parkin 2003 and Cokayne 2003 for full studies of old age in the ancient Roman world. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of demography of the ancient world.

\textsuperscript{43} The critical apparatus of recent versions of the Nestle-Aland \textit{Novum Testamentum Graece} (1979:561) includes R. Bentley’s conjecture that changes the word \textit{πρεσβύτης} to \textit{πρεσβευτής}, apparently to conform to John Calvin’s interpretation of Phlm 9 (see discussion in Hock 1998:69-70). However, as Hock details, J.B. Lightfoot’s argument for the translation of \textit{πρεσβύτης} as “ambassador” did not rely on altering the word, but on parallel uses in 1 Macc, 2 Chro, Ign \textit{Smyr.} 11, as well as similar terminology in Eph 6:20, \textit{πρεσβευτώς ἐν ἀλώσει} (“ambassador in chains”; 1998:1970). While “many scholars” have followed Lightfoot’s lead (1998:70, n.12), Hock notes a significant number who do not (listed at 1998:72, n.21, to which I would add Stagg 1981:163 and Murphy-O’Connor 1996:1).

\textsuperscript{44} Despite his note that he will continue this thought later in the book (apparently chapter 7), I cannot locate where he clearly demonstrates why such strong language (i.e., “pathetic figure”) accurately represents Paul’s goals in Philemon.
Furthermore, he correlates 2 Tim 4:6-8 (a letter which he considers to be genuinely Pauline) with Paul’s death, not by martyrdom, but of old age.

It is not the anxious finality experienced by a prisoner on death row, but the complacent recognition of a life well spent. Paul, who was close to 70, realized that his best years were behind him. In terms of the normal life span he was living on borrowed time, particularly for one who for so many years had born in his body the dying of Jesus (2 Cor 4:10). (1996:368)

Malherbe argues that the author of the PE depicts Paul as an old man (1994). With numerous references to Greek and Roman literature, he notes that these letters present a conservative view of old age but with a focus on God’s grace. These letters emphasize the importance of family structure, with particular attention to different generations. They reflect a tradition of elders exhorting youth by portraying Paul as an old man exhorting a younger generation.

Hock, Murphy-O’Connor and Malherbe all address old age as a social phenomenon, taking seriously the cultural context and reality of age. Hock focuses on negative aspects of old age that are found in the ancient literature. Whereas Stagg and Sapp (and to a lesser extent, Harris) read contemporary ageism into their interpretations of early Christian texts, Hock (and Murphy-O’Connor) might reflect a more subtle sense of modern ageism in his preference for ancient literature that portrays old age in a negative light. Negative portrayals of old age are certainly plentiful, especially in comedy and satire (Cokayne 2003:54), but comedic characters “often behaved in exactly the opposite way to that expected from the ‘perfect’ Roman citizen,” (2003:119). Hock’s choice of ancient sources does not address some important realities of age hierarchy, namely the authority of older men. On the other hand, Malherbe cites a range of sources that demonstrate the typical age hierarchy with older men wielding authority over the younger. Perhaps in Phlm 9 Paul meant to utilize the power of older age to influence a younger person due to his precedence.
In sum, all three studies affirm that Paul in Philemon and portraits of Paul in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy utilized his identity as an old man for rhetorical goals based on first century cultural context. Having taken into account the ancient literature that is more typical of ancient Mediterranean culture, Malherbe is most successful at doing this.

3.5.2. Young and old in Pauline communities

In an insightful study on age in early Christian communities, Barclay notes the lack of attention that scholars have paid to “age” and its social significance in early Christian texts (2007:225). His goal is to understand why Paul does not use these categories, but most of the article illuminates important aspects of aging in the ancient world. In the NT the term πρεσβύτεροι (and related terms) consistently implies a comparison with νεώτεροι, meaning young(er) people (2007:226, n.3). Since age categories are culturally conditioned social constructs, Barclay offers sufficient examples to demonstrate that the ancient Roman binary conception of old and young was employed with flexibility and depended on context. Thus, one cannot uncritically apply the set age categories outlined by some ancient authors (e.g., Hippocrates45) to texts that use the general terms “old” and “young” (2007:230, n.21). Ancient authors, such as Plutarch and Cicero, use the binary age categories of old and young to espouse the benefits and power of old age—a topic that must have been under some debate.46 A brief survey of NT texts within the Pauline tradition (1 Pet 5, 1 Clement, 1 Timothy, Titus and Polycarp Phil) reveals the same young-old dichotomy, and the cultural expectation of the young to defer to the old, similar to the pattern found between parents and children in the household. Young people are portrayed as governed by their passions, whereas older people have wisdom and self-control, and are thus leaders in the communities. Two exceptions that “prove the rule”

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45 From Philo On the Creation 105 (see note 37).
46 For example, Plutarch states, “youth (νεώτης) is meant to obey and old age (γήρος) to rule” (Moralia 798E). Cicero contrasts the wisdom of old age with the immaturity and often unbridled passion of youth (On Old Age 17-26, 39-50). See Barclay 2007:232-35 for further examples.
indicate that young leaders were uncommon. Both Timothy (1 Tim 4:12) and Demas, the young bishop in Ignatius’ letter to the Magnesians (3.1), needed extra recommendations to be approved in a milieu where age usually conferred leadership authority. Barclay distinguishes between our somewhat negative cultural idea of “old” (i.e., beyond normal retirement age) with the ancient comparative category where “old” conveyed seniority and depended on context. Barclay posits that Paul himself rejected age categories in his apocalyptic vision of Christian community, but that as time went on, these categories inevitably reasserted themselves as people grew older and the parousia did not occur. While I am not convinced that Pauline communities had such little conscious age distinction, Barclay’s insight about the young-old dichotomy in ancient Greco-Roman thought is important, and worth pursuing further.

Finally, Malherbe argues for a connection between Greco-Roman moral tradition and 1 Timothy by focusing on old age and 1 Tim 5:17-19. He describes the background of this text with attitudes toward old age and intergenerational conflict, specifically highlighting honour and financial support for elderly men and women. First, the instruction to exhort an old man, not to “strike out” at him, reflects similar negative attitudes about old age addressed in various ancient sources, and the social value of intergenerational respect. Malherbe equates παρόκλησις (5:1) with gentle instruction which is elaborated for various groups of people in 5:1-6:2, namely:

47 In Cicero’s treatise On Old Age, he addresses common negative characteristics of old age (e.g., inactivity, memory loss, physical weakness, lack of enjoyment, fixation on death), arguing that old age overcomes the vices and inexperience of youth. Juvenal is particularly cruel in his depiction of old age. He begins with their appearance: “old men all look like. Their voices are as shaky as their limbs, their heads without hair, their noses drivelling [sic] as in childhood. Their bread, poor wretches, has to be munched by toothless gums…” (Satire 10.198-200). Even their family finds them disgusting; they have no pleasures; they cannot hear; they are more susceptible to disease, illness and various aches and pains; they lose their memory, becoming vulnerable to swindlers; and they experience great sorrow as their younger loved ones die before they do (Satire 10.188-245). Juvenal’s mention of tooth loss may indicate a major indirect cause of death in the ancient world (Maria Liston, personal communication). With no way to compensate for tooth loss with artificial teeth, poor diet and malnutrition may have hastened death (cf. Gilbert et al. 2004). A recent study indicates that tooth loss can be correlated with declining cognitive levels (Kaye et al. 2010), which may have applied to the ancient world as well.

48 In a second century ethical treatise, Hierocles instructs adult children not to rebuke their parents (the same word for rebuke is used in 1 Tim 5:1, ἐπιπαληγεῖν), but to exhort them (also the same word as in 1 Tim 5:1, παρόκλησις) as if they had made an oversight rather than an error in judgment. Such sensitivity demonstrates respect and care for old people’s fragility (On Duties, 4.25.53; see Malherbe 1986:91 for full text in translation).
old (“real”) widows, young widows, old men who perform special functions, Timothy and slaves. Second, adult children were commonly expected to honour their parents. It was a demonstration of piety toward the gods (cf. 1 Tim 5:4). In this sense, old widows were to be honoured with material care. After establishing that this section of 1 Timothy reflects contemporary discussion about old age and intergenerational relationships, Malherbe argues that the πρεσβύτεροι in 1 Tim 5:17 refers to old men (rather than official leadership) who exercise care (προίσταναι) in the community by preaching and teaching. It was a common moral expectation in Greco-Roman society to honour old men. In order to strengthen his moral injunction to honour old men, the author cites two proverbial sayings in 1 Tim 5:18: do not muzzle the working ox (Deut 25:4) and a worker is worthy of pay (both cited in 1 Cor 9:9).

Verse 19 shifts to proper procedure in dealing with accusations against old men, namely with two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6, 19:15). In a final note on 5:20, Malherbe notes the discrepancy between not rebuking old men in 5:1, and the usual interpretation of sinning elders being rebuked in 5:20. He suggests that in this cultural context, the sinners cannot be old men.

Malherbe’s understanding of old men and women as an age designation in 1 Tim 5 is not entirely unique, but has not been a popular idea. However, his study illuminates important social background related to age and intergenerational relationships and provides culturally sensitive analysis to the age issues in 1 Tim 5.

Several details of Malherbe’s analysis could be extended. First, while he makes distinctions between old men and old women in 1 Tim 5, Malherbe does not adequately emphasize gender differences. The treatment of old widows and the treatment of elder men entails two very different activities, at least in part because old women and old men comprised

49 Plutarch, for example, equates piety with honouring parents with “goodwill and zeal,” and neglect or mistreatment of parents as most impious behaviour (On Brotherly Love 479F).

50 For example, Joachim Jeremias states that the word πρεσβύτερος here “nicht Amts-, sondern Altersbezeichnung ist [is not a designation of office but a designation of age]” (1949:32).
two very different social categories. Second, Malherbe assumes that old widows received support from the church based on their old age, but also their service to the church. The text is not clear that the “real” widows (5:3, 5, 16) are necessarily the “old” 60+ widows (5:9), and therefore that financial support is directly related to their service (5:9-10). Whereas “honour” for the old men is related to their service (5:17), “honour” for “real widows” relates to financial assistance given by the church (5:16) that is described as filial piety (see Chapter 9). Third, Malherbe suggests that “believing women” are daughters who were exhorted to care for their mothers and grandmothers (2008:278). Noting the paucity of evidence we have about real women’s lives, he does not entertain whether daughters had the freedom or means to care for their mothers and grandmothers, nor if other scenarios are more plausible. For instance, in some modern Mediterranean cultures, daughters-in-law are obligated to care for mothers-in-law because of patrilocal marriage arrangements (e.g., Fernea 1965, Danforth 1982). Since we have no clear indication of age, the believing woman might in fact be an older woman exhorted to care for younger widows (see Chapter 11). Finally, Malherbe’s suggestion that the sinners in 5:20 are not old men leaves open, but does not affirm, the possibility that they are young men.51 I make this argument in Chapter 12.

In sum, Barclay and Malherbe offer serious consideration of the ancient literary and social context of age as applied to early Christian texts. They begin to engage the cultural context of age and aging. Their work in illustrating the Roman, non-Christian context of age through ancient texts is valuable and suggestive for my study.

51 He alludes to this possibility in a footnote, citing my paper presentation at the annual SBL meeting in Washington D.C., “An Anthropological View of Old Age in Early Christian Communities” (November 20, 2006). Frances Young also makes this suggestion (1994:107; see Chapter 12, §1).
3.6. Summary

Surveys of old age in early Christianity have generally relied on positive or negative stereotypes of old age, often anachronistically utilizing ideas from modern experiences of old age (such as modern notions of “ageism”) or ideas emphasized in later Christianity where wisdom was associated with divine gifting rather than age. While stereotypes are certainly present in early Christian texts related to old age, it is methodologically preferable to compare early Christian stereotypes to ancient stereotypes of old age in the Roman and Greek cultures. Beyond stereotypes, an accurate framework of the demographic realities of the ancient world is crucial for exploring age and aging.

Scholars’ focus on “elders” and leadership has drawn attention away from issues of age structure. More work needs to be done with regard to how age and aging affects and is affected by wealth and status differences, as well as the great gender divide between women and men in that culture. While church order and leadership will not be the focus of my work, many of the relevant texts on old men have been studied in this context. One important debate is whether seniority was more important than age, especially in terms of leadership and authority in the early church. As noted, there is much potential in studying old women.

Carter, Balla and others have addressed one aspect of age hierarchy, namely intergenerational conflict and obligation, especially in adult child-parent relationships. Whether Jesus (and Paul) rejected or advocated respect for age and care for aging parents is a matter of debate. While there is debate over whether or not the earliest phases of Christianity were egalitarian (e.g., Fiorenza), scholars like Theissen, who work with the ancient social and cultural context, argue that power relationships and hierarchy were part of all phases of early Christian communities. This study will argue that cultural context includes age hierarchy, which can be detected in various forms in all cultures (Foner 1984). Verner, MacDonald and Barclay have
noted that issues of age became more prominent in later Christian texts. Some suggest that this was a new social phenomenon, resulting from diminished eschatological hopes or more “settled” and structured communities. Given the cultural context, such a radical shift “back” to the cultural norm of deference to older people is less likely than a continuity of the cultural norm.

This literature review identifies several problems with studies that have engaged the topic of age, aging and intergenerational relationships in the past. First, the cultural context of the ancient Mediterranean in the first and second centuries is not always taken seriously enough with regard to the valuation of old age, intergenerational relationships and the social significance of age categories. Second, at times the demography of the ancient world is not adequately understood or engaged. Third, studies of old age neglect or downplay gender distinctions, as well as age hierarchy, especially among women. Fourth, studies on the role of intergenerational relationships in early Christian communities have focused on the affirmation or rejection of culturally expected behaviour between generations, but have not adequately considered how public and private distinctions and social change may have affected such relationships. Fifth, the role of age in the hierarchical social structure needs to be explored more thoroughly, including rhetorical uses of age terminology (like “elder”) and whether age hierarchy was “restored” in early Christian communities over time, or whether it was always part of the social structure.

Given the importance of age in the social structure of all cultures, exploring age and aging in early Christian communities has great potential. As this literature review reveals, aspects of age have been considered in various studies, but none is a sustained work on the social and cultural aspects of age and aging.
4. Direction of Thesis

In light of the main problems I have outlined regarding previous studies related to age in early Christian studies, I have two main goals in this thesis. One is to highlight the importance of age as a social category in studying the early Christian communities, including an understanding of the demographic realities of the ancient Greco-Roman context, as well as cultural understandings and expectations of various age groups. I argue that Christian groups of the late first and early second century reflected roughly the same age structure as the population at large (Chapter 5).

The second goal is an application of the importance of age as a social category: I examine a specific early Christian text, namely 1 Timothy, with a focus on age structure. I chose this text because it reflects the observation that age categories, including discussions regarding older people, became a more visible element of late first and early second centuries Christian texts.

I agree with the majority of critical scholars that 1 Timothy is probably a pseudo-Pauline letter, though I prefer to use the term “heteronymous” instead of pseudonymous. The internal evidence indicates it originated in Asia Minor and is written to a Christian community in Ephesus (1:3), though the heteronymous nature of the letter prevents certainty.

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52 There are some notable exceptions (e.g., Spicq 1974; Knight 1992). Most interestingly, Luke Timothy Johnson finds the majority opinion untenable, and argues for Pauline authorship, not so much because he thinks Paul really did write the letters, but because he is “convinced that the position now in favor is deeply flawed and in need of re-examination” because it is “an assumed and unexamined verity” (1996:3). He does consider 1 Timothy the “most difficult of the three letters to defend as authentic” (1996:106). Schleiermacher was the first to question whether 1 Timothy was written by Paul in 1807; he did not question 2 Timothy or Titus.

53 This term is employed by Harold Remus, meaning a letter attributed to an “other” (ἐτερος) author (personal communication). This terminology replaces the potentially negative connotations in the term pseudonymous, meaning “falsely attributed” to another. Cf. Marshall’s use of the term “allonymity,” who posits that the letters were written by someone “other” (ἄλλος) than Paul shortly after Paul’s death, with no intention of deceit (1999:84).

54 Treblico (2004:206-7), in agreement with Thiessen (1995:251-53), cites a list of people who are associated with Ephesus and “the Pastorals.” Most of the names, however, are associated with 2 Timothy, not 1 Timothy, so this cannot prove that 1 Timothy was destined for Ephesus.
Scholars have tended to read the so-called “Pastoral Epistles” (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus) uncritically as one text. This is methodologically problematic. Recent work on “the letters to Timothy and Titus” (Towner 2006:88-89) recognizes this:

An intentional corpus reading of the letters is unwarranted. First, there are no internal clues to suggest that they originated from the same place or time, or that they are to be read as a single literary unit. From a general perspective, the letters read as separate messages, and where language and themes overlap, each letter nevertheless employs them to achieve unique literary objectives. (Towner 2006:28)

I will read the letters as separate texts with some similar vocabulary, style and themes, but different situations, settings and audiences. There is almost certainly a literary connection among the three letters, whether or not all three are authored by the same person (Richards 2002). Since this study focuses on 1 Timothy, however, I do not need to solve this issue here.

I agree with Campbell and Balla that age categories did not suddenly emerge as important at this point of the development of the community that received the first letter to Timothy. From the beginning, Christian communities generally replicated the ancient Mediterranean social norm of respect and social status for the elderly, with the concomitant occasional “rebellion” and malice from younger people. Some of the earliest texts reflect little of this social norm (e.g., Paul’s undisputed letters say virtually nothing about age). Therefore, some transition occurred so that age categories became more visible, particularly in Pauline

55 For example, scholars have attempted to deduce the identity of the opposing teachers by drawing one all three letters (e.g., Treblico 2004:209; see Chapter 7, §2.2). This uncritically assumes that all three letters are written about the same situation and people. Dibelius and Conzelmann assessed that “the Pastoral Epistles, taken together, are all three expressions of the one and same concept” (1972:8). For challenges to this concept see Johnson 1996:22, Murphy-O’Connor 1991, Prior 1989, Richards 2002, and LaFosse 2001. Malherbe also endorses a methodological approach to 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus that treats each letter on its own terms (personal communication). See also Towner (who seems unaware of Richards’ study) for an insightful discussion on the unity and individuality of these letters (2006:27-30; cf. Johnson 1996:7-8, 19-26).

56 William A. Richards posits three separate authors writing at different times. He hypothesizes that Titus was written first (65-80 CE) to a community that did not know Paul (2002:220); 2 Timothy was written to a divided community in need of encouragement around 80-100 CE (2002:228); and 1 Timothy was a reshaping of the first two letters, addressing new social situations (regarding women, slaves, the wealthy, etc.), written around 100-130 CE (2002:237-38). While his specific conclusions are questionable, Richards attempt to examine each letter on its own terms is laudable and worth considering further. Johnson asserts that the majority opinion of the pseudonymity of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus assumes the unity of all three letters, so that if 2 Timothy was shown to be Pauline (for example), the entire theory would collapse (1996:7-8, 22).
communities. Age categories would not have been unimportant in Paul’s day (reflecting the social norms of Greco-Roman culture), but they become more visible for two reasons.

On the one hand, age structure became more visible for apologetic reasons. The author of 1 Timothy was sensitive to outsiders’ opinions of the group, which is typical of Mediterranean honour-shame behaviour (cf. Malina 2001:27-57). Similar to the reasons for exhorting the community to pray for the government (1 Tim 2:2) or for women to behave “properly” (1 Tim 2:9-15; 5:15), exhortations toward and about older people (e.g., 1 Tim 5:1-2; cf. Tit 2:2-3) may have demonstrated the author’s desire for the community to reflect “proper” social order. Similar to David Balch’s argument for the apologetic function of the Haustafeln in 1 Peter (1981), “proper” social order (in this case, deference to elders) would demonstrate to their non-Christian neighbours that Christians were virtuous, honourable people and not socially deviant. In his study of the social setting of 1 Timothy and Titus, Verner proposes both apologetic and paranaetic functions behind exhortations in these letters. Not only was the Christian community’s reputation at stake in larger society, but “false teachers” within the community were causing social tensions within (1983). Affirming age hierarchy was an element in the author’s attempt to establish order.

A second reason why age categories became more visible is that the community was experiencing a time of profound social change and identity crisis. In the late first and early second centuries, the number of people who had been young at the beginning of the movement (e.g., in Paul’s missionary churches) and had survived into their old age was dwindling. The

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57 For example, the author prescribes an overseer to “be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil” (1 Tim 3:7, NRSV). His letter also suggests that their pagan neighbours were critical of them: “So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, and manage their own households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us” (1 Tim 5:15, NRSV; cf. 6:1). These suspicions put them on guard with the Roman authorities: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim 2:1-2, NRSV; cf. 1 Pet 2:11-12). Cf. Kartzow’s similar assessment (2009:160).

58 Peter G. Bush deems this “properly conducted order” (1990:156) in the community.
movement had old people who had grown up and grown old within the Christian community (1 Clem. 23:3, 63:3), some of whom represented a link of living memory to the founders of the movement. In the turmoil of social change, it was a time of rival teachings, and a time when young people might see their chance to vie for power.

In brief, in the late first and early second centuries, age categories and roles became more visible in early Christian texts because sensitivity to outsiders’ opinions and a crisis of identity prompted proto-orthodox writers, such as the author of 1 Timothy, to affirm age hierarchy as part of the solution to reflect honourable behaviour and combat what they considered to be heterodox teachings.

The study of early Christian texts always involves applying a framework. For this study of age and intergenerational relationships, I propose a model of the generational cycle based on Mediterranean ethnographical data and theory utilized in the anthropology of aging (see Chapter 6). The model provides a culturally sensitive way to view age and aging in early Christian communities that is more accurate than the ethnocentric studies of Stagg, Sapp, Harris and others. Also, rather than focusing on later eras of Christendom in which age played less of a role in church leadership positions (as Minois and Gnilka seem to), the model assumes that Christian communities of the late first century reflected the norms of the surrounding pagan Roman culture during the early Roman empire. In other words, the model contrasts with ethnocentric and anachronistic models of age, which reflect more about modern Western notions of age than they do about ancient Mediterranean age structure.

In Part II, I discuss ancient demography (Chapter 3) and aspects of Roman social structure (Chapter 4) in order to establish the context of age and intergenerational relationships we observe in early Christian communities and to comment on the probable demography of
early Christian groups (Chapter 5). Finally, I present a model of generational stability and social change (Chapter 6).

Part III focuses on issues of age, aging and intergenerational relationships 1 Timothy, particularly 1 Tim 5. I investigate the context of social change and age in late first and early second centuries Roman world, considering how this relates to 1 Timothy (Chapter 7). The author of 1 Timothy is focused on what he deems to be proper behaviour in the “household of God” (3:15), his designation for the Christian community, as a way to quell the suspicions of outsiders, as well as to combat the opposing teachers. This includes proper behaviour with regard to age structure (5:1-2; Chapter 8). In Chapter 9, I discuss how proper and honourable behaviour in the ancient world included caring for one’s parents, especially a widowed mother. The author suggests that some members of the community (fictive or real) were neglecting their parents (5:4, 8), which would reflect badly not only on those members, but on the community as a whole. I examine why the author used such a precise age designation for the widows in 5:9, who are “at least sixty” (Chapter 10), and apply ideas of age hierarchy among women to the problem of the younger widows in 5:11-16 to suggest solutions to some of the enigmatic challenges of this text (Chapter 11). Finally, I consider age hierarchies among men, especially appropriate public behaviour between older and younger men. This culturally sensitive reading of 1 Tim 5:17-25 suggests that the author wants to emphasize the subordination of young men, especially as it pertained to the public reputation of the community (Chapter 12).

Age formed an important part of the social fabric of the ancient Mediterranean. By considering age and aging through a cross-cultural lens, I hope to shed light on the increased visibility of age categories in the late first and early second centuries of Christian communities.
Part II: Mediterranean Age Structure

Chapter 2: Methodological considerations

1. Introduction

Ethnographical data and cultural anthropological theory contribute valuable insights for understanding social aspects of early Christian communities. In this chapter, I consider the strengths and weaknesses of this kind of study and offer comments on why anthropologists might find it of interest. I then discuss methodological issues related to modern ethnographic sources and ancient sources of information.

2. Anthropology and Early Christian Studies

2.1. Anthropological models and values in Early Christian Studies

Social-scientific criticism is the branch of historical criticism in which early Christian scholars utilize anthropological and sociological theory and models (Elliott 1996). Some scholars in this sub-discipline find particular models and values derived from modern Mediterranean anthropology especially useful for explaining cultural norms in the ancient Mediterranean. For example, the model of patron-client relationships explains a particular form of social interaction that is rather foreign to modern Western society (Elliott 1996:146). In Mediterranean cultures a person of higher status (the patron) forms an informal, reciprocal relationship with a person (or a group) of lower status (the client). Each party benefits from the other. The patron assists the client with financial aid, legal support, career advancement, lodging, protection, and other favours based on his or her influence. The client returns the patron’s favours with loyalty, praise for the patron’s generosity, and public support (such as voting for the patron in political contests), thereby strengthening the patron’s social prestige and influence. It is a voluntary relationship because it is not legally binding, but the continual cycle
of reciprocal obligations means it is typically long-term. This model enables scholars to understand social dynamics that might otherwise make little sense within a Western worldview that emphasizes egalitarianism.\(^{59}\)

Also derived from modern Mediterranean value systems, the values of honour and modesty (or honour and shame)\(^{60}\) undergird patron-client and most other social relationships in the ancient Mediterranean. Though anthropologists generally recognize that the honour-modesty-shame complex exists around the Mediterranean, the manifestations and nuances of meaning of honour vary according to culture and language (Herzfeld 1990; cf. Gilmore 1987). In general terms, honour is the social status, worth and reputation a person has in the opinion of his or her peers. Honour is maintained and gained through challenging the honour of others whose status is roughly equal to one’s own. Such challenges promote a certain amount of in-group solidarity (particularly within the family), and distrust for outsiders. Honour is also maintained through the deferential behaviour of one’s subordinates and dependents. This deferential behaviour, termed modesty or shame, entails restraint, tentativeness and prudence when interacting with or on behalf of a person of higher status. A woman’s sexual chastity is a crucial manifestation of modest behaviour, reflecting the honour of her family. But modesty is not only associated with women’s behaviour toward men; it is also the behaviour befitting anyone with lower status in terms of age or social position (such as a client toward his patron).\(^{61}\)

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\(^{60}\) Following Abu-Lughod (1993:22) I prefer the term “modesty” in place of “shame” when labelling the deferential behaviour of women to men, young people to their elders, and those of lower status or social position to their superiors.

\(^{61}\) Importantly, women are not simply passive preservers of shame, but are important cultural actors, wielding power in various, albeit sometimes “illegitimate” ways (Dubisch 1986; Abu-Lughod 1986; Osiek and MacDonald 2007).
Modest behaviour affirms and maintains the honour of the person of higher status, as well as the group to which both belong.  

Honour is based on public reputation within a specific context that is based on and perpetuated by proper behaviour, or more accurately, others’ perceptions of a person’s behaviour (Dubisch 1986:208-9). That is, honour depends on the opinions of others, and between families (especially men) it is competitive in nature. This public face of honour is usually associated with men, who defend their own and their family’s honour in the public realm. But women also strive to maintain family honour. In public perception, they do this through preserving sexual modesty, which, if not preserved, can threaten family honour (Stirling 1965:233; Dubisch 1986:208-9). In the private sphere, women maintain honour through virtuous behaviour, such as cooperation and generosity.

Traditional Mediterranean relationships are based on “collectivism,” meaning “one is a part of a network of mutually binding relationships where one is judged according to role specific and personal criteria,” as opposed to “universal and abstract criteria” (Fry 1980:9). Malina describes this as group-oriented or dyadic personality (2001:58-80). Honour is collectively reflected on all family members, and a person is careful to maintain his family’s honour through his or her own actions. Likewise, one’s personal honour is based on the moral character and behaviour of one’s family, kin and even ancestors (Abu-Lughod 1986:87; Campbell 1964:37). Variation and nuances in behaviour related to honour depend on social

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62 For general discussions on “honour and shame” as relevant to early Christian texts see Moxnes 1996:19-40; Malina 2001:27-57.

63 Honour is reproduced intergenerationally. In Milocca, people expect a daughter will share the reputation of her mother, whether positive or negative (Chapman 1971:85, 96). Dimen notes that the reputation of a married woman is based on that of her mother-in-law in Greece (1986:64). Campbell also notes that moral attributes pass from parents to children, as expressed by the saying (which is not unfamiliar in its English rendition), “The apple will fall under the apple tree” (to milo apo kat’ap ti milia tha pesi; 1964:166-67). Peristiany states that a woman must defend her chastity within marriage “in order not to dishonour her own children” (1976:12).
For example, within a village, families are concerned for family reputation among neighbouring families, but in the presence of an outsider, they are concerned for the reputation of the whole village.

The values of honour and modesty and models such as the patron-client relationship offer early Christian historians a view of the texts in their own ancient Mediterranean cultural framework. That is, they provide constructs that help to bridge a gap between ancient Mediterranean cultural norms (as represented in early Christian texts) and the experience of the modern interpreter (Malina 2001; MacDonald 1996:15-20). The early Christians, as people who were part of their surrounding ancient Mediterranean culture, thought, behaved and lived very differently from those in modern Western culture, for instance. I use the modern Western cultural worldview (broadly conceived), in contrast with the ancient Mediterranean view, because it is the basis of my own worldview.

Modern Western culture has now extended hegemony throughout much of the world, but its worldview is unique among the varieties of pre-modern cultures through space and time, including the ancient Mediterranean. Modern Western cultural values are driven by elements like technological progress, individualism, consumerism, multinational marketing and the resultant rapid social change, all of which were foreign to the ancient Roman world. The modern Western value of individualism, for instance, contrasts with the honour-modesty values of Mediterranean cultures which require a group-oriented mindset (Malina 2001:58-80; Geertz 1976:225-35). The discipline of cultural anthropology has developed tools that can aid

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64 Michael Herzfeld recommends carefully defining honour according to emic categories (how people within a culture perceive themselves), since “the precise interpretation of moral-value terms requires a clear perception of their linguistic and social context in each community” (1980:347-48).

65 My worldview derives from modern Western experience, having been born and raised in Western Canada, with English Protestant and Ukrainian Orthodox ancestors who migrated from Europe several generations before me. I recognize that, while early Christian scholars around the world are often educated according to the dominant Western paradigm, many herald from diverse worldviews, which inevitably affects their reading of the text, just as my worldview affects mine (see for example, Segovia 2000).
observations and understanding of “other” cultures, while at the same time highlighting the oddities of the Western worldview in contrast to the majority of cultures in the world now, and throughout history.

Some of the early Christian texts (the NT canon, in particular) are used as sacred scripture in modern Christian religious settings. Thus they tend to be religiously and culturally familiar, having informed and formed part of Western culture as we know it. In both parochial and secular settings (e.g., allusions in literature), such texts are often interpreted as reflective of modern, Western experience, but the people who originally wrote and read these texts were from cultures that differed significantly from modern Western culture. The ancient texts were written and received within a particular cultural mindset, value system and way of relating; what constitutes proper conduct, norms of behaviour, and deviations from the norm can be more effectively derived from modern Mediterranean cultural norms than from Western cultural norms.

Put simply, the study of early Christian texts is not only a historical, but a cross-cultural endeavour as well. This realization forces us to read outside of our own experience, with a goal of striving toward historical and cultural realism. An informed imagination, carefully evaluated, can grant us access to early Christian communities in new ways. The people we encounter in the text are often in shadow, so that not only do we view them through an author (or authors) with a particular way of thinking, but also through a language, culture and time rather different from our own. Utilizing the strengths of historical criticism to access the literary aspects of the text, along with utilizing modern Mediterranean ethnography to access the culture, offers us a

66 Interpretation of sacred scripture for personal and social application is associated with theology and Christian religious devotion, whereas the realm of Early Christian Studies observes the texts as historical documents. While the historical insights of the latter might be useful for modern theological or devotional interpretation, this kind of interpretation is not my goal as a historian.

67 In fact many other cultures with non-Western values would provide better analogies to certain aspects of the ancient Mediterranean culture in terms of kin relations, patriarchy, dyadic personality, limited good, and so on.
window into early Christian communities. As a historian, I approach these texts as data to help explain the communities they represent. On one level I am using the anthropological comparison to better understand the text, but ultimately, I am interested in using the text to better understand history, namely the history of early Christians in their ancient Mediterranean setting.

One might question the validity of applying values and models as derived from the modern Mediterranean to the ancient Mediterranean. Though some caution is in order, the analogy between the modern and ancient cultures in the Mediterranean, broadly conceived, is valid for several reasons. First, since we are dealing with the same geographical region over time, we can hypothesize some elements of cultural continuity from the ancient to the modern Mediterranean world, especially when we discuss values and traditional worldview. As mentioned above, the Mediterranean values of honour and modesty, while nuanced differently in various regions, is a consistent value among all Mediterranean cultures, modern and ancient. Cultural behaviours found in ancient texts that are foreign to Western experience are more easily explained through ethnographic description and explanation. “Witchcraft accusations,” for example, are a means of social control over someone suspected of using malevolent power to promote social conflict; they are common in pre-industrial societies, including traditional Mediterranean societies (e.g., Neyrey 1988). Ethnographic data provides a relatively detailed and continually growing literature detailing and analyzing cultural forms, values and behaviours. When modern Mediterranean ethnographic data appears to be relatively consistent among the varieties of Mediterranean cultures, values and models derived from the data is suggestive for culturally relevant interpretations of situations, decisions and conflicts described or implied in early Christian texts. Because I seek a broad continuity of cultural norms to compare to the ancient Mediterranean, no single geographical area in the modern Mediterranean will necessarily offer a superior analogy. In other words, cultural values and norms that
different ethnographers observe across several Mediterranean cultures are considered fairly reliable as broadly conceived “Mediterranean” values and norms.

Second, modern anthropological data allows us to create analogies between cultural elements common to modern Mediterranean culture and the ancient Mediterranean. We cannot question our informants about their situations; we cannot physically observe real people’s behaviour in the ancient world. By exploring modern Mediterranean cultural worlds, we can more accurately imagine similar situations in the ancient world. We are not “creating” data; we are developing an informed imagination to aid us in seeing the ancient data through a cross-cultural lens. The use of such a lens offers cultural context that renders the ancient data as “foreign,” and then provides an interpretive tool to understand it (MacDonald 1996:19-20).

Indeed, there are limitations and methodological cautions to heed in this kind of study. First, while cultural continuity exists, this does not mean that all modern values or behaviours are the same (or even necessarily closely similar) as they were two thousand years ago. Nor are they (or were they) the same in every region and every community. We cannot assume similarities. Therefore, the job of the historian is to evaluate the apparent similarities by finding corroborating ancient evidence.

Second, we must be cautious of circular reasoning while using modern ethnographic material. The spread of Christianity affected all of the regions of the modern Mediterranean (some of which were then further affected by the spread of Islam). Therefore, elements of these cultures are likely to have been affected by centuries of established orthodox Christianity, at times directly by the early Christian texts themselves (much of which became sacred scripture) or Christian religious tradition. Despite the substantial cultural continuity that can inform us of the ancient Mediterranean prior to Christendom, the subsequent Christian (and Muslim) history behind the modern ethnographic communities should be kept in mind. For example, in one
modern Greek community, reputable women who are over sixty bake the bread for Easter (Campbell 1964:290). Their age might be a direct application of 1 Tim 5:19 where widows who are over sixty are highlighted for their pious contribution to the community. Or the age of sixty could reflect a general Mediterranean notion of age that was adapted differently by both the textual reference in 1 Timothy and the Greek Orthodox bread-baking privilege. The modern bakers tell us nothing directly about the early Christians, but the parallel reference to a specific age might prompt us to search the ancient literature for similar references to women over sixty.

Third, the cultural models used and developed by early Christian scholars (like honour and modesty) need to be updated and evaluated based on current anthropological work in the field, constantly pushing for more sophistication. Otherwise, the models may be or become reified, no longer reflecting real culture, and thereby reducing their usefulness for understanding our historical subjects.68

Early Christian scholars using anthropological theory and data should be informed by the history of anthropological theory, particularly by the post-modern crisis that shook the foundation of cultural anthropology in the 1980s and 90s. At that time, anthropologists reflected on how their own perspective and biases inevitably affected how they observed people in other cultures, what aspects of culture they observed, and how they interacted with informants. Their own inherent biases also affected their analysis, the way they wrote about their experiences, the concepts they created from their data, and their conclusions about the people they studied (e.g., Abu-Lughod 1990). Beyond severe disillusionment in the anthropological enterprise as a whole, what emerged from the crisis was an approach to ethnographic work that increased collaboration with informants, as well as a rise in applied anthropology.

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68 In the context of using anthropological models for study of the HB, David Fiensy states: “The Old Testament specialist must follow the current debate in anthropology to ensure that biblical research is not based on discredited ethnological theories” (1987:80).
Early Christian scholars cannot interact with, let alone collaborate with, our historical “informants.” We cannot ask our ancient informants if our assessments of their words are correct in their view. But we can become increasingly aware of our “ethnocentric bias” (Dubisch 1986:9), both in our own work with early Christian texts and in evaluating and using anthropological data. The use of cultural models requires constant readjustment as new data and re-evaluation of data is performed, both in social-scientific criticism and in modern anthropological work. Because the lens through which we view the text is formed from ethnographic data, we rely on a modern, usually Western, translation of cultural norms, which already skews the lens toward Western views. For example, E.E. Evans-Pritchard’s ethnography of the pastoral culture of the Nuer appears suspiciously similar at times to the descriptions of the pastoral characters of the HB. The two cultures may be quite similar, but it is also possible that Evans-Pritchard filtered his observations of the Nuer through his parochial education and knowledge of ancient Israelite pastoralists.69 Similarly, J.K. Campbell (a student of Evans-Pritchard) describes the rural Greek Sarakatsani in 1955-56 as if theirs was a timeless and enduring culture, even though the Greeks had experienced a harsh civil war only a few years earlier (1943-49). The war devastated the countryside, leaving peasants starving (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002:82) and/or dislocated (2002:95-96). Campbell’s omission of the effects of war throws into question some his observations and conclusions, which seem, at times, rather idyllic. In truth, until recently the Greeks themselves tended not to talk about the war. It divided families (e.g., Panourgíá 1995:139), and Greeks did not want to reveal anything that might affect their reputation among friends and neighbours. Nevertheless, Campbell’s ethnography

69 Evans-Pritchard does describe aspects of Nuer history, along with legal and social changes in the decades before his fieldwork, but Kathleen Gough suggests that “by ascribing Nuer actions to various ‘structural principles’ as if they were timeless, he gives at other times the impression of a society in a state of stable equilibrium” (1971:88). In other words, he does not properly account for the diachronic aspects of social dynamics among the Nuer. For a summary of other critiques and its implication for studies in the HB, see Fiensy 1987.
focuses on what he perceives to be “traditional” culture, to the detriment of other aspects of the culture he observed. Thus, I explore the ethnographic data with awareness that each is based on one researcher’s observations and interpretations (at times with little reflection on the anthropologist’s own role in the process).

Of course, the entire enterprise of cross-cultural study for our own purposes is somewhat selfish and ethnocentric (one reaction to which has been the rise of applied anthropology—anthropology that endeavours to assist people developing regions rather than just study them). Nevertheless, my attempt to view the ancient Christian communities on their own cultural terms is meant to convey respect for them and their cultural ways as well as gain knowledge about them.

An important evaluation of cultural models should arise from the nature of culture itself: culture is never stagnant (as one might assume from reading some classic ethnographies). Jill Dubisch, for example, illuminates the fluid nature of culture and the unpredictability of social organization (1986:8). For Dubisch, future change, predictions and modernization are concerns for contemporary ethnographic discussions. In my historical work, I focus on a particular era in early Christian history that can be situated in the midst of the changes occurring in the Roman Empire over centuries. However, my goal is try to understand the moment in time in which these early Christians lived. Historians, who attempt to apprehend the historical “present” from a relative paucity of information, need to resist the temptation to apply later developments back onto the earliest Christian movement and the temptation to find their own values nestled in the text (see Chapter 1, §3).\(^7\)

Some social phenomena in the text may not be able to be explained by general models or knowledge of cultural norms, since these elements might be different from modern cultures or

\(^7\) This is a weakness of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983), for example, who finds “equality” in a culture that rarely, if ever, tolerates such a concept. See Kloppenborg 1996b.
might be anomalies. Lila Abu-Lughod argues that “constructing” culture promotes a false sense of “homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness” which blurs the personal choices, conflicts and struggles that real people experience within a given community (1993:14). She asserts that cultural constructs promote maintenance of the differences between “us” and the “other,” which prompts her to write “against generalization” (1993:13). As noted above, post-modern thought has clearly revealed that “objective” observations and conclusions about “a culture” are fallacious, for the observer always approaches her subject with her own biases, background and preconceptions. As a result, ethnographies since the 1980s have tended to feature the anthropologist as an active character in the story being told. Nevertheless, the role of anthropologist who writes to a Western audience is still always writing with a sense of bridging the gap between two divergent worlds, ways of thinking and ways of behaving “properly.” Abu-Lughod herself admits this role in her selection and translation of Egyptian Bedouin stories and poems, explicitly acknowledging that her choices were based on “a conjunction between women’s interest in and attention to certain issues and the salience of these issues for specific audiences in the West” (1993:16). In textual work, models and values provide a lens through which we can observe the original culture; the lens will need adjustments as we test models and theories, but it is a valuable tool for cultural insights otherwise elusive to us.

In sum, with due caution, we can utilize ethnographic reports of modern Mediterranean peoples to shed light on social aspects of the early Christian texts.

2.2. What Early Christian Studies can contribute to Anthropology

Since anthropology endeavours to study humanity in a holistic way, all cultures and time periods are theoretically important. For instance, Christine L. Fry states that the anthropological
perspective is “panhuman, evolutionary, and comparative” (1980:20). However, early Christianity specifically, and the ancient Greco-Roman world in general, seems to have rarely interested anthropologists.72

Traditionally, archaeological (and some physical) anthropologists have studied the material remains of prehistoric and preliterate cultures, and cultural anthropologists have become participant-observers in contemporary cultures. This leaves a gap of historical cultures between prehistoric times and modern times (except perhaps as background information for current work), which has been the academic domain of historians. More specifically, the study of the ancient Greco-Roman world has been the academic domain of Classical Studies, and early Christianity the domain of Biblical Studies and/or theology. As academics delve more into interdisciplinary work, they realize the richness of insight they can gain from different academic disciplines, and some scholars specialize in more than one academic domain.73 The pioneers of cultural anthropology, such as Bronislaw Malinowski who worked among the Trobrianders and Margaret Mead who worked in Samoa, focused on non-Western, isolated cultures. In the early 1960s, Ernestine Friedl stated that in her era, “many cultural anthropologists have turned to the study of societies whose cultures are in the main line of Near Eastern tradition. They have done so because of a conviction that the techniques and insights developed through the study of primitive societies are useful for the description and analysis of all societies” (1962:2), studying peasant cultures in particular (distinctive communities living in rural regions of modernized

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71 Anthropologists value a holistic view of human beings by exploring and considering four major areas of human existence: physical and evolutionary aspects of humans and related species (especially primates); archaeology (the material culture of past human societies); linguistics (the uniqueness and variety of human language), and culture (how humans think, function and relate in a given group or a society). The two branches of anthropology that deal with aging are physical and cultural anthropology.

72 As a notable exception, Sir James Frazer incorporates studies of Greco-Roman culture and mythology in *The Golden Bough* (1993[1922]).

73 For example, Maria Liston (University of Waterloo) is a physical anthropologist who does work on ancient Greece.
nations). Shortly after this development, some anthropologists began to study subgroups within their own societies, such as Barbara Myerhoff’s study of elderly American Jews, many of whose lives had been touched by the Holocaust (1979). As the anthropological enterprise continues to expand, perhaps there is something of interest for anthropologists in the study of ancient Mediterranean culture, such as long-term continuity and change in one geographical region.

Anthropologists may have generally ignored the ancient world for methodological reasons as well. Anthropologists work with material culture or become participant-observers with living people. While material culture is one aspect of studying the ancient world, it inevitably involves studying texts as well. Some anthropologists study recorded oral histories in ethnohistorical work, but this branch of anthropology is usually confined to preliterate cultures (such as previously recorded oral histories of Canadian First Nations people). In early Christian studies, textual work involves drawing inferences about social behaviour from a paucity of information; for cultural anthropologists, participant-observation involves drawing conclusions about particular aspects of culture from a plethora of experiences. There is little overlap in how information is gathered, but both disciplines are interested in, and able to “observe,” social and cultural patterns, providing a foundation for potential dialogue. Anthropologists are increasingly exploring historical aspects of culture, such as Penelope Papailias’ archival work in modern

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74 Edward Burnett Tylor saw peasant cultures as survivals of the “primitive.” He posits:

Savage animism, both by what it has and by what it wants, seems to represent the earlier system in which began the age-long course of the education of the world. Especially is it to be noticed that various beliefs and practices, which in the lower animism stand firm upon their grounds as if they grew there, in the higher animism belong rather to peasants than philosophers, exist rather as ancestral relics than as products belonging to their age, are falling from full life into survival. Thus it is that savage religion can frequently explain doctrine and rites of civilized religion. (1958 [1874]:443; cf. 1958 [1874]:145, 267, 300, 480).
Greece (2005). As specialists in studying texts, perhaps early Christian scholars have some skill to offer anthropologists who turn to texts in some of their work.

If anthropology is truly holistic, early Christian communities help fill a historical gap in the ancient Mediterranean. In our current academic milieu, a sense of openness to various cultures, orientations and viewpoints might include a consideration of a rather obscure group in the early centuries of the Common Era who called themselves “Christians.” Insights from anthropology have been showing us just how different they were from the various manifestations of the religion that emerged later on. Perhaps anthropologists would be interested in some of those insights.

3. Methodological considerations

The use of modern ethnographies alongside ancient data related to early Christian communities requires some methodological considerations. The ethnographic sources used for this study have strengths and weaknesses for studying the urban, non-elite nature of early Christian communities in the context of stratified Roman social structure.

3.1. Modern ethnographic sources

Modern ethnographic data provides the foundation for the analysis of Mediterranean age structure in this study. Since a full survey of Mediterranean ethnography would be unwieldy, I focus on six ethnographic studies that explicitly describe age categories and intergenerational relationships based in Sicily, Greece, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. They represent a diversity of cultural practices and activity related to age in the Mediterranean region, yet they illustrate continuities with regard to age structure. Where appropriate, I refer to Mediterranean “cultures” rather than “culture” so as to be mindful of the cultural variations in the Mediterranean region.

75 Neni Panourgiá discusses the historical distance between ancient Athens and the modern city in its European context (1995:36-40).

I chose these ethnographies because they are based on Mediterranean fieldwork done prior to major modernizing changes in folk or peasant cultures. Following anthropological convention, I tend to use the ethnographic present, recognizing that these ethnographies present cultures of 40 to 50 years ago. Though some cultural values and behaviours may be no longer relevant in the twenty-first century, I assume that because they predate modernization, they provide a better analogy to the ancient Mediterranean than contemporary observations of changes resulting from modernization might. I assume that peasant, rural lifestyles exhibit cultural values similar to those found in the ancient Mediterranean because, compared to urban areas, they are less affected by, and even critical of, modernization (Abu-Lughod 1986:43-44). However, I do incorporate some studies from urban areas that demonstrate how cultural values
can translate into lifestyles and living arrangements in the village and city because early Christianity was successful in the urban areas of the ancient Mediterranean.  

3.2. Urban Christians

I assume that pre-modern, traditional ways of life in modern Mediterranean ethnographies provide a potentially useful analogy to hypothesize about cultural concepts in the ancient world in general, and in early Christian communities in particular. But we must be mindful of “subcultural variation” of issues related to age (Fry 1980:8–9). Ethnographic research on urban life in the Mediterranean may give us some valuable clues about the ancient urban setting in which Christianity thrived in the first few centuries. For my purposes, new urbanites would likely retain some of the rural value system, while adapting socially to a population-dense setting. This might reflect aspects of the situation in which earliest Christianity thrived (see Chapter 5, §2).

My case study of age and intergenerational relationships based on 1 Timothy is associated with Asia Minor, ostensibly the city of Ephesus (1:3). Prior to Roman occupation, Asia Minor, especially the coastal region, was heavily influenced by Hellenism, for the Greeks had settlements there for centuries. When the Romans conquered the area, they established roads, military presence, taxation, administrative presence in cities, and the emperor cult. This made the area “as much Roman as it was Anatolian” (Mitchell 2003:191).  

Augustus

76 I find Renée B. Hirschon’s work in a Greek city (1983), Panourgiá’s ethnography of death in Athens and several essays from J.G. Peristiany’s edited volume Mediterranean Family Structures (1976) in Turkish cities helpful.

77 David Magie demonstrates that Romans resided in many cities in Asia Minor, and additional Roman settlements were set up just like those in Italy, beginning with Julius Caesar and continuing with Augustus (1950:415). The people of Asia Minor originated the imperial cult, demonstrating their general loyalty to Rome (1950:406–7, 447–48, 452). The inscriptions found on tombs and sarcophagi discovered in Ephesus by J.T. Wood (1975 [1877]) demonstrate a mix of Latin and Greek, with a good number of Roman names. For example, “Ti. Claudius Eutychus in his lifetime erected the tomb for himself and Claudia Musa his wife, and Claudia Venusta his daughter and T. Marius Marcellus his son-in-law, and Ti. Claudius Venustus his son, and their descendants, and to his freedmen” (e.g., No. 13). Clifford Ando suggests that the peace in the Roman Empire that followed the victory of Augustus allowed for the perception of consensus in the provinces through granting citizenship, promoting the emperor cult, circulating imperial art and monuments, and sharing a common calendar. This perceived unification promoted
established benefactions to gain power and prestige, but he also brought stability to Greek cities of Asia Minor with consistent justice (including appeals to the Emperor), roads, consistent taxes, and secure local government. As they “romanized,” cities began to look more alike. Therefore, I follow Keith R. Bradley in defining Roman as “any place and people imbued with Roman culture in a broad sense” (1991:4). I also adopt from Bradley the use of the term “Roman” to describe a set of cultural values found in the regions conquered by the Romans in the late Republic and early Empire between 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E (1991:4). The writing of 1 Timothy (late first century) falls well within this temporal boundary.78 I assume that Roman sources (whether written in Greek or Latin) can help inform us about cultural and social attitudes in Asia Minor in the first and second centuries.

Osiek and Balch describe the crowded nature of cities, where most people (perhaps ninety percent) lived in insula or small apartments with one or two rooms. They constituted “small, dark, poorly ventilated, crowded” living spaces with little privacy, poor sanitation and high chance of disease (1997:31-32). Such cramped spaces would encourage outside activity (indeed, there were public latrines and baths, and people typically purchased food on the streets). The public nature of activity in the city made status “conspicuous” (MacMullen 1974:62). People were both friendly and prone to gossip. A person’s character was known to all, so reputation was of the utmost importance (1974:62-66; cf. Kartzow 2009).

Among city residents, there were street associations, often grouped by trade, craft or occupation, resulting in trade associations.79 These and other associations formed religious, political and social communities (MacMullen 1974:68-73). Non-citizen residents often formed

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78 I am not referring to citizenship or the city of Rome itself (cf. Winter 2003:5).

79 For a list of occupations, see MacMullen 1974:73.
cults or associations with religious aspects (religion was embedded in many social structures of the time). The Judeans were one example. Christian groups may have appeared to be a kind of urban voluntary association (see Chapter 7, §4.3).

3.3. Status and social position

The chasm between elite and non-elite in the Roman Empire is not a reality that coincides with modern Western reality. Roman society was composed of a tiny minority of elite (upper class), and a vast majority of non-elite, common people. The latter is often described as the lower class, for no “middle class” existed. In Ramsey MacMullen’s words, “‘verticality’ is the key” (1974:89-97). The elite were the political decision-makers of cities of the Empire, with social position, wealth and usually generations of political power behind them. The early Christians generally drew membership from the non-elite (see Chapter 5, §4).

The hierarchal structure of Roman society forms an important background to studying its age structure. As in the modern Mediterranean, there was a distinction between “social position” and “status” in the ancient Mediterranean. By social position I mean a person’s formal location in the hierarchy of power, including political and legal power, citizenship and personal liberty (whether a person was born a slave or free, or became a freedperson or liberti). By status I mean unofficial social prestige and influence based on one’s family, context and character (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:56). Whereas social position was relatively static,

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80 Various distinctions were used to distinguish the two classes, but the terms were fluid and contextual rather than rigid. For instance, potentiores (powerful) and tenuiores (weak) were used to describe those who gave protection and those who were in need of it. Honestiores and humiliores described those who were high and low born, usually for legal purposes (Osiek and Balch 1997:94).

81 Stirling offers a view of social precedence: “In every human group some members are more, some less admired and respected; some more, some less able to impose their will on others” (1965:221).

82 See Rawson 1966 for the implications of personal liberty.

83 These two social elements are not consistently labelled, but the concepts are fairly consistently defined. For example, I borrow the term “social position” from Stirling (1965:221), but E.A. Judge designates the same concept as rank, namely “any formally defined position in society” (2008[1982]:139). I utilize Judge’s use of the term status as “positions of influence that may not correspond to the official pattern of the social order” (which
largely based on one’s birth (elite or non-elite), family name, ancestry and family wealth, status was more flexible (it could be gained or lost), since it was based on personal and family reputation (how a person was perceived by others), personal power (election to an office or public honours), social connections and character. Wealth also affected status among the non-elite, for wealth could help achieve a higher level of reputation. One could gain public recognition, resulting in a higher level of reputation, through patronage (private benefaction) and euergetism (public benefaction; see Joubert 2001). Both concepts involved hierarchy at all levels. Status was affected by gender, since women achieved status in the public realm through the men with whom they were associated (fathers, brothers, husbands and sons). Age was an element of status, for when all other things were equal, an older person had precedence over a younger person. Table 1 summarizes my use of the terms “social position” and “status.”

The main exceptions would be manumission and adoption. Slaves might buy their freedom, be manumitted by their masters (and remain clients of their former masters), or be manumitted upon the death of the master (and perhaps bequeathed an inheritance). Adults could be and were legally adopted for inheritance purposes.
Table 1: Status and social position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ascribed/achieved</th>
<th>Primary realms of influence</th>
<th>Kind of power</th>
<th>Flexibility (ability to gain or lose)</th>
<th>Basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social position</td>
<td>Ascribed (i.e., based on birth and legal position)</td>
<td>Political, legal</td>
<td>Political, official honours, rights</td>
<td>Rigid hierarchical order based on ancestry and sustained, inherited wealth</td>
<td>Personal liberty (slave, freed, free), citizenship, wealth, name (birth), order (for elite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Achieved (i.e., based on achievements)</td>
<td>Social, economic</td>
<td>Prestige, social honour, influence</td>
<td>Somewhat flexible hierarchy based on reputation (personal and family)</td>
<td>Character, personal power (office or honours), social connections, wealth, gender, age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a free male citizen from a reputable family, social position provided the basis for a political career (with few exceptions). MacMullen describes the elite class as those with great wealth and a high pedigree at birth. An elite person was distinguished by his (or her) name, the opportunity for the best education, and the financial ability to maintain a household of distinction (1974:107-10). “The monopolizing of leadership by a narrow circle, generation after generation” occurred because inherited wealth fulfilled the requirement to hold office, and the cultural value of ancestral honour remained strong (MacMullen 1974:101; Osiek and Balch 1997:92). For these reasons, the ruling class remained in their position, and there was little social mobility for others. Freedmen who received significant inheritances from their former masters were an exception. The static nature of social position also gave rise to status inconsistency, where a person’s achieved status was disproportionate with her or his ascribed (legal) position.

Status was “the great obsession of Romans” (Osiek and Balch 1997:92; cf. MacMullen 1974:125). Among the non-elite, status was probably more important than social position. For example, citizenship granted a person formal rights, but did not confer many real privileges.

85 For examples and explanation of the phrase “like his ancestors,” ἀπὸ προγόνων, see MacMullen 1974:101.
Social position did not necessarily reflect status. A slave, who was legally inferior to a freeborn man, could have more status than a freeborn man if he was a manager in the imperial household. Status influenced a person’s behaviour and lifestyle. It both determined and was based on the prestige and honour of an individual and his or her family, and its potential for flexibility meant people worked to maintain or gain status in their community.

Among the non-elite (some of whom were free and many of whom were probably slaves), people represented a range of economic and social statuses. “The relatively prosperous,” which could include slaves, often had skills to offer, living in the cities as artisans, doctors, teachers, musicians, etc. They might own a minimum amount of property. “The relatively poor” worked hard and could provide basic needs for their families, as free farmers or day labourers in the country, and as artisans, shop owners, merchants, employees, slaves or day labourers in the cities. These two groups (πένητες) contrasted with the utterly poor (πτωχοί), who were indigent. The πένητες had little political power and could not hold high offices, but they could hold honorary titles in voluntary associations (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:68, 70-71, 85-86).

While the elite gained political power through patronage and civic benefaction (e.g., erecting buildings, monuments or public amenities), the “relatively prosperous” gained personal power through patronage. Among the non-elite, patronage was informal, but created long-term loyalty, based on reciprocity between those with unequal status. A patron gave his or her client protection and access to power; a client gave his or her patron political support and/or enhanced

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86 A slave could also be more economically secure than a poor freeperson since the master was invested in making sure the enslaved person had basic necessities (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:86).
the patron’s prestige in the social community. Patronage provided honour and prestige to the patron, and a support network for the client (Osiek and Balch 1997:48-54).  

A person could gain or lose status, but only rarely did this make much social difference. Status could trump gender, so that a woman with higher status had more precedence than a man of lower status (Osiek and Balch 1997:91-102; cf. Abu-Lughod 1986:163-64. Ascribed social position took precedence over age categories (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:57), but when all other things were equal, an older person had precedence over a younger one.  

3.4. The nature of ancient sources  

Compared to other historical studies, there is a distinct paucity of direct evidence for early Christian social history, particularly in the first and second centuries. Since we cannot observe or question our ancient informants, an informed imagination that employs modern Mediterranean ethnographic data is useful for shedding light on social dynamics in early Christian texts. However, hypotheses about social dynamics that are formed from this informed imagination should be corroborated by ancient evidence.  

Most extant literary work was written by the male elite, elucidating only their perspective. However, male elite texts can yield indirect clues about the non-elite perspective, as in the case of some legal documents. Other texts reveal perceptions about age that relate to broad cultural ideals.  

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87 In modern Mediterranean Christian areas, this kind of patron-client relationship is evident in wedding and baptism sponsorship. The latter refers to “godparents.” The sponsor is usually of a higher social status than the groom or parent, and not biological kin. The relationship is binding and lifelong, and the persons involved function as fictive kin.  

88 For example, Justinian’s Digest contains references to legal rulings on the non-elite, some of which I cite throughout this study.  

89 Two important treatises that deal directly with old age are Cicero’s On Old Age and Plutarch’s “On Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs” (Moralia 783B-797F). Both confront negative aspects of old age, affirm that old men have important roles in society as public servants and as models for younger men, and admit that old men should take on fewer strenuous duties. Both offer an almost exclusively a male elite perspective, but also some overall attitudes about old age in the ancient Mediterranean. Personal letters related to aging and intergenerational relationships reveal details about elite family matters, but they do give us clues about cultural expectations and
In their study of the Roman life course, Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence suggest that the life courses of the non-elite (e.g., slaves, freedpersons, and “ordinary citizens”) are unknowable from ancient evidence. They focus on the elite because “there is little surviving evidence for the reconstruction of the life courses of those who were not from the elite, and it has to be recognised that the recovery of the experience of age in antiquity is limited to this influential group” (2002:1). While I agree that the evidence for the non-elite in Roman society is sparse, I disagree that we can only glean information about and from the elite.

Direct knowledge of the non-elite can be derived from various sources. Inscriptions on tombstones and monuments erected for voluntary associations can contain useful information about age and intergenerational relationships of non-elite people. The papyri represent non-elite interests and clues about age and family life in the form of wills, other documents related to inheritance and personal letters related to one family over time. However, the geographical and cultural specificity of inscriptions and papyri can limit their value. Papyri, for example, were mostly preserved in Roman Egypt. Other sources, such as popular fiction (plays, novels, etc.), exhibit common attitudes about age. Their artistic liberty, namely the exaggeration and stereotypes presented, must be taken into account, but they often reflected and influenced the non-elite, who attended theatrical productions (Winter 2003:31). Material culture, such as visual art, while not engaged to any great extent in this study, holds promise for future fruitful attitudes that may manifest in the non-elite population as well. Cicero’s personal letters, for example, provide “our most intimate evidence for day-to-day experiences of Roman families” (Saller 1994:2). This is not say their experiences would reflect those of the lower classes to a large degree, since their economic and social worries would differ significantly (see MacMullen 1974:88-120). Nevertheless, cultural expressions of ancient Mediterranean family life offer us personal insight and emotion that reflects cultural norms.

90 Plays written in the prolific period of the Athenian 6th century BCE are popular choices for Classical scholars studying age, such as Aristophanes (e.g., Wasps, Clouds) and Sophocles (e.g., Oedipus at Colonus; see Bertman 1976). Roman audiences would have been familiar with such plays, and, at times, Roman playwrights adapted themes from the great Greek plays to suit their own audiences (e.g., the Oedipus of Seneca written in the first century CE).
evidence for age and aging among the non-elite. I discuss recent work on osteological evidence in the context of demography (Chapter 3). Finally, the early Christian texts themselves can be added to evidence about the non-elite.

Although they are hard pressed to find information about the non-elite, Harlow and Laurence do posit that the cultural construct of age reflected in elite literature also reflected the non-elite. Specifically, they propose that:

age as an explanatory system, found within accounts of the actions of historical exempla, or heroes of the Roman past, might suggest there was a common understanding of actions or explanations of behaviour according to the age of the participants… it [indicates] a universal acceptance of these age related concepts and an ideology of age that descends from the elite down to other sectors at Rome. (2002:146)

This suggests that perceptions and beliefs about age and age-related behaviour might be similar across different social positions in the ancient world. I take this as suggestive for my study and utilize Roman male elite texts that exhibit ideas about age to better understand early Christian texts about age.

Moreover, the texts from early Christians and Roman elite are both written from a male perspective, so we might expect some continuity in this respect, despite the differences in social position and status. Comments about women reveal more about male perception of the female life course than the female life course itself, but piecing together women’s lives from ancient sources is always a challenge.

In conclusion, the early Christians were mostly non-elite, so we need to use elite sources for age structure with this in mind. They functioned within an urban, highly stratified environment, so that analogy from modern Mediterranean peasant culture must also be used with caution.

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Visual art can also reveal or help confirm various aspects of age and intergenerational relationships. The Romans were known to create realistic portraits and sculptures, some of which depict old age and obvious age differences between spouses or brothers (Harlow and Laurence 2002:2, 70, 83, 94; Cokayne 2003:21).
4. Conclusion

Modern Western culture provides a relatively poor basis for a historical reading of early Christian texts, and is apt to render a reading of the text that reflects more about its modern reader than about its original author and recipients. On the other hand, the application of insights from modern Mediterranean anthropology illuminates aspects of social and cultural norms of the ancient Mediterranean that might otherwise remain elusive or obscure. Potential insights should be corroborated by ancient evidence. While evidence for the non-elite (especially women) is sparse and/or biased, the evidence we do have can be better illuminated by looking through an anthropological lens.
Chapter 3: Demographic realities of the Roman world

1. Introduction

In order to study the age structure of early Christian communities, we need a sense of age distribution in the population of ancient Roman society, as well as typical patterns of kin relationships based on demographic realities. In this chapter, I outline the strengths and weaknesses of utilizing various ancient sources for demographic information as well as methods of deriving demographic data. I also offer some potential insights from comparative material in the anthropology of aging. Next, I present and evaluate Richard Saller’s kin universe simulation (1994), followed by an analysis of age and life course transitions in a first century papyrus from Roman Egypt, Papyrus Michigan 322. This legal document illustrates age structure in one family at a particularly crucial point in their generational cycle, namely as elderly parents hand over the inheritance to their heirs in exchange for care in their old age and proper burial.

2. Demography of the Roman world

Demographers use quantitative data to study the structure and development of human populations. Data from the ancient world does not yield the kinds of factual information that modern demographers are able to work with, which makes the particulars of studying of Roman demography complex and controversial. Nevertheless, it is foundational for understanding age structure and the life course in the ancient Mediterranean of the late first and early second centuries because demographic trends were radically different from modern Western experience. For instance, there were comparatively few old people, a much higher proportion of children, high infant and child morality rates, and infectious diseases that affected all ages. An informed understanding of demographic figures is essential. While ancient demographers agree that average life expectancy at birth was between 20 and 30 years, this should not lead one to
think that people expected to die in their third decade of life (contra Rohrbaugh 1996:5; see Chapter 1, §3.4).

2.1. The significance of measuring life expectancy

Demographers and anthropologists distinguish between “life expectancy” and “life span.” For anthropologists, “life span” refers to the maximum potential of life from birth to death. The human biological life span for modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) has been fairly constant, around 122 years (compare the life span of Australopithecines at 53 years; Ice 2005:88). It appears that the Romans considered the human life span to be about the same. Declarations of ages that purport to be over one hundred years are often suspicious, but there are numerous examples of people living into their seventies or eighties or beyond in the Roman world (e.g., Lucian, *Octogarians*), including the non-elite. For example, Polycarp was reportedly at least eighty-six when he was martyred in the second century.

The term “life expectancy” refers to the average number of years one expects to live from a certain point in the life course; for example, one might discuss life expectancy at birth, life expectancy at age 15, and so on. Life expectancy is variable, depending on socio-cultural and environmental factors, including climate, nutrition, exposure to disease, immunity, dangerous activity, socioeconomic level and genetics (Weiss 1981:27-50, Amoss and Harrell 1981:2; Crew 1990:16-18). Kenneth M. Weiss reminds us that “average life expectancy” is

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92 While the biological aspects of old age are often considered the domain of medical science, physical anthropologists have been interested in the evolutionary trends of aging and old age, as well as other biological aspects of aging. Anthropology emphasizes normal and healthy aging (as opposed to deviance or illness in aging; Powers 1990:69-105) within a variety of cultural and environmental contexts (Ice 2005:89).

93 For example, Pliny records apparently confirmed ages of up to 150 years, but most of his examples of old people place their ages at around 100 years (*Natural History* 7.49; Parkin 1992:46). For other references see Parkin 1992:327-28, n.43. Also, Gen 6:3 set the limit of human life to 120 years.

94 Polycarp declares to the proconsul: “For eighty-six years I have served [Christ], and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?” (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 9.3). If he measured his service to Christ from birth, he would be eighty-six, but if he measured his service from childhood (or baptism), Polycarp might be five to ten years older, putting him in his nineties (Ehrman 2003:1:362).

95 Socioeconomic status (education, income, occupation) is “one of the strongest predictors of health and mortality among all variables used in social science” (Lynch 2008:127). Phyllis Dolhinow concludes that longevity in
misleading because very few people die at the “average” age (1981:51). This is an important point.

As mentioned above, demographers generally agree that the average life expectancy at birth in the ancient Roman world (ca. 200 BCE to 200 CE) is 20 and 30 years. The term “average life expectancy at birth” is potentially misleading because the average is affected by high infant and child mortality rates in a culture with high fertility (Gowland 2007:156). That is, the high number of age at death of infants and young children is averaged with the ages of those who die later in life. About one-third of all infants died before their first birthday, and about half of all children died before their tenth birthday. At age five, a person could expect, on average, to live to the age of 45 (Parkin 1992:92; 2003:280). If a person survived the precarious childhood years, she or he had a reasonable chance of living into latter adulthood. At age 20, a person might expect to live to 51 years, on average (Parkin 2003:280), and 39 out of 100 people who reached age fifteen would probably live to sixty (Parkin 2003:292). After the age of sixty or so, there was a significant rise in mortality, but those who were over 60 comprised 5 to 10% of the total population (2003:49-50, 224). Thus, average life expectancy at birth does not reflect a typical life experience (Saller 1994:12).

humans is relatively recent (perhaps 10,000 years, corresponding with the development of agriculture), and is based on social rather than biological factors. Humans need complex social support through the entire life course, beyond simple safety and shared resources as found among non-human primates. Whereas humans have a long decline in the latter part of the life cycle, the few non-human primates who reach old age in the wild lose rank due to lessened physical strength (1984:71-77).

96 There is no way to calculate the average with certainty because we do not possess enough data from the ancient world. However, the range of 20-30 years is the “standard view” (Saller 1994:20). Tim G. Parkin argues that a range of 20-30 years allows for changes over time (1992:84). Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier’s study of Egyptian census returns lead them to suggest the lower 20s, namely 22-25 years (1994:109-10), but Walter Scheidel insists that a range of 20-30 years is as confident as we can be given the nature and paucity of the data available (2001b:20-25).
Therefore, the reality of a low life expectancy at birth does not mean that people in ancient Roman society aged at an accelerated rate and one would not expect to die after the age of 25 or 30. In this sense, Tim G. Parkin notes that “Romans did not necessarily or typically become old at a significantly younger age than we do today” (2003:25). That is, they did not grow “old” by age thirty. At thirty a man was emerging from his youth! Similarly, Dorothy Ayers Counts and David R. Counts observe that low average life expectancy (as found in isolated communities in the south Pacific islands) was not relevant to the physical or mental state of community members. They suggest that “the process and duration of physical aging are everywhere the same” (1985:7). In addition, the age structure of a society is independent of life expectancy; that is, life expectancy ratios do not dictate age distribution in the population at any given time (Scheidel 2001a:1).

Moreover, people did not expect to die in their 20s or 30s (Parkin 2003:36-37, 44-45, 48-51). The anthropological literature confirms that for many pre-industrial cultures, people expect to grow old, even if many do not live to old age due to disease, infection or accident, and even if the elderly make up a minority of the population (Cowgill and Holmes 1972:322). For example, among the !Kung prior to 1950, whose average life expectancy at birth was estimated to be 30 years (on par with the ancient figures), old age was always a “regular and unremarkable phenomenon” (Biesele and Howell 1981:82). Indeed, “the chances of surviving to the age of (say) 60 in the ancient world were not so slim as to make people of advanced age so unusual or remarkable” (2003:56). These observations are confirmed by sentiments of ancient writers. Aristotle stated, “youth has a long future before it and a short past behind it” (Art of Rhetoric 2.12). Cicero comments: “a young man expects to live long; an old man cannot expect to do so” (On Old Age 19). Though Cicero considers this sentiment foolish, for a person can die at any
age, it demonstrates that ancient people did not expect to die in the third or fourth decade of life (Parkin 2003:36-37, 48-51).  

2.2. Demographic data for life expectancy

In modern demography, the three factors involved in determining age structure are mortality, fertility and migration. Mortality refers to the rate at which people are dying within a population, fertility is the rate at which babies are being born into the population (Parkin 1992:72), and migration is the rate at which people are leaving or entering the population (not through death or birth). Reliable ancient data is not sufficiently available for accurate calculations of any of these factors (Scheidel 2001b:13). Nevertheless, demographers of the ancient world have tried to determine certain aspects of age structure from literary or material evidence (such as epigraphy, Roman Egyptian census data, legal evidence or osteology) and/or applying modern models of demographic distribution, namely model life tables, the advantages and disadvantages of which I outline here.

2.2.1. Funerary inscriptions

Funerary inscriptions, or epitaphs, commemorated a household member who had died, sometimes including people’s age at death. The inscriptions that included information about age provide primary evidence of mortality patterns for a variety of family members and ages. Studies of these inscriptions have been useful for particular questions, such as determining women’s age at marriage. By observing inscriptions made by parents (of unwed young women)

97 Similarly, Ray Laurence argues that the numbers of epitaphs dedicated to children in Pompeii “highlights a sense of bereavement amongst the adults who cremated and buried their loved ones” because, despite the demographic realities and experience of high child mortality, parents expected their children to outlive them (2007:103).

98 Even though there are about 55,000 inscriptions with people’s ages recorded on them (Shaw 1991:67), Valerie M. Hope summarizes that only 20-30% of Latin epitaphs include age at death. The proportion varies with geographical region (2007:111-12; see her notes 2-7 for references). Military epitaphs, however, almost always included age (2007:117). Age was part of army identity. “Age may signify service, commitment, even sacrifice. In a profession that entailed risk to life, the number of years lived may have been seen as an achievement.” Young soldiers were more at risk because they were put on the front lines. Hope notes, “not all commemorated soldiers were youthful, but they had given the best part of their lives in honoured service to the State, and age-at-death could be a powerful reminder of this.” Also, the military kept records of and valued “knowledge and accuracy” with regard to age and number of years in service (2007:120-21).
versus inscriptions made by husbands, Shaw determined that women usually married by their late teens and started to have children by 20 years of age (1987:30-46).  

However, funerary inscriptions do not provide a random selection of the whole Roman population, so they cannot be used to calculate average life expectancy (Shaw 1991:67-68). For instance, infants and the elderly are underrepresented, perhaps because those who set up inscriptions tended not to record the ages of those who were expected to die (infants and elderly). They demonstrate more about “the customs of commemoration” than statistically relevant data for life expectancy (Hopkins 1966:246). Differences in cultural practices, such as recording or omitting age of death, commemorating males more than females, age-rounding or exaggerating age, and even the fact of valuing inscriptions as dedications to the dead, make the data statistically unreliable (Parkin 1992:6-19; Saller 1994:15-18). Epitaphs were more common among urban people who could afford an inscription, though the range of inscription costs meant that many were dedicated by non-elite persons. Epigraphy is geographically specific, and often temporally specific as well; in other words, patterns found among

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99 “The age at which girls tend to marry is one of the most important factors in determining the overall rates of fertility in a given population, and hence its general demographic profile. It also affects a whole range of social institutions of reproduction, above all the ‘shape’ of the family, the relationships between the mother and her children, between husband and wife, and the ways in which property can be redistributed through inheritance” (Shaw 1987:30)

100 In Lucian of Samosata’s satire Downward Journey (5-6), Hermes, Charon and Clotho discuss the dead who are to board the ferry to the lower world. There are 300 babies (τα νεογνά), some of whom were abandoned, followed by 398 of the “unmourned” (τοὺς ἀκλούστους), that is, the “old people” (τοὺς γέροντας) who are over sixty. Except for exposure of some of the infants, nothing is mentioned about how either group died. However, the reason for death for every other individual is of interest to the characters (e.g., war, suicide, murder). See also note 112.

101 A typical funerary inscription was not as much a private expression of sentiment as it was “a life… seen from the point of view of the community or its public manifestation,” including public offices for men and spousal or motherhood duties for women (Harlow and Laurence 2002:132). In other words, they were markers of honour in a context where such commemoration was considered honourable, and for a family who could afford to pay for an inscription. “Specifying age at death was a further public valuation indicating the greater social important attributed to that person in death” (Shaw 1991:69).
inscriptions in one location cannot be generalized to the whole Roman world, and one era might differ from another (e.g., Hope 2007:127-29).102

In sum, while funerary inscriptions are sources of data about individuals within their household and regional context, they cannot provide enough relevant data to calculate life expectancy with any precision.

2.2.2. Papyrological evidence

The papyrological evidence is comprised of Roman Egyptian census returns from the first three centuries C.E. For the census, the head of each household was required to register all of the residents of the household (including slaves and lodgers) with their names, age and household status every fourteen years. This census information represents the best demographic data from the ancient world. There are about three hundred published texts. While the data confirms that average life expectancy at birth was likely to be under thirty (Saller 1994:19-20), more exact figures are tenuous. Based on their study of the papyrological evidence, Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier suggest that life expectancy at birth was likely between 22 and 25 years (1994:109). Walter Scheidel points out that Bagnall and Frier have to extrapolate infant mortality rates from model life tables (see §2.2.5) as infant deaths were underreported in the census material. This means that the high infant mortality rates used in their calculation are based purely on assumption and not real evidence (2001a:12-13). In addition, although they note that “the Egyptian population was not entirely stable over the long period covered by the census returns” (1994:177), Bagnall and Frier assume a certain amount of stability in order to match the consensus data with a model life table as they observe long-term patterns (1994:38, 75-90).

There are other weaknesses in the data. For one thing, it is fragmentary, so that while the data provides more concrete evidence about age structure than funerary inscriptions (for

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102 Parkin is particularly critical of using inscriptions for demographic study: “The material is so plagued with misleading biases and impossible demographic trends that the use of tombstone inscriptions, however selective, is unjustified and potentially fallacious” (1992:19).
example), it does not provide enough data for a complete sample of the population. In addition, Schiedel cautions that at times people misrepresented themselves in census data from Egypt (e.g., to avoid paying taxes, young men may not be entered in the census at all). This makes the data even less reliable (2001a:14). Finally, the papyrological evidence from Roman Egypt cannot be extrapolated to the whole Roman Empire because of geographical and cultural uniqueness (Scheidel 2001a:13).

In sum, while the Roman Egyptian censuses preserved in the papyrological record are valuable sources of demographic information for certain areas of Egypt, their value is limited to this region, and may not be entirely reliable.

2.2.3. Osteological records

Osteological records have not yet yielded much valuable information for demographic purposes. The two main problems with skeletal remains have to do with culturally determined factors of burial and modern methodology.

First, burial is culturally determined, so skeletal remains are not completely representative of a population (Parkin 1992:41-58). We cannot assume that skeletal remains in cemeteries reflect all individuals in a nearby community, since not all would have had the right to be buried there (depending on age, gender and social position). Some people would have migrated, and not all would be commemorated (Scheidel 2001a:11). There is no way of knowing what criteria dictate who was buried in a particular location. For example, slaves may or may not have been buried alongside free men and women (Saller 1994:18-19).

103 The small samples of papyrological data also apparently contain inconsistencies, though there is disagreement about what these inconsistencies are. For instance, Parkin notes that sex ratios are almost equal to known populations, but irregular among females aged 10 to 39. He suggests that this is because young women were not counted (1992:21). On the other hand, Bagnall and Frier note that the female data from Egyptian census returns lines up well with model life tables, whereas the male data is insufficient in this regard (1994:106-9).

104 For instance, data from Fayum represents a particularly poor climate and high population density, so the average life expectancy at birth might be significantly lower than elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Culturally, there was a high rate of brother-sister marriage unattested elsewhere in Rome (Bagnall and Frier 1994:127-34), which may have resulted in altered mortality patterns based on genetic problems.
Second, osteological research has methodological challenges. Early archaeologists in late antique sites did not necessarily preserve skeletal remains, considering them unimportant. In newer sites, it can be difficult to ascertain adult ages and gender from fragmentary remains. For example, age and gender is best assessed from particular skeletal material, such as the pelvic bone, which may not always be well-preserved, and becomes less sexually dimorphic in old age (Gowland 2007:156-64).

As with other ancient evidence, osteological data is fragmentary and limited. However, recent work on skeletal remains is promising, including analyzing burial goods and age (Gowland 2007:165-68).

2.2.4. Legal evidence

As far as we know, the ancient Romans did not keep records of life expectancy, but a curious text preserved in the Digest (35.2.68) is suggestive of patterns of life expectancy. The text is commonly referred to as “Ulpian’s formula.” Simply put, it was “a schedule for calculating the tax value of annuities” (Scheidel 2001b:19). The formula was used to calculate the value of a bequeathment in the form of an annual payment, or the value of a property that a legatee was entitled to use for the rest of her life (but could not herself bequeath because she did not own it). The following table summarizes the numerical descriptions of the formula (from Parkin 1992:141; cf. Frier 1982:218).

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105 Interpretation of gender in the skeletal material is not always straightforward. Several decades ago, Kenneth M. Weiss compared sex rations in skeletal populations with live populations, and concluded that researchers were more apt to record skeletal remains with unclear gender as male rather than female (1972).
Table 2: Ulpian’s formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of legatee (years)</th>
<th>Ulpian’s formula (x years more to live)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 20</td>
<td>30 years more to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>60 – x – 1 (= 10 to 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The formula suggests that someone who was 20 years old, for instance, could expect to live (and thus receive his legacy or pay the tax on his property) for 28 years more. Although the formula is suggestive of life expectancy in ancient Rome, this was not its intention.\(^{106}\) For true life expectancy, the figures themselves are “implausible” (Parkin 1992:30-33), and the ages are not meant to reflect true mortality rates. This is obvious in the last age category: a person who was sixty or older would be expected to pay taxes based on having five years more to enjoy his legacy or annuity. This may have been a way of requiring tax payment from those sixty and over, who, in other contexts, were given relief from certain public duties (Parkin 1992:30-33; cf. Frier 1982:229-30). The figure of five years had nothing to do with how much life expectancy a sixty or seventy year old was actually expected to have. Harlow and Laurence emphasize the cultural construct behind Ulpian’s formula, namely the separation of three life course stages: childhood (under 20), adulthood (in this case, 20-60), and old age (over 60; 2002:12-13).

In sum, the formula is not statistical, nor is it based on real data or realistic life expectancies (Saller 1994:13-15). Though it has some limited value for comparative purposes, it was basically “good guesswork” (Parkin 1992:38-41).

2.2.5. Model life tables

For some scholars, like Parkin and Saller, the most successful method of ascertaining age structure in the Roman world is using model life tables.\(^{107}\) Model life tables provide statistical information for typical patterns of mortality and fertility (Parkin 1992:72). The models display probable life expectancy for various ages through the life cycle; that is, they calculate the probability of dying (or surviving) when one is in a particular age group (see Appendix 1).

The models are based on known population patterns from European nations in the early 1900s, but they are used where the population patterns are unknown. The model life tables “provide information on populations for which insufficient data are available or where data are of dubious value, in order to test the validity or demographic plausibility of certain assumptions about the population being analyzed” (Parkin 1992:79). In other words, in the face of sparse evidence, as is the case with the ancient Roman population, these models can provide a framework within which to consider population patterns and age structure.

Model life tables display probable demographic patterns based on stable populations (see Parkin 1992:67-90). A stable population refers to a population that is neither expanding nor decreasing (i.e., babies that survive into adulthood replace adults as they die, so that the overall population does not grow or decline over time). The model life tables vary based on the average life expectancy at birth, which varies with different stable populations (e.g., a higher rate of infant mortality lowers the life expectancy at birth).

Typically, one model (or series of models) is chosen based on average life expectancy ascertained from the data we do have (census, epigraphy, osteology, literary data regarding age), and serves to illustrate a fuller view of approximate demographic patterns in the Roman world.

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\(^{107}\) Hopkins first suggested using model life tables to approximate the age structure of the Roman population, after criticizing the reliability of epigraphical evidence for accurate information on age structure and mortality patterns (1966).
Parkin, for example, uses the Coale-Demeny Model Life Table Level 3 West since it represents an average life expectancy at birth of twenty-five years, halfway between the estimated average life expectancy of 20-30 years (1992:79-90). Saller bases his simulations on a range of possible life expectancies: the Coale-Demeny Model Life Table Level 3 West model as a base line, as well as the Coale-Demeny Model Life Table Level 6 West model (life expectancy at birth is 32.5 years) as an “optimistic estimate” of life expectancy and “upper boundary of the probably range” of life expectancy (1994:23). Based on their calculations of life expectancy from Roman Egyptian censuses (estimated at 22-25 years), Bagnall and Frier go the opposite direction, and use Coale-Demney Model Life Table Level 2 West, for which life expectancy at birth is 22.5 years (1994:34-35; 109).

The value of model life tables is that they allow the historian to conceptualize a demographic reality very unlike our own. For instance, relatively few children die in Canada; most families can expect all of their children to grow to adulthood. In ancient Roman society, high infant mortality meant that an average woman might give birth to five babies, but only two or three would reach the age of ten (about half). The observation made above that about one in every three persons who reached the age of fifteen would reach the age of sixty is based on the model life table (Parkin 2003:292). The model life tables suggest it was a predominantly young population, and on average one’s parents died much sooner than typical Canadians experience today.

Model life tables are necessarily based on assumptions that are cause for due caution. Scheidel argues that the models are largely based on twentieth century, relatively stable and healthy European populations (2001a:4), and do not represent real populations. The models are

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108 He uses this model “not because it is certain to represent the Roman experience, but because it provides a general-purpose table that is unlikely to be grossly misleading. With an average life expectancy of twenty-five years, Level 3 falls into the middle of the range of the probable; the region West tables are intended for use where data are not available to make nuanced choices among the regional models. It is a strategy to avoid the need for unattainable precision” (Saller 1994:23).
assumed to represent stable populations. Parkin presumes that fluctuations in the Roman population were short-term, but that the population was stable over the long term (1992:73). On the other hand, Scheidel argues that these models cannot adequately represent the range of variation in demographic possibilities, and thus realistically can represent neither particular local situations nor the age structure as a whole in the ancient Roman world. They do not fit populations with high migration and/or high mortality resulting from malnutrition, epidemics and infectious diseases (e.g., malaria, tuberculosis). These factors did affect the population in the Roman Empire. For example, Roman travel (e.g., by roads, by sea) must have made a significant difference for migration patterns and thus population numbers, especially in urban areas.

Furthermore, Scheidel points out that the causes of death are a “crucial factor” but a “much-neglected subject.” The effects of disease, for instance, do not conform to the model life tables (2001b:17, 24). Disease would have caused variations in death rates in different regions, depending on environment and population density, and in different time periods (2001a:15-19). The prevalence of disease was affected by regional ecology and cultural norms (such as breastfeeding practices; 2001a:5-11). Scheidel suggests that average life expectancy might

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109 Bagnall and Frier note that the great Antonine plague (165-66 CE) would have had more demographic impact than usual fluctuations of food supply (1994:173-78). Eusebius recounts a time of severe decline in that adult population in Alexandria due to plague in 261-62 CE. The deadly disease claimed the lives of people of all ages, from babies to old men. He says that the number of men registered to receive food from the state dropped so low that those between fourteen and eighty made up the same numbers as those between forty and seventy years old before the disease spread (Eccl. Hist. 7.21.9-10).

110 The advice of Soranus for breastfeeding and newborn care (which may reflect common practice, his own idiosyncratic ideas, or a combination of both) if followed, may have adversely affected an infant. For example, he advocated that a newborn not consume colostrum (this substance precedes the production of breastmilk right after birth; Gynecology 2.11), which we now know is important for the newborn immune system. Avoidance of colostrum is common in many cultures, but we cannot know how widespread it was in ancient Roman practice among elite and non-elite (Garsney 1991:58-59). But avoiding it may have compromised Roman health in the short and long term, compromising their bodies’ ability to fight off disease. Also, among the elite, whether or not a woman should breastfeed her own infant or employ a wet-nurse was a matter of debate; poorer women would not have had an option (Harlow and Laurence 2002:41). It is conceivable that lactating women nursed other women’s babies when the need arose among the poorer classes (cf. Dean-Jones 1994:222). Early weaning (introduction of foods other than breastmilk) could be problematic for the baby. Garsney compares sixteenth century urban conditions in which mothers had to return to work away from the home, and did not breastfeed frequently enough
very well have been lower than the models demonstrate in some cities, and significantly higher in particularly favourable locations (2001a:22, 25), emphasizing that particular time and place (climate, ecology and disease prevalence) are crucial for ascertaining mortality patterns (2001a:26).

In sum, the model life tables provide a heuristic tool for considering an age structure that is quite unlike our own, but must be used with caution when applying them to the real populations of the Roman Empire. Ascertaining major causes of death at particular ages in particular regions and time frames would provide a clearer picture of age structure.

2.2.6. Causes of death

While studies of disease and cause of death requires more work, a couple of points can be made with regard to how causes of death affected non-elite demographic patterns in the Roman world.

First, Scheidel argues that the elite in Roman society would not have had significantly higher life expectancy at birth than the non-elite. This is because better nutrition did little to hasten disease, especially in crowded cities where most of the elite resided. Neither did access to ancient medical care provide much help (Scheidel 1999). Disease would affect everyone in the population in similar ways. Therefore, geographical location would have had a greater effect on life expectancy than social position. For example, areas in which malaria was rampant would likely produce lower life expectancy for people in all social positions.\footnote{J. Lawrence Angel reports that in Eastern Mediterranean cities in the early Empire, people experienced a decline in population and lowered fertility as “hallmarks of full Romanization.” While disease, like malaria, accounted for some deaths, the crowded urban setting and warfare may have been more significant for demographic decline. These cities were, however, probably better off than those in Rome where lead poisoning and malaria were particularly devastating to fertility and longevity (1972:101-2).}

to have adequate milk for their infants (1999:64). This seems to me to be a poor comparison of the urban non-elite in Roman cities where women’s work may have been closer to and more associated with the household, but this point would require further research.
Second, it is commonly stated in Roman as well as early Christian studies that many women died of complications related to childbirth (usually stated as death “in childbirth”). As far as I can tell, this claim is not substantiated by current demographic material. Bagnall and Frier observe a sex ratio that remains consistent through the life course according to census reports, and assume that male and female mortality rates were similar. They state: “we are permitted to speculate that male and female life expectancy did not differ widely in Roman Egypt” (1994:108). Similarly, Parkin does not make a distinction between the life expectancy at birth of men and women arguing that maternal death resulting from childbirth is more assumed than documented, and probably not demographically significant (1992:102-5). This area deserves further exploration since scholars often assume many young women died as a result of childbirth.

In sum, the demographic evidence suggests that average life expectancy at birth was about the same for elite and non-elite, and for men and women—somewhere between twenty and thirty years. However, if a person survived the perils of childhood, she or he had a reasonable chance of reaching an age to marry and have children, and some hope of reaching old age. People did not expect to die as young adults, though of course some did. Old age was

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112 In The Downward Journey, as Clotho and Hermes board all of the dead onto the ship to Hades, they record how each person died. Near the end of the list, Hermes asks, “Do you want me to bring in all the women together?” to which Clotho replies, “By all means, and also those lost at sea, for they died in the same way” (6). This is the only mention of women, and there is no explicit mention of women dying in childbirth (unless this reference is metaphorically speaking of it). The other dead include three hundred abandoned babies, three hundred ninety-eight old people (γέρωντας) who are over sixty (ὑπὲρ ἐκεῖσθαι), eighty-four wounded in battle, seven “committed suicide for love,” men who died fighting for “the throne,” a man murdered by his wife and her lover, those who died by execution, sixteen killed by pirates, those lost at sea, and those who died of fever, including a doctor (5-7).

113 The examples are many. Osiek and MacDonald state: “The chances that women would reach old age, however, were dependent on whether they survive their childbearing years. In antiquity, giving birth was by far the greatest threat to a young woman’s life” (2006:20). They include no references for evidence that this is the case. Roman historians also assert this sentiment with little or no evidence to back up the statement. For instance, “The actual act of giving birth was always a dangerous time for mother and child” (Dean-Jones 1994:211-12); and “higher mortality rates among young women because of the dangers of childbirth explain some of the difference [between median age of death for wives and husbands]” (Falkner and de Luce 1992:21). No evidence is provided for these statements.
not unusual, but old people only made up a small portion of the population. People experienced a great deal of death in their families at relatively young ages.

In modern Western societies, we often associate death with aging and old age, but across time and cultures, this has not necessarily been the case. Weiss argues that a strong association between aging and death only occurred in the last century or so because for millions of years most people died of disease or accident before they grew old (1981:56; cf. Pollak 1980). Disease, especially infectious epidemics, mostly affected the very young and very old in pre-industrial societies. The most dramatic change in age population in modern societies has been the reduction of infant mortality due to improved nutrition, medicine and hygiene (Weiss 1981:49-52; cf. Crew 1990:17-18). Peter N. Stearns notes that in pre-industrial societies, infants (not the elderly) were primarily associated with death (1982:8). In his classic cross-cultural work on old age, Leo W. Simmons also asserts the dearth of old people in pre-industrial societies meant that death was not primarily associated with old age, and death was not seen as normal or natural. The sudden and unexpected death of youth and vigorous adults is often considered a result of magic and sorcery (1970 [1945]:217-18; Counts and Counts 1985:150). Weiss comments: “Modern culture allows the rather complete expression of the aging process, which has removed some its mask, if not its mystery” (1980:53). Nevertheless, “all societies value life and seek to prolong it, even in old age” (Cowgill and Holmes 1972:321; cf. Counts and Counts 1985:22).

2.2.7. Mortality crossovers

Comparative data from the anthropology of aging suggests another area of potential study related to the aging patterns of the non-elite. While it could be said that in a very broad sense physical aging is similar for all humans, physical anthropologists argue that there are

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114 In the past, since fewer people grew old, degenerative processes were relatively rare and thus not subject to natural selection. In modern societies, degenerative diseases are still inevitable, but more prevalent because more people live to old age (Weiss 1980:46-50).
cross-cultural differences related to physical changes in the aging process. For example, researchers who have compared advantaged and disadvantaged groups (usually “Blacks” and “Whites” in the United States) have found “mortality crossovers.” This means that in the disadvantaged group, there was a higher mortality rate up to a certain age (around 75 years of age); beyond that age, the advantaged group demonstrated higher mortality. This suggests a “selective survival” of some disadvantaged persons into old age, persons who may not only live longer but be healthier in their old age (Crew 1990:25).

The idea of mortality crossovers might apply to the ancient Greco-Roman world, where the advantaged would be the elite (who wrote most of the extant texts), and the disadvantaged the non-elite masses (including early Christians). Parkin suggests that most older people in the Roman world were not likely to be affluent (2003:224), which fits with Scheidel’s argument that life expectancy had more to do with geographical region than social position. We might see evidence of a mortality cross-over in the statements about very elderly witnesses in Quadratus, or even the robust physical character of Polycarp in the recounting of his martyrdom (though the depiction of his vigour is probably a rhetorical way of demonstrating

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115 For example, see Douglas E. Crew’s summary of cross-cultural variation in bone loss, biochemical changes and neurobiology (1990:18-25). See also Yewoubdar Beyene for variations in reproductive timing and menopausal symptoms in rural Greek and Mayan women (1989).

116 One must recognize that the heterogeneity of persons within the groups labelled “Blacks” and “Whites” is a complicating factor that may skew research results. Nevertheless, the notion that socioeconomic status does not necessarily correlate positively with quality of life in old age is worth considering.

117 Lynch discusses the “cumulative disadvantage” hypothesis as opposed to the “age-as-leveler” hypothesis, noting that whether or not old age brings more socioeconomic disparity for those already disadvantaged is complex because of selective mortality as well as social change across time (recent cohorts seem to demonstrate less disparity, for instance; 2008:128).

118 In the only extant fragment of Quadratus he states that some people who were healed or raised from the dead by Jesus were still alive in the time of Hadrian (Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 2.15; Ehrman 2003:118-19). Hadrian ruled from 117-138 CE. While we cannot be certain this is historically accurate, it is possible. As a hypothetical example, Jesus purportedly healed a twelve year old girl perhaps around 30 CE (Luke 8:42); she would have been about 100 years old in 117 CE. Philip of Side (early fourth century CE) recounted that Papias made a similar statement, but nowhere else is Papias attested to have recorded this, so it may just be a mix up of attribution between Papias and Quadratus (Eccl. Hist.; Ehrman 2003:112-15). Papias himself is referred to as an ancient man (Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 3.39.1).
Polycarp’s honour and ability, it may have some factual basis). Though mostly conjectural, it demonstrates one way that studies of physical anthropology might help us make sense of some ancient evidence pertaining to age.

3. Kin Universe

Based on model life tables, Saller has developed a simulation of the kin universe of men and women (1994:48-65). The simulation presents statistical possibilities for the number and ages of living kin for a person at any given age through the life course. It is based on the numbers in model life tables (Appendix 1). Because of the cautions about using model life tables noted above (§2.2.5), they must be evaluated carefully and taken as approximations only. Nevertheless, if used critically, the simulation is a useful heuristic tool because it suggests ages and numbers of a person’s surviving kin at given ages throughout the life course. Thus we can speculate, for example, the likelihood that someone at the age of 25 had a living father or mother or children. Saller himself emphasizes that this simulation is meant as a general picture of the kin universe, not a record of precise ages (1994:47).

Saller suggests three scenarios. The first he labels “ordinary” based on the assumption that a non-elite woman married at 20, non-elite man married at 30, and they both had a life expectancy at birth of 25 years. He labels the second and third scenarios “senatorial” based on the assumption of earlier marriage of elite people (15 for women, and 20 for men). He presents two scenarios for the elite to reflect two possible figures for life expectancy at birth: 25 years and 32.5 years. The latter is Saller’s attempt to account for a lower morality among the elite. However, since Scheidel convincingly argues that disease would kill elite and non-elite at about

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119 Harlow and Laurence argue that chronological age may not have been consistently accurate in Roman records, especially in old age, but the notion of chronological age was certainly important (e.g., for funerary inscriptions and horoscopes; 2002:13).

120 See Appendix 2 for reproductions of part of the simulation.
the same rate, I have only included simulations based on the life expectancy at birth of 25 (Level 3 West Female; Appendix 2).

Saller’s simulation is based on several important assumptions. First, it assumes that life expectancy at birth is a set figure, namely 25 years. This is a reasonable estimate based on the common suggestion that life expectancy at birth was probably between 20 and 30 years in the Roman world, but the set figure of 25 does not represent the possible range of life expectancy at birth that would have represented various regions and eras in the Roman Empire. Second, Scheidel points out that this age-specific mortality, based on model life tables, inflates the proportion of infant death and underestimates the number of young and middle-aged people who would have died of disease (2001b:34-35). Furthermore, the simulation estimates an age of first marriage for men (25 for elite, 30 for non-elite) that has been challenged by Scheidel and others (2001b:33-34). The challenge pertains more to the age of elite than to non-elite, but the average age of first marriage for either is far from certain.

Finally, the simulation is based on averages, which must be kept in mind for the simulation to be useful. For example, the simulation shows that a 25 year old man was likely to have a father (if he was living) who was 56 years old on average. This average might represent roughly a ten year span of 50 and 60 years old. For an individual case, this depended on how old his father was when he sired his children. In other words, if the father married at 25 and had several children over a ten year span, his children would be 25 to 35 years his junior, making him 50 to 60 years old if each of his sons married at 25. Scheidel makes a similar observation, noting that children born to younger fathers and those born soon after a father marries are much more likely to have their fathers living when they reach maturity than those with older fathers. For example, if a child is born to a 30 year old father, he is 10% more likely to lose his father within fifteen years than a child born to a father that is 20 years old. However, a child born to a 45 year old father (e.g., a man married at 30, having a child 15 years into his marriage) was one
third more likely to lose his father within 15 years than a child born to a 35 year old father (e.g., a man married at 20, having a child 15 years into his marriage; Scheidel 2001b:34).

Saller’s simulation has more significant problems when we look at the woman’s life course, and I find it less useful (Appendix 2.2). First, the simulation assumes women will remarry until the age of 50, but women seem to be less likely to have remarried after the age of 35 (Bagnall and Frier 1994:111-16, 153; cf. Krause 1994:73). Thus the proportions of women with a living husband (more than 0.90 up to age 60) is way too high to fit the data. Second, the simulation cannot account for the numbers of pregnancies a woman would experience, nor the number of infants and children she would lose before they reached adulthood. The average age of her children does not account for individual ages of multiple children, nor how long she was typically fertile.

While Saller’s simulation cannot be used for exact figures, it is useful for suggesting a general picture of how people in the Roman world experienced their kin universe, particularly for the life course of men (Chapter 4).

4. The ancient Roman kin universe and Papyrus Michigan 322

Having sketched broad features of age structure according to demographic evidence and models, as well as some features of Saller’s kinship simulation, I now examine one particular family in Roman Egypt, as represented in a first century legal document. It provides a tangible way to access some effects of age structure in an ancient Roman family. In the document, Psyphis, who was still alive at age 69, and his wife Tetosiris (age 60) divide their property amongst their two sons, two daughters and one grandson (the child of a deceased son). Figure 1 illustrates the kinship relations, and Table 3 summarizes age-related life transitions for this intriguing family (P. Mich.322, 46 CE).\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{121} Translations and commentary can be found in Rowlandson 1998.
Figure 1
Kinship Diagram for P. Mich V.322a (46 CE)

Key:
guardian =
heir =
testator =

Merepsemis age: 45

Dionysios age: 66

Psyphis age: 60

Onnophoris age: 45

Psenkebkis (deceased)

Psenkebkis (minor)

Maron

Psenkebkis

Thaesis age: 2

Tamarres age: 38

Tamarres age: 39

Thaubastis age: 33

Psyphis age: 45

Tetosiris age: 60

Psyphis age: 69
Table 3: Approximate ages during the life course of a family in P. Mich. 322

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin relation</th>
<th>Year (CE)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Life event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43-45?</td>
<td>66-68</td>
<td>57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This family is hardly typical in some ways. It was rare in the ancient world to find both parents still alive in old age (and married for 45 years). Scheidel suggests that one in sixty couples who married at ages twenty-five (for the man) and twenty (for the woman) would be alive and married fifty years later (1999:279-80).\(^\text{122}\) It was rare to have five children who reached adulthood. According to Saller’s kinship simulation, on average a seventy-year old non-

\(^{122}\) Scheidel comments on the good fortune involved in Augustus’ long reign:

When the future Augustus married Livia in 38 B.C., he was twenty-five and his bride twenty years of age. Of every sixty couples of twenty-five year old men and twenty year old women joined in matrimony at that time, only one could still have been together fifty years later. By A.D. 13, Augustus and Livia had become that one couple. When Augustus died the following year, five out of six inhabitants of the empire were unable to remember a time when he had not been their sole ruler. It is hard to estimate the extent to which the successful launch of the Principate, depending as it did on Augustus’ ability to outlive both his rivals and their memory, was facilitated by a statistical fluke. It took four centuries for another emperor, Theodosius II, to rule that long, and if we consider Octavian a co-regent from 43 B.C onward, his luck was without parallel in Roman history. (1999:279-80)
elite man might have 2.3 children (1994:51), and a sixty year old non-elite woman might have 1.8 children (1994:48). It was also rare for parents to relinquish control of their property before death. They were also quite wealthy, and part of a distinguished priestly family. Nevertheless, this family offers us a framework within which to picture women’s and men’s approximate ages at particular life transitions.

Tetosiris (the mother) was fifteen and Psyphis (the father) was twenty-four when their first child was born; they were probably married the year before. These ages would be a little young for typical non-elite Romans elsewhere in the Empire. However, an age gap of nine years between husband and wife was within the typical age range.

Tetosiris was twenty-seven when her last child (who survived to adulthood) was born, and Psyphis was thirty-six. We have no record of their infants or children who did not survive to adulthood. Tetosiris was thirty-three when she became a grandmother; Psyphis was forty-two when he became a grandfather. They had five children live to adulthood, one of whom probably died in his late 30s or early 40s (see below). We do not know if they had any other children who died in infancy or childhood. At ages 60 and 69, they were probably great-grandparents.

Their daughter Tamarres, age 42 at the time the will was drawn up, was probably a grandmother, but we have no information about her descendants. They were part of her husband’s lineage, not hers.

Thaubastis may have been recently widowed or divorced, since no husband is mentioned. According to Bagnall and Frier’s study of Roman Egypt, “evidence for women up to age 35 shows that virtually all older unmarried women had in fact been previously married” (1994:115). However, after the age of 35, a smaller proportion of women were married (e.g., by

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123 The change in ownership appears to take effect immediately because the document states the male heirs will provide materially for their parents for their rest of their lives, specifying monthly supplies of wheat and oil, a rather lavish allowance for expenses and clothing (300 drachma), and provision for outstanding debts and taxes. They are also to provide a suitable funeral for their parents, sharing the expense three ways. This is not a usual set-up, as parents usually retained control of property until death (e.g., P. Kronion 50=P. Mil. Vogl. 84).
age 50, only 30% to 40% of women were married; 1994:126-27, 153-55). Thus, it would not be uncommon to be unmarried at the age of 39 if a first (or subsequent) marriage ended in divorce or the death of a husband. As with Tamarres, any children would be legally part of her husband’s family (whether minors or adults), so they are not mentioned. However, we might consider that under the Augustan laws, before the age of fifty, a woman needed to remarry within two years if she was to receive inheritances or legacies. Therefore, since Thaubastis is written into this will, I would suspect that she had not been widowed or divorced for very long.

We have no information about Onnophoris’ wife except that she is Psyphis’ mother. If Psyphis the grandson (age 27) and Thaesis his wife (age 22) have children, they would be minors, and are not mentioned in the will. It is not clear why Thaesis is mentioned, when other wives are not (perhaps she is a granddaughter, married to her cousin?).

We do not know if Psyphis the younger is married; at age 33, he may be, but his wife is not important in the will.

Tamarres the widow is the only person outside of the patrilineal family to play a significant role in the will. I presume this is because she is acting on behalf of her minor son, and heir, in place of his deceased father, Psenkebkis. Similar to Thaubastis, Tamarres the widow was under fifty, so her husband may have died quite recently as well. They had one surviving child together that is mentioned in the will. We do not know his age, but we can assume he was a minor (which could legally mean as old as twenty-four). Tamarres’ husband Psenkebkis, the deceased brother of the family, might have been any marriageable age at this death, but likely would have been between 36 and 46 when the will was written, if he had lived. If he was the first born son, his mother would not have been much younger than 14 when he was born. He
could have been as old as 46 if he died just before the will was written, which would mean he was eight years older than his wife (a typical age gap for a first marriage).  

The data regarding Psenkebkis the younger does not help much. The only clue we have about his age was that he was not old enough to receive an inheritance on his own behalf. If he was in his early twenties, his father would have been in his forties if he had lived to 46 CE. If Psenkebkis the younger was as old as 24, his mother would have been 14 when he was born. In this case, Psenkebkis and Tamarres would have been married as young adults, and they had only one surviving son. Also, in this scenario Tamarres might have been widowed for a long time (as much as 24 years), and not remarried, perhaps to focus on her son’s interests. However, we do not know when Tamarres was widowed. She may have been married before, and any children in a first marriage would belong to her first husband’s family. Especially if it was a subsequent marriage for both, Psenkebkis and Tamarres might have been closer in age. At 38, Tamarres was still within her childbearing years, so her son could conceivably be as young as a newborn. With the high infant mortality rate, however, it is unlikely that he was that young and mentioned in the will. He was probably at least four (the age at which Ptolemy considered children able to learn and develop personality; *Tetrabiblos* 4.10.205).

On the other hand, it is tempting to slot him into the six year gap in ages between Thausbastis and Psyphis, since there is a three year gap between the other children. This would make him 36 if he had lived until 46 CE. However, families rarely have such precision in age gaps! He could have been younger, but it was unlikely that he would marry a woman who was too much older than him as a young man. It is possible that the mother breastfed her children for at least two years, experiencing lactation amenorrhea (the absence of menstruation due to frequent breastfeeding), then conceiving and giving birth about three years after the previous child. It is also possible that the ages of the children are altered slightly in the will to fit a culturally significant pattern, or a pattern that was important to their priestly status. I have taken the ages at face value since I have no evidence for the latter, nor are the ages rounded in any perceptible way as they sometimes are in inscriptions (ending in X or V).

The situation may be similar to that of Pudentilla, who did not remarry when her husband died because she wanted to keep a close relationship with her two sons who were under the *potestas* of their paternal grandfather. Her father-in-law wanted her to marry his other son (in order to keep her property, or dowry at least, in the family), and threatened to disinherit her sons if she did not. She agreed to the marriage, but did not actually follow through. When her father-in-law died, she married another man, Apuleius, who was younger than her. Her younger son, who was probably between 15 and 25 and under the influence of his paternal uncle/guardian, considered her new husband and potential step-siblings as rivals for her property. Apuleius, who was being charged with bewitching Pudentilla, argued that most of the inheritance would go to Pudentilla’s sons in the end (*Apologia*; Harlow 2007:203).
The overall inheritance pattern demonstrates that daughters, though involved with their husband’s families, are still part of the natal family. The mother, Tetoisiris retains her ties with her natal family, for her nephew (her sister’s son) is her guardian. Similarly, Tamarres the widow is connected to her natal family (her guardian is her brother), but involved in her in-laws’ will on behalf of her son. As a daughter-in-law, she retains an important position in the family because she is the mother of Psenkebkis the younger.

Even though the adult children of Physis and Tetoisiris are obliged to take care of their parents, it is unclear whether the parents reside with one of their children. Their wealth would suggest they could have servants care for them. The adult children of both genders appear to be in regular contact with their parents. While Roman historians emphasize the centrality of the nuclear family unit (husband, wife and children) in the *familia*, they do not always stress the continuity of relationship between grown children and their adult parents, including daughters.

5. Conclusion

The demography of the ancient world cannot produce exact numbers for mortality, fertility and migration, and thus for life expectancy. Material and textual data along with critical use of model life tables suggest an average life expectancy at birth of 20 to 30 years. However, a person who survived their precarious first years of life had a good chance of living into full adulthood. Ancient Romans expected to live to old age, even if relatively few did. Saller’s kin universe simulations demonstrate the value of applying demographic data to age structure and family dynamics of the Roman world. Scheidel’s critique of the simulations points to the ongoing revision of strategies to ascertain the demographic realities of the Roman world.

126 It is curious that Tamarres the daughter’s husband is listed as her guardian, as this is not typical, and there is some legal precedent against this.
The kin universe of a Roman family was, on average, far from complete due to late marriage and death before old age. Nevertheless, the natal family probably still had a central role in a person’s life, even into adulthood because of factors like inheritance and filial duty. The family also played the central role in a person’s life course.
Chapter 4: The Life Course in Mediterranean Cultures

1. Introduction

Having considered ancient demographic realities, I now discuss age structure in the ancient Mediterranean by considering the life courses of women and men. The evidence from the ancient Mediterranean often demonstrates clear parallels to modern Mediterranean ethnographic material: there is a strong contrast between stages of life; cultural expectations of certain chronological ages and/or social ages influenced how people were viewed and how they behaved (Harlow and Laurence 2002:17); and age appropriate behaviour was strongly gendered. In both cases the family or household formed the basis of a typical life course, and so perpetuated the generational cycle.

2. The generational cycle and the life course approach

In modern ethnographies, age and life stages are often correlated with specific cultural roles, responsibilities and behaviours. Age structure reveals how age status (i.e., social roles based on age) is defined in a particular culture, and how people of different age statuses relate (intergenerational relationships). How we understand age and aging in the Mediterranean is contingent upon the generational cycle—young people grow old, and replace their elders in the social system as their children in turn fulfill the role of young adults (Figure 2).

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127 The anthropology of aging is has slowly been increasing in importance in anthropological theory (Kertzer and Keith 1984:13-14). Lawrence Cohen notes that while anthropologists have lamented the paucity of attention paid to age and aging in anthropology, there are, in fact, numerous monographs and articles that do focus on age. He is critical of this subfield because it does not often consider the insights of the self-reflective, post-modern anthropology of the late twentieth century, especially the biases of the anthropologist, ageist language and other hegemonic effects of the researcher’s perspective of the elderly (1994). As an exceptional example, he lauds the efforts of Barbara Myerhoff who donned gardening gloves and heavy shoes in regular daily activities in try to experience a glimpse of the physical efforts of her elderly informants (1979:18-19).

128 Similar to my “generational cycle,” Harlow and Laurence define the “life cycle” as a “cumulative patterning of life courses [which] is the life cycle of a society” reproduced generation to generation (2002:4).
Figure 2: The generational cycle

Cultural values determine

Cultural expression of GENERATIONAL CYCLE

Roles based on age status

OLDER (parent) dictates becomes cares for BEHAVIOUR within intergenerational relationships

YOUNGER (child) reflects
The generational cycle has a two-pronged definition. On the one hand, it is the ongoing process of family members in successive generations passing through the life course. On the other hand, it is the experience of an individual family member during her or his own life course. The life course is the life-long process of growing up and growing old, including life transitions and concomitant role changes, and changes in expected behaviour toward different generations (cf. Clark 1983:121-22).

This definition is informed by the “life course approach.” This approach has been used in sociological, anthropological and historical studies of age and aging (e.g., Hareven 1982). It is a “theoretical orientation” that offers a “holistic understanding of lives over time and across changing social contexts” (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe 2003:15). In order to study any stage in the human life span effectively, one must consider both cultural and social norms of the whole life course (various roles, life decisions and transitions), as well as the historical context of a person or age cohort. In the life course perspective, the individual is linked to social change within the historical circumstances of her or his life time. She or he makes decisions within the opportunities available in a particular historical and social framework. For example, individuals who were part of the young adult age cohort that experienced the Depression of the 1930s had certain characteristics as they grew old that were unique to that historical experience. “A life-course perspective helps us understand how problems, needs, and patterns of adaptation of older

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129 Glen H. Elder, Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson and Robert Crosnoe outline five basic principles for employing the life course perspective (2003:11-13). I frame these in terms of individual persons, since everyone ages as an individual: “aging and death occur individually, and not as a collective process” (Weiss 1981:27). First, the life course perspective focuses on development over the life span, considering the life-long process of a person’s or cohort’s aging and development, as opposed to an age specific study. Second, the life course perspective recognizes the active choices of individuals and/or cohorts, within the limitations and possibilities of a particular historical and social context. Third, the life course perspective identifies historical events that occur within a person’s life course, for this affects decisions and life possibilities. Fourth, according to the life course perspective, as a person ages, she or he experiences different roles and concomitant changes in behaviour, which may depend on other factors such as gender, class, wealth, ethnicity and earlier life experiences (cf. Hareven 1982:6-9). Fifth, the life course perspective takes into account the relationships and interdependence of individuals, since each family member’s decisions affect others, and the timing of role transitions is linked with obligations to the family and its needs.
people were shaped by their earlier life experiences and by historical conditions” (Hareven 2001:142).

Early Christian texts generally offer few clues about life course decisions and historical circumstances. However, the life course perspective challenges us to consider life course transitions, life-long historical and social context, and relational interdependence over the life course that may have affected the decisions and behaviour of the people represented by the text.

3. Definitions

Before outlining the life course, there are two items that require elaboration as a basis for the life course, namely the Roman household and “old age.”

3.1. The context of the household

In Mediterranean cultures, a person’s identity was always embedded in the group, and the family forms the most basic level of a person’s identity (Osiek and Balch 1997:215; Moxnes 1997:20). The life course was experienced on an individual level, but always within the context of a person’s position in the family and household.130 The Roman household was the “location of the life course” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:20).

It is typical to refer to the Roman household (domus or οἰκός) rather than the familia to denote the typical domestic unit we might call “family.” Bradley states, “the Roman family is an ambiguous concept and defies easy definition” (1991:5).131 The Roman domus (often meaning household, or living unit) included those related by blood or marriage and others (slaves and

130 Laurence confirms the centrality of family identity for each family member over individual identity with an example from inscriptions on columelle in Pompeii. The inscriptions seldom mention age, but for those that do, more than half are for females ages 18 to 32, and males from 0 to 7 make up the majority. Such a small sample of ages does not reflect demographic realities, but Laurence offers a more practical explanation. Rather than the life course of an individual, the inscription represents the person’s familia identity. When a young woman dies, her kin publicly mourns the loss of new familia, as well as potential descendants that she could have produced. A male child’s death threatens the loss of the entire familia (2007:109).

131 This is also true, he notes, of our own definition of “family.” It can mean a person’s partner and children or a person’s siblings and parents, or kin relations beyond one’s “immediate family” (cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents). Close friends may even adopt familial language.
domestic servants) within the household, with the husband, wife and children as the typical core unit. The Roman *familia*, by contrast, referred to those under the power of the *paterfamilias*, by nature (primarily children and descendants through the male line), or by law (slaves). Women were typically married *sine manu* by the first century, meaning they continued to be under their father’s *potestas* (power) rather than their husband’s, as long as their father was alive. In other words, a woman belonged to her father’s *familia* but to her husband’s *domus* (Bradley 1991:4, 9-10; Saller 1994:74-83; Parkin and Pomeroy 2007:72). One’s *familia* identity was important for legal matters, but the *domus* was the focus of social interaction, and thus of the experience of the life course. I assume that the “location of the life course” was similar for elite and non-elite persons in that it began in the household; that is, the life course was based in the experience of the family (and slaves or other individuals) who lived together.133

The *domus* was integral to family honour: the *paterfamilias* protected his household, and the members of the household maintained virtue, in order to maintain honour and prestige for the household. Intergenerational relationships were crucial to the household because of inheritance. Children and wealth (which preserved social standing) ensured the survival of the household and the maintenance of its honour (Saller 1994:86). Cicero notes that because of reproduction, the husband-wife unit is most important (*On Moral Duties* 1.17.54), but matters of generational continuity and inheritance, suggest the parent-child, especially the father-son, relationship was central (Moxnes 1997:31; Lassen 1997:111-12).134

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132 Moxnes distinguishes between family (encompassing kinship grouping, as well as certain symbols, values and meaning), the household (a residence unit in one location that was task-oriented and functional), kinship (the larger network of relatives based on birth and marriage, which may involve political power), and family history (a process through which the family interacts with external society and wider kin; 1997:16-17).

133 The experience of the household would have been quite different, however, depending on a person’s wealth. The elite class also owned slaves, who attended to everything from finances to gardening, and functioned as personal assistants, nursemaids, and entertainers for lavish evening meals (Harlow and Laurence 2002:21-22). The non-elite laboured themselves for their family’s survival, or if they owned slaves, would have laboured alongside them.

134 Similarly, the father-son relationship is pivotal in the male life course, especially the son or sons who will inherit the father’s property (Cool and McCabe 1983:65).
Understanding the ancient family and household is crucial for studying early Christian communities. Christians assembled in house churches, employed fictive kin language for fellow members, and often incorporated whole households into the community (Ascough 1998:9; Osiek and Balch 1997:33-34). Paul used familial language in his letters, most notably the term ἀδελφός (literally “brother”), but also father-child language (e.g., 1 Thess 2:9-12; Aasgaard 2004:285-95). Most importantly for my thesis, the family and the household continued to provided metaphors for the self-conception and social interaction of early Christian communities in the late first and early second centuries (e.g., Eph 2:19; Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 4:17; Osiek and Balch 1997:215). The author 1 Timothy explicitly conceives of the community as “the household of God” (1 Tim 3:15). The household metaphor “shapes” the content and character of the letter (Horrell 2008; cf. Verner 1983).

In this account of the life course, I consider free persons who have status and reputation to be gained or lost. Slaves might attain some status, but they were in the lowest social position in society. While their sex (male or female) was clear, they did not have “gender”; that is, they did not have the responsibilities or rights of a free man or woman (Osiek and MacDonald 2007:96). They could neither legally marry nor call their offspring their own children. They either lived servile lives from childhood, became slaves at some point in the life course due to conquest, or perhaps became freedpersons. They might be manumitted after a certain number of years of service to their master, or in old age (when they were no longer productive). Slaves within the early Christian movement had no different legal status than slaves in society at large, and there is not much evidence for greater numbers of slaves being manumitted by Christians. In fact, early Christian texts indicate that the community did not view slaves in a way substantially different than the rest of society. For example, 1 Tim 6:1-2 indicates that slaves should behave properly by Honouring their masters, serving them with respect. The author of Ephesians says plainly, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling” (6:5; cf. Col 3:22-4:1, Tit
As in society at large, slaves in Christian communities were in a different social category than free men and women. Aspects of the life course might be similar for slaves and freepersons, but we cannot assume they would be the same. Therefore, the life course of slaves is a topic I do not address here.

The extant literary sources accurately represent only a small minority of elite people in the early Roman Empire. The lives of the non-elite are less accessible to scholars, since most texts were written by, and reflect the perceptions of, elite men. Nevertheless, since the household provided the main social unit for age structure, stereotypes of age-related behaviour, life course stages and the general age structure of the culture were probably comparable between elite and non-elite populations.

3.2. Defining old age

In modern Western society, we commonly use chronological age to denote “old age.” For example, people often retire from their adult career at age sixty-five. Canadians are eligible to receive Canada Pension after age sixty. Some businesses offer a discount for those who are over fifty. Chronological ages create societal standards for who might be considered “old,” but many of those who fit such categories would not consider themselves “old,” nor do they necessarily appear “old.” All people experience the natural, observable processes of age and aging, but chronological age is not important or relevant in all cultures (Fortes 1984:99). Less precise, but more useful is functional age, which measures age in terms of ability; “old” is defined in terms of activity, physical strength, mental sharpness, cognitive functioning, and overall independence or dependence.135 A physically debilitated sixty year old is functionally

135 Other measures of age include historical age (the ability to remember significant events within a person’s lifetime), social age (based on the timing of major transitions from one life stage to another, often defined by rites of passage), and biological age (used by physical anthropologists studying skeletal remains to measure functionality). Regarding biological age, skeletal remains do not demonstrate the true population structure related to age and sex because the skeletal record is never complete (due to varying rates of decomposition, cultural burial practices, etc.). It is difficult to measure age in adult bones (Crew 1990:13-14), but continue revisions to improve the accuracy of these measurements.
older than an eighty-year old who is physically active. The distinction between chronological and functional age alerts us to problems of indiscriminately grouping together people of like chronological age, and thus reifying a particular age group, especially in old age where physical and mental functions can vary widely (Crew 1990:27-28). In pre-modern societies, a person may be considered old earlier than in modern society, especially because age is typically based on function (e.g., the advisory position of an elder) or life stage (e.g., grandparent) rather than chronology (Cowgill and Holmes 1972:322).

People in Mediterranean peasant cultures do not define old age in chronological years as much as by social role and functionality. Someone who has attained old age is usually a grandparent and/or has finished raising her or his own children (Campbell 1964:83; Friedl 1962:88; cf. Campbell 1964:290; Hirschon 1983:122-23). This may correlate with the onset of menopause for women (Stirling 1965:101; Abu-Lughod 1986:133-34) and the inability to continue in strenuous activity for men (Stirling 1965:224). Also at this point they are simply older than many others in the family and community (Abu-Lughod 1986:163).

Gerontologists distinguish between active older people, called “young-old,” and those who are dependent, called “old-old” (e.g., Hareven 1982:13; Foner 1984:3-4, 240). The young-old, or intact, are those who can still care for their own daily needs. She or he is often in a position of power in the family and/or society, having attained the experience and stage of the life course necessary to be, for example, head of the household with married sons, or mistress of the house with daughters-in-law doing much of the work. A person who is old-old, or decrepit, has relinquished some or all of this power and responsibility to a younger adult. She or he contributes to household or outside work in only a minor way, spends time at home, and is

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136 People may also appear older at a younger age in pre-modern societies. In an Iraqi village, Fernea observed a woman from a poor family who was forty-five, but looked like she was seventy (1965:42).
usually dependent on care because of illness, senility or disability that comes from aging.\textsuperscript{137} The young-old have more power and authority than the old-old. Rather than a distinction between the two categories, it is more helpful to consider a range of functionality in old age, from “intact” to “decrepit.” These categories are useful for distinguishing phases in the latter years of the life course.

4. The life course

The life course is an individual experience affected by personal decisions and life circumstances (e.g., the death of a close family member). However, cultural expectations related to social position, status, gender and geographical location strongly guide a person’s life course as well. Every culture has a normative framework for how a person progresses through life (Harlow and Laurence 2002:3).\textsuperscript{138}

I now turn to the broad strokes of the life course for ancient Mediterranean men and women. Just as gender and gendered characteristics (e.g., courage is masculine; women are prone to gossip) are socially constructed, so also life stages and what is appropriate behaviour for certain age groups is socially constructed. The life course for men and women differs significantly.

\textsuperscript{137} It is a stage in preindustrial societies that does not usually last very long before death (Counts and Counts 1985:6; Amoss and Harrell 1981:3). Fernea’s description of Iraqi women clearly illustrates the difference between young-old and old-old women. The “old” women who danced and chanted at a religious gathering contrast with an “old” woman on a bed in the corner who groaned and shifted occasionally. The old-old woman died shortly after (1965:108-12, 289-90). These categories are not always distinguished in ethnographies (Counts and Counts 1985:6).

\textsuperscript{138} The life course approach has only recently been used in Classical Studies. Pioneering this work, Harlow and Laurence explore an “age-based approach” to studying Roman social life (2007:23-24) that proposes a “framework for the study of temporal experience in the Roman world” (2002:147). Their focus is “underlying codes of behaviour or the expectations of others when viewing the actions of a person according to their age” with awareness of “variation in the life course” (2002:1).
4.1. The life course for men

The ancient evidence for men’s life course is much more explicit, albeit often idealized, than for women’s life course. I focus on the non-elite when possible and point to similarities in the modern Mediterranean where appropriate.

4.1.1. Idealized life stages

Several ancient elite sources explicitly outline male life stages, based on chronological ages; other sources reveal stereotypical expectations for how men in particular age groups should behave. It is important to note that these life stages cannot be applied uncritically to all people. Since they are gender-specific, they only outline the male life course and usually relate to the public and/or political life of the elite. In addition, we can ascertain some probabilities related to a man’s life course through Saller’s simulation of the kin universe (1994).

Cicero succinctly describes four stages of life for the Roman male:

Life’s race-course is fixed; Nature has only a single path and that path is run but once, and to each stage of existence has been allotted its own appropriate quality (tempestivitas); so that the weakness (infauditas) of childhood, the impetuosity (ferocitas) of youth, the seriousness (gravitas) of middle life, the maturity (maturitas) of old age—each bears some of Nature’s fruit, which must be garnered in its own season‖ (On Old Age 10.33).

Similarly, Aristotle described three stages of the male life course: youth, the prime of life and old age. The behaviour and attributes of youth are directly opposite those of old age: the young are changeable and prone to excess; they have violent desires, courage, hope, passion, confidence; they are ambitious for honour and victory more than money; having not experienced want, they prefer honour rather than being concerned for what is advantageous; their peers are important, and they think they know everything. The old are materialistic, ungenerous, and seek

\[\text{139} \text{ Perhaps because they are relegated to the female sphere, male children are not mentioned as much as older males. In modern Edremit, Turkey, a boy of six is circumcised. He remains with the women until the day after the ritual when he is transferred to “the world of men” (Fallers and Fallers 1976:265).}\]
expediency over principle. The prime of life, which begins physically at 30 or 35 years old and mentally at 49, avoids the extremes of both (Art of Rhetoric 2.12-14).

Other writers suggest more detailed stages with similar attributes. For example, Ptolemy associated seven life stages with astrological signs and development (second century; Tetrabiblos 4.10): infancy (0-4) is a time of fast growth and malleability; childhood (4-14) is a time to learn, develop personality and start physical exercises; youth (14-22) is a time when he believes men are sexually uncontrollable and prone to errors in judgement; a young man (22-41) is in the prime of life, exercises control, and desires honour and reputation; a man from 41-56 years old is past his prime and expects difficulty; the elderly (56-68) have given up labour, but might be sage advisors; old age (68 and over) is characterized by decline. These seven stages are ideal rather than practical or exact. They do illustrate general attitudes and cultural expectations for children, youth and mature men, focusing particularly on maturity.

Certain behaviour and distinct characteristics were appropriate to certain ages (Eyben 1993:9-11). In the first century CE, Horace addresses how actors should be aware of performing for their audience according to their age. A child is emotional and changeable. A youth is determined and filled with passions and ideals. As a man grows up, he gains self-control, tenacity and concern for honour, and recognizes that his actions have consequences. An old man

140 According to Philo, Hippocrates posited seven ages: παιδίου, παιδός, μειρακίου, νεανίσκου, ἀνδρός, πρεσβύτου, γέροντος (On the Creation 35[104]). Philo recounted the stages of life as described by Athenian lawgiver Solon, ten stages of seven years each. For Philo, seven is an important number in nature, mathematics, astronomy and the Judean belief system. Up to 7, the male Roman is a boy; 7-14 he is a youth; 14-21 he grows a beard; 21-28 he gains manly strength; from 28-35 he marries and has children; from 34-42 he has “good sense” and self-control (unlike in his younger years); from 42-56 (the seventh and eighth “week” of years) he is strongest in insight and “power of speech”; from 56-63 he is still strong and wise, but “softer”; from 63-70 he is at the end of life (On the Creation 30-43 [89-128]). Similar stages continued in rabbinical Jewish thought, but focused more on Jewish study and community: “At five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years old for the Mishnah, at thirteen for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bride-chamber, at twenty for pursuing [a calling], at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty for to be an elder, at seventy for grey hairs, at eighty for special strength [cf. Ps 90:10], at ninety for bowed back, and at a hundred a man is as one that has [already] died and passed away and ceased from the world” (m. Aboth 5.21).
is fearful of poverty and of death, apt to complain and reminisce about his younger days, and
disciplines the young (Ars Poetica 156-78).

These schemes describe stereotypical characteristics associated with particular stages of
the life course. The age specifications reflect socially constructed expectations of age roles,
involving preparation for and involvement in public life (for the elite) or a trade (for the non-
elite), as well as marriage. This is similar to modern Mediterranean boys who are socialized to
prepare them for eventual decision-making and family leadership (Kiray 1976:268). These
schemes are also ideological in that they reflect and help to sustain social norms and political
structures. According to Dio Cassius in Augustus’ time, a man had to be 25 before becoming a
senator and 30 before becoming a praetor (52.20.1-2). These ages (not unlike age restrictions in
any culture) are somewhat arbitrary in that an individual may or may not reach a certain level of
maturity by the age of 25 or 30.

4.1.2. Youth

Roman youth was considered a time of leisure and freedom before their adult
responsibility began (although freedom could be curtailed for youth with a living father).141
Young men were thought to be passionate but lacked reason; they were also considered pliable
and courageous (Eyben 1993:28-29; 37). It was a “slippery age” (lubricum aetatis) when young
men needed direction and supervision, since they tended to be foolish and morally irresponsible
(Eyben 1993:14-21). For example, Horace characterizes young men as follows:

The beardless youth, with his guardian finally removed, rejoices in horses and dogs and in
the grass of the sunny Campus; supple as wax to be fashioned into vice, he is rude to those
who give him advice, slow at providing for what is useful, extravagant with money, filled

141 Among the elite, there was usually a prolonged time between the end of childhood and full adult status that
could be considered “liminal” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:65). A young man put on the adult toga (toga virilis) in
his mid-teens (between fourteen and seventeen, the latter being the age at which he could enter the military), but
was not considered a responsible adult until about twenty-five, the age of marriage (Eyben 1993:6-7; Harlow and
Laurence 2002:65). This was also the age at which an elite man could begin his public life. Donning the adult toga
for an elite Roman was a coming of age ceremony. He became a Roman citizen, celebrating publicly in the Forum
of Augustus, surrounded by statues of famous men who provided examples of virtue, reminding the young man to
strive for pietas (duty to parents, ancestors, gods and state; Harlow and Laurence 2002:67-69).
with lofty ideas and passionate, but also swift to abandon the objects of his affectation. \textit{(Ars Poetica} 158-65; translation by Golden 1995)

Young men were considered impulsive and aggressive, with an uncontrollable sexuality. Their behaviour was considered normal for their age and generally tolerated. Cicero thought it was an age when young men chose a life of vice or virtue \textit{(Cicero On Moral Duties} 1.32.118; Harlow and Laurence 2002:69).

In Roman law, a boy under the age of fourteen required a \textit{tutor} (defined as a “protector” of someone who could not protect himself due to his age; \textit{Digest} 26.1.1), but no tutor was needed if the father left no property to his son \textit{(Digest} 26.3.7; cf. 38.17.2.26). At age fourteen he was considered a legal adult \textit{(Saller} 1994:185). From age fourteen until age twenty-five a \textit{curator} (who functioned very much like a tutor) was usually appointed for a young man’s interests.\textsuperscript{142} A man under the age of twenty-five was not liable for being misguided in finances, based on the belief that he was not considered capable of sound public decisions before this time.\textsuperscript{143} Interestingly, this law changed the former age of responsibility (seventeen years old) after the Punic War when tensions between generations were extreme \textit{(Eyben} 1993:7; see Chapter 7, §4.1).

Most evidence for the liminality of male youth is from elite sources, but the prevalence of this notion in the ancient literature and among modern rural Mediterranean folk suggests the non-elite may have shared these ideas. In modern Mediterranean cultures, young men emerge from the private sphere of the household and spend time in the public sphere (e.g., streets, 

\footnote{\textsuperscript{142} The institution of \textit{cura minorum} was suggested in the \textit{lex Laetoria} in 191 BCE, instituted fairly consistently during the Principate, eventually becoming required in the late empire, functioning in the same way as tutelage \textit{(Saller} 1994:188-89).}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{143} Ulpian states: “The praetor following natural equity has issued this edict in which he has undertaken the protection of \textit{minores}. For since all agree that person of this age are weak and deficient in sense and subject to many kinds of disadvantage the praetor has promised them relief in the edict and help against imposition. The praetor says in the edict: ‘With respect to what is alleged to have been done by a person under twenty-five, I shall treat the case as the circumstances demand.’ It is evident that he offers to help those under twenty-five. For it is agreed that after this age the strength of a full-grown man is reached. And therefore, today, up to this age, young men are governed by curators and under this age the administration of their own property should not be entrusted to them, even though they might be able to look after their own affairs well.” \textit{(Digest} 4.4.1).}
businesses, religious buildings, coffee-houses) with male friends and/or at work with their fathers (Fallers and Fallers 1976:255-57). It is considered a time of social and sexual passion and freedom (Stirling 1965:223). When they marry and have children, men become adults, with adult responsibilities and obligations.\footnote{Abu-Lughod’s description of life stages in Bedouin society revolves around the concept of ‘agal, which has to do with reason, social sense and self-control. It is the opposite of passion. It is correlated with maturity and the development of responsibility in the life course. Children are born with almost none. Youth, associated with passion and being religiously and socially flawed, have little ‘agal. At the age of forty, one begins to be “wise” or “reasonable,” important in the political realm and especially important for senior men. Those without ‘agal remain dependent and without honour. The development of ‘agal continues into old age unless one becomes senile (1986:90-91).}

\subsection{Maturity}

At seventeen, a young Roman man was eligible for military service.\footnote{From age 17 to 46 a soldier was considered \textit{iuniores} (younger men); soldiers older than this were called \textit{seniores} (older men; Aulus Gellius 10.28.1; Parkin 2003:95).} Often after he had military experience, at 25 or 30 years of age, he got married. This was a sign of maturity. Elite men may have married earlier for political reasons (Saller 1987:21-34), for it was at this age that they ideally began political life in the \textit{cursus honorum} (that is, their political career path; Harlow and Laurence 2002:73-77). Men were typically older than their young brides by five to ten years.\footnote{For evidence from inscriptions, see Shaw 1987:43. For evidence from Roman Egypt, see Bagnall and Frier 1994:118-19. Harlow and Laurence outline three marriage scenarios: (1) The marriage of a 25 year old male to a 15 year old female linked three generations and a long, stable marriage was expected (2002:97). (2) A 40 year old bridegroom preferred a young bride because older women might be more powerful and more assertive because of their status boost after having children (2002:85, 90). In this case, the groom and his father-in-law are of similar ages, creating an alliance through the young bride. This scenario would be especially important for man who needed heirs (2002:97-98). (3) Occasionally, an old man (say about 60) might marry a young virgin, but his was usually ridiculed because this marriage was “subverting the normal life course” (2002:98-99).} Harlow and Laurence describe elite marriage as important for kin extension and social networks (2002:92-103), but this would be true of non-elite as well.

The life course of non-elite men would have focused not on public or political life, but on occupation (if they were not poverty-stricken). A son traditionally followed his father in his trade or occupation, as is found in the modern Mediterranean (e.g., barber, mason, farmer; Chapman 1971:33). In Roman times, a contract was made between a young man’s father (or
guardian) and a master who taught the young man his trade. The apprenticeship could for last several months or a couple of years, during which time the young man learned the trade while receiving room and board and residing in the household and under the authority of his master (Hübner 2009:75).

In one apprenticeship contract (dated 66 C.E.), a father sends his son who is “not yet of age” to a master weaver in order for his son to learn the weaving trade. The father agrees to provide food and clothing and pay taxes for the boy, but the master weaver agrees to pay a monetary amount in compensation for food and clothes. The boy is obligated to work for a full year. If he missed any days, they would be worked when the initial year is up, or compensated with silver. The master was liable if he failed to instruct the boy (P.Oxy. 2.275; translation in Lewis and Reinhold 1990:133-34). An apprenticeship may have impacted a young man’s lifestyle and decisions in many ways, including the physical rigours of learning a trade. Saller notes that freeborn children suffered corporal punishment in apprenticeships.

By middle age (in his forties or fifties) a modern Mediterranean man has normally become head of the household, so his power and responsibility are at their peak. He provides for his children as best he can (e.g., education, dowry; Fallers and Fallers 1976:259). He procures marriages for his adult children (mothers are usually involved in arranging marriages, as well), thus demonstrating his ability to provide dowries for daughters and inheritance for sons.

147 Apprenticeship contracts were created for young free boys as well as young slaves (boys and girls) who were about twelve or thirteen years old. They were similar in form, specifying the length of the apprenticeship and obligations of both the apprentice, the instructor and the parent or master (Rowlandson 1998:267-68).

148 This statement is based on Augustine (1994:152): “boys (puer) are compelled by painful penalties to learn their trades (artificia), or letters (litteras). And the work of learning, to which they are driven by the penalties, is so much a punishment for them that sometimes they prefer to endure the penalties by which they are being driven to learn, rather than to learn” (City of God 21.14; for Augustine’s own experience of learning, see Confessions 1.9). Seemingly unrelated factors, like marriage, might affect occupation as well. In a study of modern bakers in France, Daniel Bertaux observes the changes a young apprentice experiences. He is forced to rise early in the morning for work, so that his body’s rhythms are permanently altered. If he marries a woman who is willing to help him in his trade, he is more likely to own his own bakery. Otherwise, he remains a labourer (1982:131-47). There may have been similar effects in trades in the ancient city. Cicero distinguishes between noble and vulgar occupations, praising skill, honesty and intelligence over labour, performance and money collecting (among other things), and lauding agriculture above all (On Moral Duties 1.150-51).
In middle age the elite Roman man was judged by his public life, offices or honours held (Harlow 2007:197). While the non-elite could not hold high office, men still strove to incur positions of honour in the semi-public realm, such as in associations. MacMullen imagines the life of a non-elite Roman man who lived above subsistence level:

Like ourselves, the Roman in his one-room shop, in the back of which he and his wife and children slept and in front of which he spent the day making and selling (let us say) articles of felt, did not look forward to a future altogether without prospects. He could realistically aim at an apprenticeship for his son and the lad’s help in the business later. He could realistically aim at the secretaryship of his crafts’ local guild. While he might buy from an astrologer the promise of an inheritance, just as today he buys a state lottery ticket, when he turned from fantasy to fact he found much to give significance and self-respect to his life. (1974:119-20; cf. Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:57)

This imagined description gives us a sense of a non-elite man’s potential lifestyle and occupation, as well as the importance of filial relationships and voluntary association in his life. A more complete picture would include a sense of group-oriented personality, or connectedness to his kin and neighbours (cf. Malina 1993:63-73). The description idealizes the prospects for such a man, assuming that his son would survive to adulthood and that he would grow old guiding his son. This was not the case for many fathers of sons who died in childhood, nor for many young men who lost their fathers before they reached adulthood.

According to a man’s age of marriage, it follows that most fathers were at least 25 years older than their children (Saller 1987:29). Saller’s simulation of the kin universe suggests that if a man married at age 25, his father would be (on average) 56 (elite) to 59 (non-elite) years old, if he was still alive (Appendix 2.1, Table 7.2). By the age of 25, more than half of all sons would be fatherless, and by age 35 more than three-quarters would be fatherless. Therefore, many adult sons would no longer be living under patria potestas and would themselves function

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149 His wife’s would experience of the life course would be quite different.

150 According to Saller’s simulation (Appendix 2.1, Tables 8.1and 8.3), 43% of elite men at the age of 25 would have a living father (39% of non-elite men), 32% would have a living father at age 30 (28% for non-elite), 22% would have a living father at age 35 (17% for non-elite), and 13% would have a living father at age 40 (9% for non-elite).
as *paterfamilias*, though if they were under twenty-five they would still require a *curator* for legal transactions.

Saller does not include the ages of a man’s parents-in-law, but derived from the female tables (not reproduced here), if an elite woman married at the age of 20, her father would be 46.5 years old on average (1994:56), so that there may have been a 10 to 15 year gap between the man’s father and his father-in-law. When his father stepped away from public life at around sixty, this man would still have access to his father-in-law as a powerful middle-aged man, perhaps at the height of his public power. In this way, his father-in-law may act a kind of patron (Harlow and Laurence 2002:10-11, 95-97, 145). Having his father-in-law as a patron would be important for elite men in the political realm, but might also be important among the non-elite, specifically for a young man’s status in a trade or voluntary association. However, due to presumably later ages of marriage among the non-elite, the gap may be wider. According to Saller’s simulation, a non-elite woman who married at 20 would on average have a father aged 55, making him 25 years older than her husband (Appendix 2.2, Table 8.2).

Another implication of a man’s age of marriage is that he would have been between 50 and 60 before he saw his children marry and have children of their own, and thus observe his line of succession. In other words, few fathers would be alive to see their grandchildren (Saller 1987:30, 1994:121).}

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151 Note the error in Table 7.1 in Harlow and Laurence, who use Saller’s simulation of the kin universe (2002:96). The father of a male Roman would be 56 rather than 51, as shown in Saller’s Appendix, Table F.

152 Parkin notes that a man could not expect to become a paternal grandfather before age 60 if he married at age 30 (2003:51). According to Saller’s simulation, a man of the senatorial class would have been approximately 50 when his son was about 20, having married himself at about 25 (1994:65), but a non-elite man would have been approximately 60 when his son was about 19, 65 when he was 24 (a suitable age for marriage), having married at about 30 (1994:53). However, on an individual basis, if a man married at 25, had a son shortly after, and his son married at 25, he would have been 50. There are obviously numerous possibilities for age ranges, so the approximate nature of these figures must keep the simulation’s results in perspective.

153 Another dynamic that would be relevant in family relationships is that a brother married much later than his sister, so their children, who are cousins, could be twenty years apart—at a different stage in the life course—but still in the same generation in that family (Harlow and Laurence 2002:2).
4.1.4. Older age

In the ancient world, some men reached old age (perhaps 5-10% of the population was 60 or older; Parkin 2003:49-50, 224). In fact, if a person reached age 15, he had about a one in three chance of reaching age 60. Bagnall and Frier’s evidence from Roman Egyptian census returns reflect a similar proportion of people aged 60 or more—almost 6% of the total population.\(^{154}\)

Parkin designates sixty as “old” (*senectus*), based on modern convention and select ancient sources, but is clear that the age of sixty and the sociological, physical ad behavioural characteristics associated with “old age” did not necessarily correspond to this exact age (2003:17-19). The ancient sources suggest elite men were expected to withdraw from military and public office after the age of sixty,\(^{155}\) and the Augustan marriage laws (*Lex Julia et Papia Poppaea*) no longer expected a man of sixty to remarry and have more children (Harlow and Laurence 2002:118, 149). Augustus’ designation of sixty probably corresponded to when it was respectable to step down from political or civic duties rather than a question of reproduction, as it was for women who did not need to remarry after fifty (Harlow 2007:200; Parkin 2003:198-99). Non-elite men did not “retire” as elite men in public life did as they had no public life in the first place. They would have worked until they were physically unable, but old men may have had fewer strenuous duties.

In the modern Mediterranean, as a man grows old, he becomes less active, and no longer able to do the strenuous work of younger men (Campbell 1964:83; Chapman 1971:47). Before

\(^{154}\) A proportion of 5.7% of the population was aged 60 and over, based on data in Bagnall and Frier (1994:104, Table 5.4). The proportion drops almost by half (3.2%) when one includes those who are 65 and older.

\(^{155}\) At the age of sixty, a man was no longer eligible to serve in the military, therefore could no longer vote in the *comitia centuriata*. This was an assembly in the Roman Republic that decided on laws, magistrate positions, war, and judgment upon citizens. It was based on wealth, such that the wealthier had more influential votes, and age since the vote was split between those 17-46 and 46 and older; the older contingency was a much smaller group, and so had less power in the vote (Momigliano and Cornell 2003:372). This might be the meaning behind the phrase “sixty year olds over the bridge” (*sexagenrios de ponte*) (e.g., Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.5.10). The “bridge” led to the voting space.
he is “old-old” (that is to say, dependent on others), he may do some work at harvest, odd jobs, or other undemanding work, but not under the direction of his active sons (Stirling 1964:224; Chapman 1971:47; Campbell 1964:163). Even so, Chapman describes an older man as “mostly idle” (1971:74). He typically sits around the guest room of the house, or outside in the sun, chatting with other old men (Chapman 1971:47; Stirling 1965:223-24). He jokes, and others joke, about his “loss of virility,” reminiscing about the past with other men in the coffeehouse (Clark 1983:122; Campbell 1964:286). He may drink too much (a common stereotype), spend more time in religious pursuits (Chapman 1971:47; Hirschon 1983; Abu-Lughod 1986:90-91), or concern himself with his grandchildren (Campbell 1964:164). Growing old is a process, so when this stage begins varies with health, resources and inclination (Stirling 1965:223-24).

An older man’s inactivity often correlates with a loss of his former authority and status though remnants of his status remain. Perhaps because of his years of experience (or his increasing interest in religious matters; Hirschon 1983), in a moral crisis, his opinion may be important (Campbell 1964:106, 286). He may be able to retain an advisory role, offering advice or mediation (Chapman 1971:47; Cool and McCabe 1983:65; Stirling 1965:95, 224). He still acts as the formal head of the household at weddings, and the marriages of his other children require his consent. However, his day-to-day influence may wane (Campbell 1964:286).

Elders were properly associated with maturity. They had authority over young people, who were immature, that is, not “complete,” because they were not yet adults (Plutarch *Moralia*).

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156 Chapman observes that most older men are generally independent, and she knew of only one or two dependent fathers (1971:74).

157 Ironically, the more sons a Sarakatsan man has, the more prestige he has (Campbell 1964:297), but as an old man with sons to do the work, there are fewer odd jobs for him to do, and less of an active role.

158 In a Turkish village, a man is considered old at around fifty years of age. In Campbell’s observation, a Sarakatsan man is “old” at about age sixty (1964:83).
The **puer senex** (a young man with the maturity of an old man) was an exception. But the **puer senex** was esteemed for his maturity (Eyben 1993:10).\(^{159}\)

If one did not behave according to one’s life stage, he was subject to ridicule, especially an older person acting like a youth. One of Seneca the Elder’s characters, Junius Gallio castigates his father for acting like a young man in his old age:

I shall begin with praise of my father. He was moderate in his youth, and passed through that slippery time without blemish. He married, reared a son, brought him through to maturity. Now he is old, except that he doesn’t yet think he is. He has flung himself so deep in debauchery that I am prosecuting him. An old man in love, an old man drunk, decked in garlands, steeped in perfumes, driving himself backwards into past years, revelling in pleasure more vigorously than a youth—is this not a prodigy! An extravagant youth is misbehaving; an extravagant old man is mad. Age exhausts the stock of virtues—but vice goes wantoning on.” (Controversies 2.6.4).

Seneca notes the highlights of the typical honourable male life course, from young adulthood to old age: precarious youth, marriage, birth and raising of a son. Now the son he raised is horrified at his father’s behaviour in old age. On the one hand, he expects his father to act in a different way, as a proper older man should (“he is old, except that he doesn’t yet think he is”), but on the other, he associates poor behaviour with old age (“age exhausts the stock of virtues—but vice goes wantoning on”). This description exemplifies the ambiguity about old age in Roman sources.

### 4.2. The life course for women

The life course of a woman differs substantially from that of a man in the Mediterranean. A first century woman’s life cycle in the ancient Mediterranean appears to have been similar to other patriarchal cultures, most resembling that of the modern Mediterranean. Her identity was based on biological and social factors, namely marital status, motherhood and childbearing ability. A woman’s importance increased with age (Campbell 1964:153).

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\(^{159}\) For references see Eyben 1993:262, n.29; cf. 1 Tim 4:12; Barclay 2007:238-39.
4.2.1. Before marriage

In Roman times, if she was not exposed as an infant (and either died or was picked up as a slave), a girl would be raised and educated at home by her mother (and perhaps other female kin and/or household slaves or servants), especially in domestic duties, that is, how to be a wife and mother. “In terms of socialisation it is probably safe to assume that young women learnt their responsibilities and behavioural norms from close association with female members of their families, most usually mothers and aunts” (Harlow and Laurence 2003:58).

In recent times in the Mediterranean, a girl would spend most of her time with the women in the household, but as she is not yet sexual, she has considerable freedom to play or run errands in the public realm. However, when she reaches puberty, her movement outside of the household is severely limited. The restriction protects her modesty (shame) and the honour of the household. She is expected to behave modestly herself as well. Her modesty ensures that her family can procure a good marriage for her. Her mother, and perhaps other female kin, train her to be a good wife, which includes “household management, frugality, technical skills, and proper wifely demeanor” (Salamone and Stanton 1986:107). Chapman describes this time as an “intensive training in the womanly virtues” (1971:35). She is socialized to adapt to her marital home, which might be a hostile environment and in which she has little or no say (Kiray 1976:268). With her mother and other older female kin, she creates part of her dowry, an assortment of household furnishings along with property or money, which the bride will take with her into marriage (Clark 1983:122).

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160 Chapman notes that women in rural Sicily are perceived as sexually vulnerable and prone to reveal family secrets through gossip if they are given the opportunity, so they ideally remain in the private realm. However, women are only somewhat isolated from men in the public sphere, since they in fact meet up in daily tasks (on the road, at the mill or well, in the orchards, etc.). Poor women who need to work cannot afford to be restricted to their households, but poverty is usually associated with lack of honour anyway (1971:39-40; cf. Abu-Lughod 1986:7).

161 In Niolo, an area on the island of Corsica, if a family could not afford to marry a daughter, she would remain in the home to care for aging parents and later live in her brother’s house, aiding her sister-in-law in building the household’s reputation (Cool and McCabe 1983:63). In a traditional Iraqi family without sons, one daughter may be
4.2.2. Marriage

Marriage was the transition that marked a woman’s change from childhood to adulthood (cf. Campbell 1964:150). Among the non-elite, women married in their late teens or even early twenties (Shaw 1987:44). The comparative late age of marriage among non-elite women probably resulted from the benefit of having able, childless young women to help with domestic chores (Osiek and Balch 1997:62), and it may have taken time for a non-elite family to gather, save or create a young woman’s dowry. Although evidence for dowries among the non-elite is sparse, Saller draws on modern comparative evidence to illustrate that dowries would range from a small trousseau with “no maintenance or patrimonial function” to a large portion of her parents’ wealth, meant to be passed on to her children, and meant for the wife’s maintenance (1994:205, 11-12). The dowry would be given to the husband, but would be returned to her upon the death of her husband or divorce; the dowry was separate from other inheritances she may receive. Both might give her power and influence in the marriage (1994:220-21).

A woman’s father, working closely with her mother, chose her husband, but women’s networks influenced and enabled the search for a suitable husband and negotiations with the other family (Harlow and Laurence 2002:58). A woman of lower classes may marry someone who had learned the skill or trade of her natal family (Treggiari 1991:123). If her father was no

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162 Elite women married earlier to enhance political connections. In addition, “marriage at an early age might have enhanced the ‘virtue’ of submission and sense of subordination a young girl might have felt towards her husband, and increased his sense of superiority, dominance and paternalism, but we must remember that such an image was the product of the husband’s mind” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:81). Demographically, marrying daughter off at young age meant a father could secure descendants and successors; that is, he had a greater chance of seeing his grandchildren before his own death (2002:94).

163 Philo asserts that virgins whose parents die leaving them unmarried should receive a portion of inheritance equal with their brothers for the dowry. “But if virgins are left without a dower [literally “left unmarried,” άτολήφθησαν άνέκοδοι] they should share equally with the males… [the husbands chosen for them] should be, if possible, of the same family as the girls, at any rate as the same ward and tribe, in order that the portions assigned as dowry [τροικιδίους] should not be alienated by inter-marriage with other tribes” (Special Laws 2.125-26). Cf. Reinhartz 1993:73, 86. Philo might be referring to the elite class, but some portion of non-elite commoners were property owners as well, so these directives would apply to their property to be bequeathed.
longer living, her mother, male guardian, older brother or paternal uncle (or other kin) would arrange the marriage and dowry. If she was married *sine manu*, like most women in the first century (Treggiari 1991:32), she would still be under her father’s *potestas* if he were still alive. If he was dead, and he had had property, she would probably own her inheritance, which she would manage independently from her husband, but with some obligation to her guardian (who was appointed upon her father’s death). Even if her father was still alive, she may have a *peculium* from him that she would manage largely independently. She would have little say in her first marriage, since marriage was primarily a way to link families. For the elite, this often had to do with political alliances or ensuring status and wealth connections, but for the non-elite, marriage might have also offered social or status connections. Her husband’s status and age affected her status as a married woman more than her chronological age (Harlow 2007:197). A woman usually married a man between five to ten years older than she was. Because of this age difference in first marriages, “there was a strong possibility of a large number of women outliving their first husbands,” resulting in the prevalence of widows and remarriages among women (Harlow and Laurence 2002:11).

### 4.2.3. Wife and mother

When she married, a woman’s life changed radically: she faced a new home, a new social network and kin, new household responsibilities as a *matrona*, the beginning of a sexual relationship and consequential expectations of pregnancy and becoming a mother (Harlow and Laurence 2002:11).

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164 Campbell emphasizes that in the modern traditional Mediterranean woman’s marriage is an alliance between her family and another (1964:50). Her marriage partner is chosen for her, usually by one or both parents. Among the Egyptian Bedouin, this is one way a young woman’s father and other elder male kin have control over her, though there are ways for her to protest and refuse if she is very unhappy (Abu-Lughod 1990:43-45; 1981:101-2).

165 In high status families, men especially were not encouraged to marry for love or affection, but for the reputation of the family. Affection could develop in the marital relationship, although concord was the ideal. In non-elite families, this may also have been the case, particularly among those with status to gain. Slaves could not legally marry or did they have any status, but they did form conjugal relationships and families. It is possible that affection created more reason for slaves to “marry” because they had no status to compromise, but their servile status would not have ensured that their masters would keep them together.
Women’s passage into adulthood and marriage was symbolized by wearing a head covering (2002:62).

One crucial variable in understanding the nature of a woman’s life course, and relationships between old and young women, is post-marital residence (Brown et al. 1998). In modern Mediterranean peasant culture, a new bride would typically move away from her natal family to live with her husband and his family (patrilocal) or into a new home (neolocal) near her husband’s family. In this case, she is the “stranger” in the new household or extended family. Marriage is not a union of companionship or romantic love, and married couples do not show affection in public (Stirling 1965:113; Fallers and Fallers 1976:253). In fact, a new bride usually spends more time with her mother-in-law than with her new husband, and she is expected to serve her mother-in-law and perform the difficult domestic work. If the bride does not reside with her mother-in-law, they may be close neighbours. In general, the new bride’s consistent daily contact is with her husband’s family rather than her natal family. Conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is proverbial, perhaps because they vie for the son’s affection (Chapman 1971:111-13). In Turkey, Stirling describes the daughter-in-law as isolated and subordinate, maintaining “respectful silence” in the presence of her husband and elders, performing menial tasks for her mother-in-law, but also having to work closely with her. Her careful preparation for the role helps to mitigate open conflict, as does her hope of becoming mistress one day herself (1965:110-11).

There are other patterns of post-marital residence. In some Spanish communities, newly wedded couples move to a new home (neolocal) close to the bride’s parents (matrivicinal, which refers to living close to the bride’s natal family). The bride’s natal family is the new couple’s primary kin (e.g., Gilmore 1986). In rural Greece, a woman may be given a “dowry house”

\[166\] In modern Athens a bride is still referred to as “our bride” (Panourgiá 1995:140). As an “outsider” to the family, the daughter-in-law has an antagonist relationship with her in-laws and she attempts to vie for favour (1995:96).
either as part of her parents’ home or as a separate house nearby. A daughter may also move into her parents’ home with her husband to look after her aging parents if the husband was not needed to work his family’s land.

For Roman women, the evidence for post-marital residence is ambiguous. Susan Treggiari notes that marriage was patrilocal in the sense that a woman was living in her husband’s house (1991:33), but later qualifies this by arguing that marriage was usually neolocal (1991:410). Suzanne Dixon suggests that in the propertied classes, the newly married couple lived separate from either set of parents (but probably fairly close to one or both; 1988:217). The young wealthy husband may have set up a new home years earlier when he came of age and either studied or found work before his marriage (1988:170). In lower classes, it is harder to know what arrangements were made. Those with a particular skill or trade in the urban setting may have lived in a building where home and work were not clearly distinguishable (Treggiari 1991:378); this may have necessitated living in very close proximity to parents. At the very least, however, older women (either mothers, mothers-in-law or other older female kin) continued to be authority figures in a young married woman’s life.

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167 Treggairi states: “It was unusual for sons on marriage to bring their wives into the parental home” though this might be the case if the husband had inherited the parental home, or was working on the land or in the trade of his parents. This would not be a long-term arrangement, based on life expectancy of parents at that stage (1991:410).

168 In an illuminating analysis of Pompeian houses, A. Wallace-Hadrill suggests that most people, notably the poorer folk in that city, lived in “big houses.” Two patterns are notable, and a shift over time might be evident. In the older arrangement, the nuclear family and slaves formed the stable core of the household but many other temporary adherents lived in the household as well: “a fluctuating assortment of dependents, freedmen, workers, friends, and lodgers” (1994:116). These were a “source of income and a sign of social power” (1994:117). Wallace-Hadrill posits a shift in the imperial period toward “big houses” with many separate family units living within them, more like the arrangements in Ostia (1994:106-110). Based on evidence from Ostia, Osiek and Balch suggest that atrium houses were the setting of Pauline churches (1997:16), but most families lived in small, crowded apartments or insulae (1997:31-32). Rowlandson notes a similar pattern amongst the poor in Greek and Roman Egypt: “Families tended to congregate together, living within the same building or in adjacent dwellings” (1998:85). In either situation, urban post-marital residence would not necessarily be distinctly neolocal, especially as we might envision in our culture (cf. Malina 1993:124).
A young woman could expect to bear children quite early in her marriage. It was likely that half of her children would not reach adulthood (Parkin 1992:92-95). Becoming a mother, especially if she had a son, raised a woman’s status in the family and in society. In the modern Mediterranean, once she has had children, especially a son, a woman’s status increases. She has more say in family decisions, perhaps including finances (e.g., in Bayt al-’asir, Lebanon), and her personal value increases (Cool and McCabe 1983:64; Kiray 1976:266).

### 4.2.4. Older age

When her adult children married, a decision in which a woman had some say, she became a mother-in-law. She might help her daughters as they adjusted to being young matrons, and perhaps helped to raise her grandchildren (Dixon 1988). We have little evidence for the lower classes, but if a woman needed to spend time working outside the home, a grandmother would be a natural choice for a caregiver of young children. The paternal grandmother (who may have some interest in helping raise her son’s children) may be at least ten years older than the maternal grandmother, but either might fulfill this role if they were still alive, and the adult daughter lived near her natal home.

As reflected in the Augustan marriage laws (*Lex Julia et Papia Poppaea*), the age of 50 was considered the time when women would reach menopause, and no longer be fertile (Harlow and Laurence 2002:127). In observations of modern Mediterranean cultures, menopause is associated with social freedom since at this time the taboos of menstruation, associated with

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169 Harlow and Laurence state that a woman who was sterile was “socially dead” because she could not fulfill the basic female role of reproduction (2002:86), but this is probably overstated. Certainly, a non-elite woman who could not have children would be stigmatized, and she would not be assured care in old age. She might have to reside in her natal home or have kin grudgingly care for her, but she might also provide welcome domestic help in her brother’s household. As a modern analogy, in an Iraqi village, Fernea describes infertile women (as well as women from families with only daughters who could not afford to have all of them marry) who were pitied and considered liminal. They never became fully adult women, but neither were they rejected by the other women (1969).

170 In many cultures when older women become less productive in domestic work, they are given the task of looking after young children as part of her domestic duties.

171 On menopause in the Roman world, see Chapter 10, §5.1.
impurity, are no longer relevant (Beyene 1989:106-7; 124). Abu-Lughod suggests that older women are no longer fertile, so like men, their sexuality is hidden (1986:133-34). Therefore, older women’s presence in the public realm is no longer sexually threatening, and they are central to the daily activities of the community (Cool and McCabe 1983:66; Campbell 1964:118).

However, since menstruation is hidden from men (Harlow 2007:200; see Chapter 10), male Roman writers tended to refer to women in relation to men, especially in their roles as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, mothers-in-law and grandmothers. A woman might become a grandmother by her late 30s or early 40s, so grandparenthood did not necessarily mark her as “old” (2007:208), but it did “age” her as she entered a new stage of the life course (2007:202).

For the Roman male writer, chronological age of a woman was not as relevant as social age (“attitudes and behaviour expected of an individual at any given stage”; Cokayne 2007:197), and a woman’s appearance and life circumstances (Parkin 2003:15-26). Information about old women in Roman society comes mostly from the writings of men, whose attitudes toward old women varied widely. Old women were often loathed, sometimes ignored and occasionally highly respected. Cokayne argues that there were two opposite stereotypes of old women: “a woman was either a respectable wife and mother, or she was disreputable” (2003:134). In many cultures older women have an ambiguous status, and a similar dual stereotype is reflected in modern Mediterranean ethnographies. They are respected by sons and daughters for their central domestic role in the family, but they can also be characterized as “witches” (Cool and McCabe 1983:61-62, 65-66).

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172 See Linda Cool and Justine McCabe for cross-cultural references to women who become more powerful after menopause (1983:61). Judith K. Brown reports that, cross-culturally, women in middle age are less restricted after menopause, have authority over junior members of society as mothers-in-law and grandmothers, and may achieve roles beyond the domestic sphere, usually in the realm of religion or medical arts (1982:144-45). An older woman is more confident than she was when she was younger, and may be more vocal about what does or does not please her (Cool and McCabe 1983:66).
In Greek and Roman literature men tended to note women’s physical aging—old women are typically portrayed as visually unattractive (Cokayne 2007:220). They were stereotypically “disgusting, haggard, stinking, toothless, and sex-crazed” (Parkin 2003:86; Bremmer 1987:203-4).¹⁷³ For example, the poet Horace describes an old prostitute, who was already a disreputable woman because of her profession. The description is rather negative, though the protagonist reveals some ambivalence toward the woman:

Imagine asking what's stolen my powers, you
Stinking whore, all this endless time,
When you've one black tooth, and when ripe old age
Furrows your brow with wrinkles,
When an ugly hole like a leathery old cow’s
Gapes between withered buttocks!
Yet that flabby chest, and those breasts, like the teats
Of a mare, can still excite me,
And that spongy belly, and those scrawny thighs,
Set on those swollen legs.
Bless you, and may masculine figures in triumph
Bear your funeral along.
Let no married woman wander about, weighed down
By rounder fruits than yours.
What if the little works of the Stoics prefer
To nest among silken pillows?
Illiterate sinews stiffen no less, do they:
Bewitched, it droops no less?
Either way to rouse it from a fastidious groin
It's your mouth must labour hard.
(Epode 8; translation Kline 2006)

Similarly, Martial exaggerates an old woman’s physical appearance and proximity to death as he ridicules her for wanting to remarry in his poem “To Vetustilla.”

Though you have seen three hundred consuls, Vetustilla, and have but three hairs, and four teeth, with the chest of a grasshopper, and the legs of an ant; though your forehead shows more folds than a matron’s dress, and your bosom resembles a spider’s web; though in comparison with your vast jaws the mouth of crocodile of the Nile is small; though the frogs at Ravenna chatter more melodiously than you, and the gnat of Atria sings more sweetly; though your eyesight is no better than the owl’s in the morning, and your body exhales the odour of the husband of the she-goat; though your loins are those of a lean duck, and your legs shrunk like those of a withered old Cynic; though the bath-

¹⁷³ Vincent Rosivich argues that the Roman stereotypes of old women in Latin literature were adaptations of stereotypes in Greek literature that were absorbed particularly when the authors were young men (1994:114).
keeper does not admit you into the bath till he has extinguished his light, and then only among the prostitutes that lodge in the tombs; though it is winter with you even in the month of August, and not even a pestilent fever can unfreeze you, you nevertheless dare to think of marriage after two hundred years of widowhood, and insanely expect somebody to fall in love with relics like yours. Who, I ask, even if he were willing to till a rock, would call you wife?—you whom Philomelus but recently called grandmother. But if you will have your corpse meddled with, let Coris the grave-digger prepare you a couch, such as alone befits your nuptial rites, and let the kindler of the funeral pile bear the marriage torches for the new bride. Such a torch is the only one that Hymen can offer you. (10.90)

Like old men, old women were expected to behave according to their stage of life. It was not befitting an old woman to be bride.

Older women were typically characterized as excessive gossips and alcoholics (Harlow and Laurence 2002:129-30; cf. Tit 2:3). In the above elegy, Propertius wishes the old woman’s tomb to be “an old wine jar with a broken neck” (4.5). A Roman statue of a drunken old woman depicts her pathetic state as she clutches a wine jar (see Cokayne 2003:148-49). Cokayne emphasizes that such negative stereotypes were based on an old woman’s apparent lack of self-control (2003:145). Unlike men, who had some license for uncontrolled behaviour in youth, women were expected to be chaste and respectable their whole lives (Cokayne 2003:135).

Old women were also considered superstitious, often portrayed as evil witches.

Propertius writes an elegy of curses for an old woman who practiced magic. He describes her as

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174 Older women in the modern Mediterranean are known for inappropriate behaviours like lewd talk or drunkenness, which are usually excused by younger people on account of their age (Chapman 1971:46; Fernea 1965:147; Cool and McCabe 1983:67). For instance, McCabe witnessed young people dismissing the shameful behaviour of an old seventy-two year old woman. The woman mocked the immodest dress of younger women by lifting her skirt and exposing her underwear; the young people were embarrassed, but dismissed the behaviour because “she is an old woman” (Cool and McCabe 1983:66).

175 On old women and drunkenness in the ancient world see Bremmer 1987:201-2.

176 Rosivach suggests that:

stereotypes like that of the anus [old woman] are essentially ideological constructs built up by attributing to some ‘other’ negative characteristics which are the opposite of those valued by the ‘in’ group. For example, that the anus was typically ugly is just an exaggerated way of saying that an older woman was no longer physically attractive to Roman males whose ideal of physical beauty was that of a young woman. (1994:114; cf. Parkin 2003:81-86)
an old woman with a wrinkled throat, hollow teeth and thin hair, but a woman who possessed potent and malicious magical skill:

May Earth cover your grave with thorns, Procuress, and your shadow feel what you do not wish for, thirst: and may your ghost rest not among your ashes, and vengeful Cerberus terrorise your shameful bones with famished howling!

Clever at winning even adamant Hippolytus to love, and always darkest omen to a peaceful bed, she could even force Penelope to be indifferent to rumours of her husband, and wed with lascivious Antonius. If she wished it, the magnet was unable to attract iron, and the bird played stepmother to her nestlings.

And indeed, if she brought herbs from the Colline field to the trench, what’s firm would be dissolved to flowing water. She dared to set rules for the spellbound moon, and disguise her shape as a nocturnal wolf, so that by art she could blind watching husbands, and tear out the innocent eyes of crows with her nails, and took counsel with owls concerning my blood, and for me collected the fluids produced by a pregnant mare. (4.5; translation by Kline 2008)

In the modern Mediterranean, older women may be feared because it is believed they can use magic or the evil eye, either to protect their family or to antagonize others. An old woman who uses magic for the benefit of her family is not considered malevolent. It is not magic per se that is suspicious, but others’ perceptions of a woman’s moral reputation, which determines how she uses her power. Particularly women who possess low prestige or are poor are thought to harbour envy, and use magic against others. For example, a woman with low status would not easily find a good marriage for her daughter, and she might be thought to smite potential grooms (Campbell 1964:290). Accusations of witchcraft may also derive from the fact that older women function as midwives and healers (Chapman 1971:44; cf. Brown 1982:145).177

On the other hand, a few old women were portrayed in the ancient literature as the epitome of female self-control—the ideal Roman matron. This stereotype was directly opposite to the one described above. For example, Pliny the Younger praised a woman named Ummidia Quadratilla, who died at 79 years of age. She raised her grandson to be a good citizen, and

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177 Chapman wonders whether the dearth of young women in the healing arts in Milocca in the 1920s might be because the younger generation had lost interest (1971:44).
prudently bequeathed her wealth to family members, despite the many admirers who undoubtedly hoped for a share (Letters 7.24). She is elsewhere attested as a generous patroness in her local town (CIL 10.5183; Harlow and Laurence 2002:129). Pliny also describes a deceased 13 year old girl as having the “all the wisdom of age (literally, “wisdom of an old woman,” anilis prudentia) and sedateness (gravitas) of a matron though joined with youthful sweetness and virgin modesty” (Letters 5.16.2; Parkin 2003:245).178

The two-sided portrayal of older women in Mediterranean cultures (ancient and modern) is largely based on perceptions of her character, namely whether or not she is reputable. This characterization may relate to men’s recognition of older women’s de facto (or perhaps real) power (Cool and McCabe 1983:61-62). In fact older women become more visible in the public realm because they are no longer relegated to the domestic realm as they were when they were younger. They talk to men without fear of criticism and attend markets freely (Campbell 1964:290; cf. Chapman 1971:46). They may “penetrate the male domain.” For example, in a Turkish village, women did not usually join men in the guest room, but one very old woman, the mother of “an old man,” regularly joined them “as a tribute to her old age and infirmity” (Stirling 1965:101).

Thus, the dual stereotype of old women may be a way of managing women’s expanded power as they age since most real women do not really belong in one category or the other (cf. Fry 1980:17). However, since early Christian texts were written by men, the stereotypes reflected in ancient texts are themselves quite relevant.

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178 Rosivach finds that in Latin literature, anus (old woman) is a term basically used for a lower class old woman, but utilized to refer to an upper class older women to demean her or to highlight sympathy for her, especially in her loss of a son (1994:115-16). A second century inscription from a father to his daughter and heir says he hopes she will eventually become a pulchra anus, a “beautiful old woman” as she looks upon her offspring (CIL 10.1688). Parkin notes this is the only time he has seen the two words pulchra and anus together (2003:206). It is an odd combination of words, which suggests that further research might yield more nuanced thinking about perceptions of old women.
4.3. Summary of the Life Course

In ancient Roman sources, a man’s life course largely had to do with his public life and reputation. Youth was considered a time of freedom and volatility, followed by marriage and family responsibilities, occupation and providing for his children, if he lived to see them reach adulthood. With old age came a decline in active roles, and potential continuity of authority or influence for a reputable man.

A woman’s life course was based on her status vis-à-vis fertility and childbearing. Her household role and her status as a wife and mother (including statuses of virgin and widow) were integral to her identity throughout the life course. Depending on the age of marriage, menopause and becoming a grandmother might coincide, granting her the freedom and authority of an older woman. Male perceptions of women’s age, based on appearance and social and domestic roles, may reflect how they contend with women’s increasing authority over the life course.

5. Gender and age

Some scholars argue that women become more masculine as they age, since they gain freedom and act with self-indulgence and wilfulness—attributes normally associated with men (Cool and McCabe 1983:66-67; Abu-Lughod 1986:163). However, we should be cautious in saying that women become more like men. It is true they no longer fit the category of typical (that is, childbearing) female, but neither does an old woman fit the category of typical male. Old women become a different category of women.179

Old men do not seem to fare as well as old women in the Mediterranean. A man’s de jure power decreases as he becomes frailer with age, whereas a woman’s de facto power

179 Cf. Counts and Counts, who suggest that gender differences are “muted” in old age, but not eradicated (1985:7-11).
becomes more authoritative and recognized as legitimate.\textsuperscript{180} Old men who can no longer do hard labour are not yet completely dependent (old-old). Their relative idleness relegates them to an ambiguous role: respected for their age, but mocked for their weakness. A man spends time away from home throughout his adult life, so that in old age, when he ceases work, he “retires” to the domain of his wife, separated from the seniority he acquired outside of the household (Cool and McCabe 1983:67).\textsuperscript{181} On the other hand, old women continue to have some useful role in the domestic realm until they are old-old. An older woman who is widowed becomes more independent, and is not likely to remarry. Widowers, on the other hand, tend to find another wife to depend on in the domestic sphere (Chapman 1971:110).\textsuperscript{182} Old women are no longer always subordinate as they were when they were young. By virtue of their age and life stage, they now wield some authority over their juniors (Abu-Lughod 1986:163), and potentially even over their husbands, who spend more time in the domestic domain.

The two opposite stereotypes of women that Cool and McCabe address range from powerful (“scheming manipulators”) to weak (“kindly grandmothers”). These stereotypes are fabricated in cultural constructs or even created by anthropologists, since women’s real, and

\textsuperscript{180} For instance, Campbell contrasts an older influential Sarakatsan mother with an old father, who is a “genial nonentity” (1964:165-66). Cool and McCabe contrast older women and men in a Lebanese community. Marriage and motherhood define a woman’s success, and are realistically attainable. However, with little wealth or power in larger society, middle-aged men consider themselves unsuccessful, figuring women think the same of them, so “they become increasingly impotent vis-à-vis the successful and confident older women” (1983:67).

\textsuperscript{181} Cool and McCabe also argue that whereas women work together, young men’s competitive nature translates into little camaraderie between older men (1983:67; cf. Hirschon 1983:127). However, older men do not necessarily sink into isolation in old age. Among the Gheg of Albania, men form close social relationships within a clan because of the severe rivalry with other clans. Male kin discuss clan honour around the evening fire, participation in which “was limited to age rather than by reference to genealogical relationships” (presumably referring to young men’s respectful silence in the presence of their elders; Whitaker 1976:200). Men in the Turkish town of Tütüneli develop friendships and support systems among others with similar occupations, voluntary associations, and neighbours (Benedict 1976:237). In old age, as noted above, men might sit together, chatting and joking (Chapman 1971:47; Stirling 1965:223-24). Campbell suggests that old men do not compete for honour because they “ought no longer to possess a sensitive self-regard” (Campbell 1964:286). This may contribute to more ease in old men’s companionships.

\textsuperscript{182} Chapman notes if an old man has no wife, he may have to rely on relatives, or he may have a woman living with him outside of marriage, though this is informally and indirectly condemned by the community (1971:88). Stirling states that an older man may rely on a daughter-in-law to manage the household, but otherwise requires a wife (1965:195).
varied, experiences fall somewhere between these “extremes” (1983:56). Cool and McCabe also suggest that old women, as ambiguous persons with “illegitimate” power (based on Mary Douglas’ ideas), pose a threat to the structure of the social system (1983:61). They are accused of malevolence, and kept on the margins.

There are two problems with Cool and McCabe’s conception. First, their continuum is based on power. While women may appear to gain more power as they age, and men lose power in old age, this comparison of “power” blurs important distinctions between the female and male life course in Mediterranean cultures. Also, in my observations, the Mediterranean stereotype of an old woman is not based on power, but on perceptions of her reputation (hence the ideas of ideal matron or evil witch; Campbell 1964:290; cf. Cokayne 2003). Second, according to Cool and McCabe, any power a woman may wield is perceived as illegitimate and negative. She manipulates persons and supernatural forces to do harm. However, old women’s power in the Mediterranean is not always considered illegitimate. Older women can wield power in positive, and even legitimate, ways, including her management of the household, authority over daughters-in-laws, influence over adult sons, input in who her adult children will marry, and influence in shaping young women’s reputations.

It is true that old women no longer fit the standard category of “female” in that they are no longer sexually reproductive (and perceived to be no longer sexually active, especially if widowed). They are also expected to be and perceived as less sexually active (especially since many are widowed or divorced). Even though their movement in public no longer threatens

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183 Cool and McCabe suggest a second explanation for characterizing old women as evil: men feel guilt over the present oppression of women, especially widows, so they fear old women because of a perceived, latent, long-term sense of women’s anger at their subordinate status (1983:61-62). To me, this hypothesis reflects more about the theorists’ modern Western feminism and the guilt that they think Western men should feel rather than a reflection of Mediterranean cultures. In fact, women may not primarily perceive themselves as subordinate, especially if they have their own “world” in which they have relative freedom (Fallers and Fallers 1976; Fernea 1965).

184 However, Yewoudbdar Beyene reports that Greek women have better sex with their husbands after menopause since they are less anxious about getting pregnant (1989:124).
the honour of the family in the way it does for younger women, their sexuality continues to play a role in their reputation. On the one hand, her reputation as an old woman is based on her sexual modesty as a younger woman. On the other hand, older women are sometimes associated with sexual aggression, perhaps a reaction to her authority, especially over young men.¹⁸⁵ The stereotype of a sexually aggressive old woman is not really a demonstration of male attributes, but displays an exaggeration of female qualities (namely, women’s “natural” lack of self-control).¹⁸⁶

Cool and McCabe suggest that this irregular behaviour is not checked by social sanction because old women are more like men and culture (1983:66).¹⁸⁷ However, men who act inappropriately in public are subject to social sanction; their sense of maintaining their honour makes them sensitive to the opinions of others. Old women may be more “assertive” than their younger counterparts (Cool and McCabe 1983:67), but this does not necessarily make them more masculine. Their freedom seems to have more to do with their age than with becoming like men.

The fact remains that older women’s roles are different from what we might consider typical Mediterranean categories of male (courage, manliness) and female (sexual modesty), since these categories are based on adult roles associated with the childbearing phase of life. If those categories are considered the “norm,” then old women do have a liminal or ambiguous status. Anthropologists have noted ways in which old women are liminal. Older Greek women

¹⁸⁵ In a Spanish matrilocal setting, where mothers-in-law dominate their sons-in-law, there is a negative stereotype of old women as sexually aggressive and domineering. Julian Pitt-Rivers argues that when the “sexual division of labour breaks down,” old women become like “surrogate males”: they are respected, esteemed by their children and no longer sexually active (but note that these characteristics are not really “male”). Pitt-Rivers illustrates this notion with the striking image of an old woman astride a broomstick—a domestic tool converted into a symbolic phallus (1977:44, 80-83). The image of an old woman on a broomstick may reflect young men’s fear of the power of old women (especially mothers-in-law; Gilmore 1986).

¹⁸⁶ One could argue that sexual aggression is not unlike young men’s lack of self-control, but young men are not really fully male either until they become responsible husbands and fathers.

¹⁸⁷ This echoes Sherry Ortner’s equation of culture and maleness (1974).
who are in permanent mourning always wear black (*mavrafora* is the term for a black-garbed woman; Hirschon 1983:124; Panagouriá 1995:241-15; cf. Chapman 1971:46). Old Egyptian Bedouin women recite “women’s” poetry, an activity that could be considered liminal, and a challenge to authority of senior men (Abu-Lughod 1986:26, 30). In Greece, middle-aged or old women perform laments for dead relatives; these laments themselves are liminal, often carrying countercultural messages (Caraveli 1986:170; Danforth 1982).

However, Cohen suggests we should also question the notion of old women (and men) as ambiguous figures: “The liminality of old age may often be more rooted in generational politics than existential condition; the trope of ambiguity tends to obscure this difference” (1994:145). Mediterranean women, who function day-to-day apart from men, do not necessarily desire to be like men, in contrast to some Western notions of how women should gain power in a male-dominated, but gender-integrated society (cf. Fallers and Fallers 1976).

Older women are different from younger women, but might best be categorized not as similar to men, but simply as older women. As older women with life-long experience and good reputation, they gain positions of respect, including influence and authority in the community.

Cool and McCabe also argue that an old man becomes more “feminine” as he spends time at home, grows more passive and loses his former authority (1983:65, 67). Similar to old women, old men are no longer categorically like younger men, but neither are they very much like women. They do little or no domestic work or child rearing, but sit around and chat with other old men. Mediterranean men may mock those who appear to be feminine in old age (cf.

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188 In Greece, older women are often associated with the dead (Hirschon 1983:124; Campbell 1964:168). Women tend graves, caring for them as an extension of the household. Graveyards are often places where related and non-kin women meet in their common experience of mourning, and in religious activity (Hirschon 1983:116,118-20). On the other hand, Abu-Lughod argues that Bedouin women are associated with life, connected to fertility and childbirth, whereas men are associated with death, connected to slaughtering animals and funeral gift exchanges (1986:126).
Plutarch *Moralia* 785D-E), but they strive to grow old as men, even as they lose virility. Nevertheless, men do seem to have more to lose than women do as they age.

In sum, comparing old women and men does not provide an accurate picture of their roles as old women and old men. Instead of considering the latter part of the life course as a cross-over of gender roles (women become more like men, and men become more like women), we should focus on how age changes roles for men and for women in their own spheres. Thus, we would describe at least four categories of persons according to gender and life stage: young women and old women, young men and old men. These are the age and gender categories that are evident in 1 Tim 5:1-2 (cf. Tit 2:2-6).

### 6. Conclusion

By considering the life course of Roman men and women, we see that age status, or where one fit in the stages of the life course, largely dictated a person’s behaviour and characteristics. In general, older age affords greater power and prestige for both men and women, especially within the family. Prestige wanes when a person approaches the latter stage of the life course, especially for men. Women seem to retain prestige longer because of their continuing authority in the domestic realm. While some scholars suggest Mediterranean women more like men in old age, I suggest that women become a different category of women rather than more like men. Likewise, men become a different category of men. The life course for men and for women sets the stage to explore further the dynamics of the generational cycle and intergenerational relationships.
Chapter 5: Demography of Early Christian Communities

1. Introduction

Using demographic data from the ancient world, the life course for men and women, and the general picture of the kin universe of the ancient Romans, I now consider the demography of early Christian communities. Of course, the exact demographic situation of early Christian communities is uncertain, but we can piece together significant clues about the distribution of the age and gender of members. The visibility of women, especially widows, is noteworthy.

2. Households and fictive kin

Age structure and other demographic clues become more evident in the late first and early second century Christian texts, perhaps 30 to 60 years after Paul’s letters were written (in the 50s). We have evidence for “households” as part of the Pauline communities (1 Cor 1:16; Rom 16:10, 11; 1 Tim 3:4; cf. Acts 11:14), which usually included at least a married couple and their dependent children, and perhaps slaves. As the basic social unit, households have different age groups living and functioning together, and perhaps all joining the Christian group. The Christian household began as the meeting place, but the community soon invested in socializing children.

After Paul’s time, entire households continued to join the movement (1 Tim 3:5, 12), but the communities were larger, more socially diversified, and presented more complex

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189 Households could reflect numerous other arrangements (e.g., a widow with children, stepparents, temporary kin or the inclusion of an ailing elderly parent). A more detailed search may yield more clues, but there is little information about age among the individuals in the Pauline churches except assumptions about age in households (cf. Barclay 2007:239-41).

190 Paul highlights the household of Stephanus (1 Cor 16:15) and mentions several families in Rom 16:10-11. According to Acts, Cornelius and his whole household became believers (Acts 10:2, 24, 44; 11:14); likewise, Lydia and her household (16:15) and the jailer his household (16:33) all converted.
problems (Lührmann 1981:95). Late first century texts like Col 3:18-4:1 and Eph 5:22-6:9 suggest typical Roman households were involved in the community, husbands and wives, children and slaves. The requisite characteristics for overseers and deacons in 1 Tim 3:1-5, 12 suggest similarly structured intergenerational households (cf. 1 Tim 5:1-2) that approximately reflected the general population. Each community would have its own demographic variation that would have shifted as members grew older (1 Clem. 63.3; Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.3), as they had children who grew up and stayed (1 Cor 7:14, 2 Tim 1:5), or left, as they welcomed new members of various ages (1 Tim 3:6), and as communities split due to size or conflict. Voluntary associations usually had 15 to 100 members (possibly two or three hundred in some instances; Kloppenborg 1996a:25-26). Christian communities may have had similar numbers of adult members, with children added on to the number.

The author of 1 Timothy also conceived of the community as biologically unrelated persons functioning in some ways as kin (e.g., 1 Tim 3:15, 5:1-2). The Christian community became like a new metaphorical family (Barclay 1997:72-73). Fictive kin manifested in patronage (e.g., Gaius, Rom 16:23; Phoebe, Rom 16:1-2; Aquila and Priscilla, 1 Cor 16:19) and certain kinds of requests (forgiving a slave, Phlm 8-16). In 1 Timothy and Titus, the author promotes behaviour that reflects conventional family life, including “elders” as leaders to promote stability (Tit 1:5; 1 Tim 5:17; Barclay 1997:77-78). The group reflected the Roman household, encompassing men and women and people of different age groups (1 Tim 5:1-2, Tit

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191 Barclay argues that “early Christianity became distinguished by this characteristic [commitment to God over family ties], whose importance led to a fundamental reconsideration of the worth of family loyalties and of the family as such,” in more or less radical forms (1997:74). In a society with filial piety as the basis of family, conversion challenged family stability, since honour and concord in the family intertwined with religion (Sanders 1997:162).

192 Karl Olav Sanders suggests we “avoid an over-idyllic view” of fictive kin, since it was probably patriarchal from the beginning. When Paul asks Philemon to rethink the status of the slave Onesimus, inequality is still very much evident: Philemon is still Paul’s benefactor, and Paul does not challenge Philemon’s status as master (1997:56-62).
The social structure and benefit of fictive kin networks might be quite similar to that found in modern Mediterranean urban settings.

Peter Benedict found that households in a Turkish town tended to be made up of nuclear family households which were economically autonomous in a non-agricultural, town-based system. Neighbouring households, which may or may not be related, function in ways that are similar to extended kin in rural areas, namely through cooperation and mutual support. These cooperating households take priority over kin who live elsewhere, supporting one another in major economic undertakings like preparing winter foods, and “social obligations such as assistance in times of birth, marriage and death.” The passageways between courtyards allow for women to move freely within the neighbourhood without being seen in public (1976:226). Networks of men are based on common occupation, coffee-house groups, voluntary associations and neighbours, and networks of women are based on daily contact with neighbours and visiting or prayer groups (1976:227).

Similarly, in the shantytown areas of the Turkish city (called gecokondu areas) primary relationships quickly shift from kin to neighbours and formal organizations (like schools), work associates and voluntary associations. Cooperation with neighbours includes exchanging goods (not usually money), whereas economic cooperation with kin decrease significantly. Such swift adaptation suggests that rural kin relationships were already losing their effectiveness before people moved to the city. People rarely desire to move back to the countryside, even though they have been forced to move because of land shortages and mechanization of agriculture.

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193 This mix of gender, class and age contrasts with some voluntary associations, such as the youth movements of encouraged by Augustus (which were entirely male), or voluntary associations comprised of lower class men involved in a particular occupation (e.g., trade guilds).
Regional government and/or powerful patrons may support such traditional social structures in order to preserve their interests.\footnote{In Morocco, the popular belief in the efficacy of traditional kinship obligations, friendships and patronage continues to be important for the elite to maintain power structures, and inequity, in the village setting (Seddon 1976:190-93).}

Colleen Leahy Johnson notes that for Italian immigrants, people create fictive kin \textit{(compari)} in the absence of biological kin (1983:94). Creating non-kin networks in the form of wedding sponsors and godparents (baptism sponsors) is common in modern Greece and Italy (e.g., Friedl 1962:72; Chapman 1971:115-20).\footnote{On the Greek island of Nisos, intense competition between families means that cooperation and trust is found primarily in the family household. Any cooperation outside of the family must be “phrased in the idiom of family and backed by moral sanctions,” such as wedding and baptism sponsors (Kenna 1976:351).} These relationships are considered binding and permanent. They involve expectations of reciprocity and restrictions regarding eligible marriage partners that are similar to biological kin. Such relationships would be highly adaptable in urban settings. Furthermore, families already established in the city are an important source of support for their rural kin. Friedl’s study of Greek migration to urban areas suggests that those who migrated had relative wealth, and were able to support kin who came to the city (e.g., nieces and nephews stayed with them to complete education unavailable in rural regions; 1976:385). In modern Athens, non-kin can have the “status of family members through the love, support and affiliation they have exhibited toward the family throughout the years” (Panourgiá 1995:99). This status includes practical assistance in crises, such as providing a funeral meal (1995:118), as well as affection (1995:76).

Early Christian communities were distinctly urban. Unlike conservative rural areas, cities were the centres of power and change in the Roman Empire.\footnote{Rural folk could not risk change that might risk their survival (MacMullen 1974:27).} Meeks comments that “[the city] was the place where, if anywhere, change could be met and even sought out. It was where the empire was, and where the future began” (1983:16). Meeks is careful to note that
modern notions of social mobility did not occur in the ancient Mediterranean (1983:19-20), and this being so, his insinuation that Romans were future-oriented is an ethnocentric assessment (cf. Malina 1993:63-89). His suggestion that the cities held the mechanism for social change is more tenable. A North African inscription describes a man who worked his way from being a poor farmer’s son to becoming a household master and city senator (CIL 8.11824).197 His change in status occurred in the city.

Cooperation involving ties between neighbours (be they kin or not) may be reflective of the urban setting in which early Christian communities were successful, operating as a kind of pseudo-kin, or fictive kin, that formed a cooperative group. If the generational structure remained relatively stable, the urban setting would promote communities of fictive kin that replicated similar intergenerational relations.198 In other words, the generational cycle, as a relatively constant cultural construct, would be apparent among neighbours or other associations that replicate kinship-like functions for people who move to the city apart from their biological kin. Conceiving of the early Christian community as fictive kin helped them, and helps us, make sense of the mix of economic and social status, gender and age.

197 This third century inscription is from Mactar, Africa. He was:

born of a poor, small family—my father lacked income-property or house. From the day of my birth I have spend my life working in my fields—never a rest for them or myself. When the year brought forth the ripened grain, then was I the first to cut the stalks… I reaped twelve harvests under the raging sun and then, from laborer, became contractor, and for eleven years commanded a team of harvesters… This work, and life content with little, availed to make me master of a home with a farmstead—a home that lacks no riches. Our life won the fruits of office, too: I, even I, was enrolled among the city senators, and chosen by them to sit in the house of that body. From a small farm boy I, even I, became censor. I fathered and lived to see sons and dear grandsons. I have passed through years distinguished by the merits of my career—years that an evil tongue never hurt with any accusation. (translated by MacMullen 1974:43).

198 Hareven identifies “surrogate kin networks” in American history that formed out of need. They replicated the norms of reciprocity and economic aid that kin normally provided (2001:152).
3. Age range of members

Outside observers of Christian groups commented on the age range of its members. In his letter to Trajan, Pliny the Younger, wondered if he should discriminate between the very young or more mature Christians (10.96.1), and was concerned with the great numbers of people who were of every age and rank and both genders (10.96.5). We cannot know if his description meant to include children, but it does suggest a full range of ages, which would include young adults, mature adults and the elderly. His letter demonstrates that the age range of members was a notable element of the movement. Also, his hesitancy to deal with all age groups in the same manner suggests that these distinctions could make some difference in the public sphere.

Likewise, from the early third century, Minucius Felix polemically describes a Christian feast (and orgy) that includes “all their children, sisters, mothers—all sexes and all ages” (Octavius 9). Again, the idea that a range of ages characterized the Christian community was notable to an outsider.

In his second century critique of early Christians, Celsus describes the perpetrators of the movement as “the most illiterate and bucolic yokels, who would not dare to say anything at all in front of their elders (πρεσβυτέροι) and more intelligent masters” (emphasis added). Celsus continues: “whenever they get ahold of children in private, and some stupid women with them,” they encourage children to listen to them and disobey their fathers and schoolmasters (Origen Contra Celsum 3.55; translation Chadwick 1965:165). The description of the main evangelists suggests they are slaves and/or younger men, if we take “their elders” to be a statement about age. The stereotype of youth as a time of foolishness and rebellion against authority is present here, as well as their pliability and attraction to a deceiving, charismatic leader (Sallust Cataline 14, 17; Eyben 1993:56-57; Harlow and Laurence 2002:70-71). While Celsus’ comments are based on stereotypes and are polemical, they do suggest that young men and slaves were part of
the group. Eyben suggests that the young (elite) were particularly attracted to philosophy, religion and mystery cults (1993:176).

As I argue in Chapter 12, there is detectable tension between old and young men in 1 Tim 5 (cf. 1 Clement). According to demographic data of Roman population, there were more young men in the population than older men (Parkin 2003:51). Perhaps some young men were attracted to the movement because they saw opportunities for prestigious positions (not unlike in voluntary associations, see Chapter 7 and 12).

There were certainly older people in the group, and some Christians attained “old age” as life-long members.\footnote{Several texts indicate chronological age. Polycarp was martyred at the age of eighty-six or older (see above). A special group of widows must be at least sixty years old in 1 Tim 5:9. (Cf. Anna, the Judean widow and prophet of Luke’s birth narrative, was purportedly eighty-four; Luke 2:37.) Other texts simply indicate old age: John is called “the Elder” in 2 and 3 John. Papias is called “ancient” (Papias Fragments 1.4 in Ehrman 2003:295; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 3.39.1). Irenaeus (2.22.5) states that John, Jesus’ disciple, lived to the time of Trajan (98-117 CE; in Lightfoot 1898:554). If he was about thirty (Jesus’ age according to Luke 3:23), he would have been about 100 years old at the beginning of Trajan’s reign (or if he had been twenty, he would have been 90). In Luke’s gospel narrative, Zechariah and Elizabeth are both called “old”—too old to have children when they miraculously conceive John the Baptist (Luke 1:7, 18, 36). Simeon is generally assumed to be old because Luke says he would not die before seeing the Messiah (Luke 2:26), but for an alternative opinion see LaGrand (1998). It is perhaps worth noting that Luke–Acts has a curiously high number of age references (in addition to those mentioned, for example, 2:42; 3:23; 8:42).} Although they would not constitute a distinct group (like our notion of “old folks”), old individuals were involved in early Christian communities. Since those over sixty comprised 5-10% of the population (Parkin 2003:49-50, 224), the population of older people was not insignificant. This population statistic applies to the overall population without gender or class distinctions; since the elite comprised a very small proportion of the population, most old people were not part of the elite (2003:224). In the ancient Mediterranean, residential location affected life expectancy more than wealth. In particular, people living in urban settings, including the elite, had a lower life expectancy at birth than those who lived in rural areas.\footnote{See Scheidel 2001a:15 for ancient and comparative references. In addition, different geographical regions would promote diseases that would variously affect people of different age groups. For example, areas with high rates of malaria infection would cause early mortality on average (Scheidel 2001a:8).}
This means we can reasonably hypothesize that, all other things being equal, approximately the same proportion of persons over sixty in the early Christian communities is feasible.

It seems that old women had significant roles connected to their age, marital status and social standing. For example, older women were viewed not only as influential teachers of younger women (Tit 2:3-5), but of children as well (2 Tim 1:5), and old widows are presented as models of behaviour and legacy (1 Tim 5:9-10). On the other hand, old women are also prone to negative sentiment (“old wives’ tales” 1 Tim 4:7). This seems to relate to the association of old women and superstition.201

4. Women, especially widows

There may have been a higher representation of women, and particularly widows, in early Christian communities than the general non-elite populace.

4.1. The visibility of women

Not everyone joined the Christian community with their households. Some individuals joined without their family. In Corinth, both men and women joined the Pauline church without their marriage partners (1 Cor 7:10-13), but 1 Pet 3:1 focuses only on married women who joined the movement apart from their husbands.202 In 2 Tim 1:5 the author portrays Timothy as influenced by his mother and grandmother, with no mention of his father or grandfather.203

201 “It is therefore not surprising to see the twice-marginal amus (woman and old) associated with the humbler aspects of folk religion and with magic” (Rosivach 1994:112-13).

202 This might suggest something about her age. If such a woman did have young children, she might bring them along, but the domestic reality was that a lower class woman with children at home was busy caring for the home, children and husband, or out working for the survival of the family. Would she have time to attend meetings outside of her home? And would a woman of childbearing age be able to leave her home without suspicion? A woman past menopause would be less suspect leaving her home than a woman of childbearing years. On the other hand, a woman may bring her children along, which is the implication of 1 Cor 7:13-14 (cf. Lührmann 1981).

203 Acts 16:1 mentions he had a Judean mother and Greek father, but we know very little about the historical Timothy (see Malina 2008). Historical or not, the omission of his father’s influence in 2 Tim 1:5 would suggest to the reader that his father was deceased or a “non-believer,” though I lean toward the former. As mentioned, many young men would not have living fathers. Lois was probably considered by readers to be Timothy’s maternal grandmother for several reasons. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law did not typically have close emotional
Celsus, the second century critic of Christians, makes special mention of women and children in the movement (Origen *Contra Celsum* 3.44, 55). Celsus highlights women as actively instructing initiates, perhaps in their own homes and/or shops (MacDonald 1996:111-12). For Celsus, it may be that women were simply more visible. They may have been more visible because of the number of women not in traditional household roles, like widows, or it may have been because of their numbers.

The extended discussion of widows in 1 Tim 5:3-16 (cf. Acts 6:1) suggests that the movement attracted proportionately more widows than the general demographic represented. The author of 1 Tim is concerned that young widows in particular are bringing shame on the group by “gadding about from house to house” (5:13; see Chapter 11). They contrast with the ideal old widow described in 5:9-10 (Chapter 10). Interestingly, in his satirical story of Peregrinus, who swindles a group of Christians by pretending to be one of them, Lucian of Samosata describes a scene in which Peregrinus has been imprisoned. The Christians kept him company, “and from the very break of day aged widows and orphan children could be seen waiting near the prison” (*The Passing of Peregrinus*, 12). MacDonald notes that the phrase γυναῖκες ἀρραβώνες better captures the derogatory tone if translated “old hags called widows” (1996:74). She posits that old women perhaps provided prisoners with resources or prayer, or served as look-outs. If old women were usually ignored in public, they might have been the logical choice for such activities. However, Lucian mentions old widows in this role to ridicule the Christians, so that they became “a graphic image of credulity, shamelessness, and transgression” (1996:82). Again, this does not prove there were more old widows in the movement, but their visibility is suggestive.

relationships. If Timothy’s mother was widowed she may have relied on her natal family after her husband’s death. There was a greater chance that Timothy’s maternal grandmother was alive, since she would typically be younger than a paternal grandmother. According to Saller’s simulation, only a quarter of twenty year old males would have a living grandparent (17% would have a living maternal grandmother; 5% a living paternal grandmother), and a decade later, only six percent of thirty years old males would have a living grandparent (5% maternal, 1% paternal).
4.2. Identity of widows

The visibility of widows warrants a fuller discussion of widows in the ancient world and in early Christian communities. The term χήρα means widow (“a woman left without a husband”), but could also apply to a divorcée (“a woman living without a husband”) (Stählin 1974:440). In both cases, such a woman was sexually experienced, but no longer in a sanctioned sexual relationship. Though one social category covers both situations, it was more respectable to remarry after widowhood than after divorce (Humbert 1972:68, 73). Early Christian texts reflect this point. In Mark, Jesus condemns remarriage after divorce (10:12), as does Paul: “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives” (1 Cor 7:39; Rom 7:2). While Paul discourages remarriage for a widow, he does not condemn it: “But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my judgement she is more blessed if she remains as she is” (1 Cor 7:39-40; Stählin 1979:457). The association of the shame of adultery with divorce may have contributed to a negative attitude toward remarriage.

The prevalence of divorce, especially among the non-elite, is more difficult to assess than the prevalence of widowhood. Demography provides quantifiable measurement of probable death rates for women’s husbands, and inscriptions tend to reveal more information about widows than about divorcées (Treggiari 1991:482). Women normally married at younger ages than men, and often outlived their husbands. Based on demographic and papyrological evidence,

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204 Thomas A.J. McGinn suggests that χήρα could also refer to a woman who was not yet married (1999:631), but παρθένος is the usual term for a virgin.

205 Men divorced women more often than women divorced men for sexual indiscretion, but either spouse could initiate divorce because of adultery (proven or suspected). By the first century CE, women were able to divorce their husbands on their own initiative (Treggiari 1991:443-46). Women might also initiate divorce for a husband’s physical violence. An amicable divorce for practical reasons was possible: “Gifts are allowed between husband and wife in the case of divorce. This often happens because the husband enters the priesthood or because of sterility, or where marriage is no longer appropriate because of old age, illness or military service; so the marriage is dissolved by agreement” (Digest 24.1.60.1-62.1). Incompatibility was not a culturally acceptable reason for divorce. A young male character in Terence’s play remarks, “to return on her father’s hands a wife in whom you allege no fault is arrogance (superbus)” (The Mother-in-Law 1.152-54; Treggiari 1991:461-65).

206 Bagnall and Frier find that divorce “was not rare among the general population of Egypt” (1994:123), but how reflective this is of the rest of the Roman world is unknowable.
Jens-Uwe Krause concludes that perhaps 10-15% of women up to the age of 30 were widowed, but between the ages of 30 and 50, about 40% of women were widows. Overall, he suggests that 30% of adult women were widows (1994a:73). While these estimates may be too high (McGinn 1999:631), they do suggest that after the age of about 30, a married woman could expect her chances of becoming a χήρα to rise.

In 1 Timothy (and other early Christian texts) χήρα may refer to both widows and divorcées. It certainly refers to adult women who are no longer married. The “real widows” in 1 Tim 5:5 are described as “alone” and widows over 60 were to have had one husband (1 Tim 5:9), which suggests most χήρας were widows. But the difference does not seem important to the author of 1 Timothy. He was more concerned about the behaviour of these women. In my discussion of the χήρας in 1 Timothy (and my use of the translation “widows”), I assume that most are widows, without precluding the possibility that some were divorcées.

Given that men were 5 to 10 years older than their women upon first marriage, a Mediterranean woman generally expected to become a widow. “Women were likely to outlive their husbands and the social world of adult women could be crowded with widows” (Cokayne

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207 McGinn disagrees with Krause’s suggestion that free women in the population were not significantly outnumbered by men. McGinn argues that exposure of female newborns (resulting in infanticide or slavery) was prevalent enough that the numbers of women who were eligible for marriage was less than Krause argues. Thus, the proportion of widows was probably not as high as Krause suggests (1999:618-19).

208 McGinn points out that Krause does not distinguish between a woman whose husband has died, and a woman who is divorced (1999:631). Krause’s lack of definition may compromise his arguments for the proportion of widows (that is, women whose husbands have died) because a woman without a husband was in the same sociological category as a divorcée.

209 Widows in early Christianity were considered a distinct group of people, separate from “wives.” Ignatius refers to households of men with their wives and children and the “virgins who are called widows” as a separate group (Smyr. 13.1). Grapte was to admonish the widows and orphans separate from Hermas, who was to read his revelation with the elders of the church (Visions 8.3). Polycarp’s division of wives and widows as separate groups may indicate different life stages (Polycarp Phil 4.2-3). The directives for wives include affection for their husbands and disciplining children in the φόβος of God, which correlates with the childbearing phase of a woman’s life. Similar directives are associated with younger women (νέας) in Tit 2:4-5. The directives for widows in Polycarp’s letter are suggestive of older women: they are to be in prayer, as the “real widows” are in 1 Tim 5:5, they are not to be slanderous, an instruction given to older women in Tit 2:3. They are to be self-controlled (σωφρονέω), a virtue the older women are to teach the younger women in Tit 2:4-5 (cf. 1 Tim 2:9).
For the Romans, a respectable adult woman was normally married (McGinn 1999:631), and both men and women were expected to remarry if they were still in their childbearing years (Treggiari 1991:500-1). Thus, up to a certain age, widows generally strove to remarry (Krause 1995:110), to appear respectable, to conform to social norms, and/or for financial security. Younger widows were especially encouraged to remarry because their sexuality was connected to familial reputation (McGinn 1999:632).

Augustus’ promotion of traditional family values in the marriage laws suggests that remarriage reflected a cultural expectation. A woman’s identity and function in the family was largely associated with childbearing within marriage. She was raised from the time she was a girl to be a wife and mother. Women tended to remarry after widowhood or divorce while still in the childbearing phase of life, though perhaps less frequently after about the age of 35.

Some elite women may have chosen not to remarry while still in their childbearing years (Humbert 1972:77), but whether non-elite women did or even could make such a choice is not certain (Parkin 1992:196, n.196). A non-elite widow might inherit from her dead husband or from her father, but she might also be left in poverty (Treggiari 1991:500-1).

A widow with wealth and health would sustain a reasonable standard of living after her husband died. She might have significant power over others as an older woman, especially if she had a good reputation. For younger women, remarriage could complicate inheritance issues for...

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210 In pre-industrial societies, older women always outnumber old men, especially widows (Cowgill and Holmes 1972:322).

211 Bagnall and Frier find that “long-term stable marriages are ubiquitous” in the Egyptian census returns of their study (1994:122).

212 Krause argues that Christian asceticism altered the motivation to remarry very little, both because material need and social pressure motivated widows to remarry throughout antiquity, and because the prevalence of asceticism is overestimated (1995:109).

213 Bagnall and Frier 1994:127-28; also Hopkins 1980:334, Figure 5). This may be a regional variation unique to Roman Egypt (Parkin 1992:196, n. 196), but the pattern is suggestive for other parts of the Roman world.

214 In Roman Egypt, women owned land, collecting rent from tenants (e.g., P.Oxy. 33.2680), and bequeathing it as they wished (e.g., P.Köln 2.100). For further examples of women’s property ownership, see Rowlandson 1998:218-45.
those who were heirs to their father’s property. Children expected to inherit from both parents, but those from a second marriage threatened the inheritance for those from a first marriage if a new husband or subsequent children were favoured (Harlow 2007:205). Even so, stepfathers were generally seen in a positive light (Hübner 2009:61-82).

Many widows probably wanted to remarry to secure their financial situation (Krause 1995:109). Remarriage may be the most secure financial choice for a widow (Krause 1995:109). In Parkin’s estimation:

In classical Roman society… a childless widow would have been in a singularly unenviable position when she grew old, with no form of state support, and so she would have had every reason to remarry while the opportunity was available. It would appear that most women at this time, of the elite class at any rate, did remarry and remain potentially productive throughout their childbearing years. (1992:133)

A poor widow could find support from her family (her natal family if she were young, or her own children if she were older), or a patron. She might be able to support herself by offering special skills, such as midwifery, healing arts or weaving. She might also turn to prostitution, a base and ridiculed position, especially for an old woman (Cokayne 2003:139). Seneca reveals why a widow might be anxious: “I shall have no one to protect me and no one to keep me from being despised” (Consolation to Marcia 19.2). A woman without sons and wealth of her own was likely to be destitute.

Given the relatively high proportion of permanent widows (widows who did not remarry) in the general population, some widows might have been attracted to Christian communities for financial support (Bremmer 1995:49) or for emotional or social support. Though we can not necessarily take Luke’s account of the nascent Jesus movement at face value, it suggests that early Christians may have taken a special interest in caring for needy widows from its beginnings. Luke’s late first century or early second century account of widows’ meals (Acts 6:1) and Tabitha’s care for widows (9:39) reflect a particular interest in
widow care roughly contemporary with 1 Timothy. The reliance on the HB (Septuagint) as sacred writings in early Christian communities may form some background to early Christian care for widows and orphans (e.g., Deut 10:18, 24:19-21, 26:12-13). But not all widows would be in need of financial assistance, especially if they had married sine manu, and managed their own inherited property.

A widow would not typically remarry if she was past childbearing, that is, she was “old” (Treggiari 1991:499). It was probably quite evident that women had their last children in their early 40s as their fertility slowed down before the onset of menopause (Parkin 1992:123; 192, n.137; Frier 1994:320-21). Her identity became more associated with her motherhood role as she directed and/or was supported by her adolescent or adult children.

Some widows who remained unmarried were given special praise for their faithfulness to one husband, demonstrating that death did not end their harmonious union. She was called

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215 Augustus ruled that a woman named Septicia was too old to be remarried (to an “old man” [seni]) because she was “no longer capable of bearing children,” and “the marriage had not been for the purpose of procreating children.” Her inheritance, which was put into question by her marriage, was awarded to her sons rather than become a dowry to her new husband. Valerius Maximus, who records the incident, is in full agreement with Augustus’ decision:

If Equity herself had taken cognizance of this matter, could she have given a juster or weightier decision? You spurn those to whom you gave birth, sterile you marry, you confound testamentary order by your malevolence, and you are not ashamed to assign your whole estate to the man beneath whose body, already laid out for burial, you spread your withered senility. So thus conducing yourself, even down in the underworld you were blasted by a celestial thunderbolt. (7.7.4)

In the modern Mediterranean older women typically do not remarry (Chapman 1971:110). Their identity and status can vary. On the one hand, the death of her husband might mean a poignant loss of identity and authority. Whereas a new bride may feel like an outsider in her new marital family, a woman’s married identity becomes primary. One seventy-eight year old Greek widow describes her keen sense of loss following her husband’s death:

You see I wear black. But it isn’t only the clothes I wear which are black. My man is dead. In the house of your mother, father, sisters, brothers, you are a guest [mousafiri]; you are an outsider [xeni]. You live with them but you are an outsider. But with your man you are a nikokyra [female householder]. When you are a nikokyra no one says you didn’t do this right, or come and eat this food which was made for you. I don’t have my own household. I don’t have anything anymore. (Salamone and Stanton 1986:118, n.4)

In the Turkish village, a woman should have a man to arrange business, to protect and to advise her. If her husband is dead, a widow’s grown son may take this role (Stirling 1965:196-97). However, an older widow without a son is especially likely to be alone, either tolerated by her husband’s kin or dependent on charity or neighbours who have no obligation to her (1965:115, 174). Fernea describes a family of women, a local schoolteacher who lived with her mother and two adult sisters, who did not fit this pattern. The schoolteacher earned money for the family, and one man stated, “They have no man to protect them, but their good reputation is protection enough.” They were known to be pious and conservative (1965:53).
univira (once married) in inscriptions, often erected by her children (Humbert 1972:68-70; Treggiari 1991:499). Humbert suggests the rarity of the univira rather than the frequency may have given this title its status (1972:75; cf. Parkin 1992:132). The most important attribute of a univira was her marital faithfulness (la fidélité conjugale).\textsuperscript{216} Moreover, the objective of the epitaph was to promote a positive public image (Humbert 1972:68; see Chapter 10, §5.2). In other words, a widow’s reputation, cultivated over many years of chastity after her husband’s death, was most praised. Widows did not have social prestige based on their widowed state (indeed, they were anomalous since they were without male protection), but an older widow might have authority based on family connections, wealth and/or age, especially when she wielded authority over younger women (Krause 1995:113-15; Treggiari 1991:498).

Whether or not a widow could or did remarry, her respectability and reputation were most important. Younger widows (especially under 35, perhaps) were encouraged to remarry because they were still able and willing to have children. While a widow who remained unmarried and gained a good reputation for this (univira) was celebrated, remarriage was normally encouraged.

1 Tim 5:16 suggests that some widows found financial, and probably also, emotional and social, support among the Christian communities. These may not all have been old widows, for some vulnerable young widows might have sought social protection if they could not find it in their natal or marital families.

\textsuperscript{216} Humbert found 50 inscriptions that praised marital faithfulness, and only 5 that explicitly praised a woman who did not remarry after her husband died (1972:73). In the Laudatio Murdiae (CIL 6.10230), an inscription erected in the first century BCE, a son honoured his mother who married twice, once to his father and then to another man. She was faithful in both marriages, and fairly distributed her property to her children of both marriages. Her son from her first marriage (the testator) received what her first husband had wished his son to have. Her son praises her, declaring, “the provisions of her will proved both her gratitude and devotion towards her husbands, her impartiality towards her children and her sincere righteousness” (translated by Gardner and Wiedemann 1991:132-33).
5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I surmise that early Christian communities generally reflected the demographic range of ages found in the household. We have evidence for a range of ages among both genders in the Christian communities: there was a stable number of young and mature adult men and women, and relatively few, but still present, elderly people, with a significant presence of older women, and probably lots of children. Older men would have drawn less comment from critics since older men regularly joined associations and fulfilled public roles. If there were a high proportion of women involved in the movement, this might suggest something about the continuity of the movement: given that mothers usually outlived fathers, children might be influenced by their mothers to stay in the movement. The proportion of older men was probably similar to the general Roman population; older men would comprise a smaller proportion of the community members than other age groups. Given the mix of age and gender in early Christian communities, it is important to consider the dynamics of intergenerational relationships. The particular way in which people in Mediterranean cultures interact according to age structure and the generational cycle is the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 6: The Generational Cycle – A Model

1. Introduction

The author of 1 Timothy conceived of the proto-orthodox community as the “household of God” (3:15), a metaphor that implies intergenerational interaction. The demography of early Christian communities resembles the household with its mix of ages, gender and social position. The model of generational stability and social change provides a useful way to consider the cultural dynamics implicit in early Christian communities in general, and in 1 Tim 5 specifically. In this chapter, I explore age as a social category in modern Mediterranean cultures, culminating in a model of generational stability and social change. Evidence in Mediterranean ethnographies demonstrates that the cultural value of honour has important connections with age, and that the family or household (the repository of honour) is the focal point of both continuity and change.

2. A model of generational stability and social change

The model outlined in this chapter explains how age and generation relate to social stability and the potential for social change in Mediterranean cultures (Figure 3). In brief, social relationships function in two connected and fluid realms: the private (household) and the public (larger society or community).²¹⁷ Age is important in familial roles; parent and child (and all

²¹⁷ Similarly, David I. Kertzer and Jennie Keith suggest that in developing theory about age norms, we “need to take account of differentiation in at least two social arenas, the domestic and the public.” However, they ask, “When is the egalitarian face of age dominant, as opposed to its hierarchical and more conflictual potential?” (1984:40). In this question, they assume that hierarchy necessarily produces conflict, without accounting for cooperation between age groups—a common feature in the Mediterranean family. They also assume that age groups outside of the household are more likely to be egalitarian and cooperative, which is also not the case in the Mediterranean. For example, men who are equal in age compete for honour, and family honour takes precedence over relationships outside of the family. A man does not want to appear to be subordinate to anyone among his peers (Kenna 1976:348), but this does not manifest as egalitarian cooperation.
other familial) roles change as each member moves through various transitions of the life course. These roles provide a framework for stable age structure in the public realm. Generally, this manifests as the young deferring to the old, and the old maintaining precedence over the young. At a societal level, a stable structure of relational norms based on age, gender and social status dictates moral behaviour in relationships and helps maintain honour. At the same time, the family provides a context for both challenging and enforcing the age hierarchy. It provides a safe space for working out conflict in various ways. Power struggles within the private sphere are rarely aired in public, as this would negatively affect family reputation, and with it the honour of all family members. Generations replicate similar behaviour with regard to age status, which contributes to social stability. But as historical circumstances change, the potential for questioning age hierarchy in the family opens the potential for changing the social structure as well. At the same time, one’s familial identity provides a conservative element, for young family members grow into more powerful older adults. This generational cycle may ultimately exert pressure to maintain the social structure.
The generational cycle determines public behavioural patterns among the old and young, which helps maintain family honour. The generational cycle manifests in the household, which provides a safe place for intergenerational conflict, and the potential for social change. Social change depends on historical circumstances and individual family members, but stable age status presents a conservative element of stability to the system.
3. **Age status, honour and moral behaviour**

Age status governs behaviour between old and young people in Mediterranean cultures. The household, as the focal point for traditional Mediterranean cultures, provides a point of reference. The family is always composed of different age groups, and one’s age status (and gender) dictates proper behaviour to those older and those younger. Although levels of affection may vary, a parent deserves deference and respect from her or his children, and older siblings maintain precedence over younger ones. Household relationships provide “natural” classifications of people in society (Chapman 1971:229), and seniority status is closely tied to age.

The old and young in Mediterranean cultures are not considered social equals, so that the old and the young are in a complimentary rather than an agonistic relationship (Friedl 1962:88; cf. Peristiany 1976:17; Campbell 1964:39, 45, 211). Age structures behaviour so that older people have precedence, and younger people display deference. For example, in rural Turkey, “Relative age is always important since deference to elders is strictly enjoined at all age levels” (Stirling 1965:224). This is true for both sexes.

Both among men and women, seniority of generation and age confers authority and privilege, and divides, or in large households ranks, the household population. Girls are expected to be deferential to older women, to wait upon them, and to speak only when spoken to. Equally, boys and young men defer to and obey their male seniors. (Stirling 1965:119)

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218 Intergenerational relationships are an apt paradigm for other unequal social relationships. Friedl considers the behaviour of the young and old to be paradigmatic of all behaviour between unequals (those of different social position) in Greek village culture (1962:88). Chapman uses age groups in the household as a comparison for economic relationships outside of the household that involve the cooperation of different social classes (1971:144-45; cf. Abu-Lughod 1986:81-82).

219 An elder brother has precedence over a younger brother or sister (cf. Aasgaard 2004). An older sister has precedence over a younger brother in childhood, but as adults, the brother would have precedence (Abu-Lughod 1986:80-82). In a patrilocal household, if there are disputes among brothers before the father dies, it is not about pecking order, but “how hard the pecking should be” (Stirling 1965:133). These relationships are further complicated by the commonality of half-brothers, due to premature death and remarriage (1965:106).

220 Everyone recognizes his or her place with respect to social rank (based on class, wealth, occupation, kin, and sometimes lineage), sex and age, and is expected to behave accordingly (Chapman 1971:48, 67).
Likewise, among the Egyptian Bedouin those who control resources and are responsible for dependents are usually older men, and they have precedence over those who are weaker, including women and younger men (Abu-Lughod 1986:80-82).

However, authority based on age is not guaranteed, just as greater wealth or male gender does not guarantee authority (Abu-Lughod 1986:86, 92). Age must be accompanied by honour in order for age to confer respect.

It is not age per se that entitles one to authority over others or to higher social standing, as the position of idiots and insane demonstrate. Age tends to go with increasing self-mastery as well as responsibility for others. Age also brings increasing freedom from those on whom one depends or who have authority over one, because as time passes they die. Wealth provides the means for gadr (power) in that it allows a person to be generous, to host lavishly, to reciprocate all gifts (hence, to meet all challenges), and finally, to support many dependents. (1986:93)

The rights of age might be considered “ascribed” rights if an older person has spent her or his lifetime gaining independence, control of property, and the respect of people who owe her or him deference.222

3.1. Public behaviour in the public realm

Ideal behaviour that is expected in the family is translated into honourable behaviour in formal public behaviour. In rural Greece, anyone belonging to a younger age cohort treats those in older cohorts with “at least some of the deference with which all treat the elders,” and those who are older treat younger people as subordinate, “with some of the peremptoriness with which the elders are entitled to treat all others” (Friedl 1962:88). If an older man enters a guest room, he is seated quickly, given the best chair (near the fireplace in winter), and always served first

221 Abu-Lughod describes an old man in his sixties who squandered his wealth, chased women and acted irresponsibly. His dishonourable behaviour meant that younger kin no longer respected him, for he no longer deserved their respect (1986:93).

222 Seniority contributes significantly to social position. In Stirling’s Turkish villages, for example, the senior men sit in the central foremost position in mosque because their “age and religious reputation count highly,” even though all men are theoretically equal (1965:235). He describes seniority this way: “An old, poor, and shameless man will be thought little of, but treated with respect for his age. A young man who has no senior kin and who commands ample resources will be listened to and given respect, but his youth will limit his standing in the village. Between those roughly equal in other ways seniority is of great importance” (1965:235).
unless visitors are present. He is allowed to lean against the stalls in church when others are not (Friedl 1962:88). In a Turkish village, men arrange themselves in a generally accepted scale when sitting in guest rooms, wedding feasts, and mosques (Stirling 1965:221-22, 224, 235).

Typically, young Mediterranean men obey and respect their fathers in public, based on formal social rules. They do not smoke, drink, play cards or engage in coarse talk or talk about sex in front of their fathers. They do not speak in public without the father’s permission and do not answer back (Friedl 1962:88; Stirling 1965:101; Fernea 1965:100). Campbell suggests this is because these are activities of equals that demonstrate manliness, and thus are not appropriate for fathers to witness (1964:160). Young Egyptian Bedouin men seem uncomfortable with older kin; they do not laugh or joke. They sit quietly and listen; they are ready to serve, and seem to prefer peers or female kin (Abu-Lughod 1986:116). In an Iraqi village, when women attend a religious gathering, they greet friends and kiss the older women with deference (Fernea 1965:108). Old women also had places of honour near the bride at a wedding (1965:137).

Other deferential behaviour may include avoidance and self-effacing gestures such as downcast eyes and exercising restraint in eating, talking or relaxing (Abu-Lughod 1986:165). Among the Sarakatsani, an ideal young man displays a “restrained manner towards his elders” (Campbell 1964:279). Striking or insulting one’s parent is considered a sin (Campbell 1964:160-61, 324). In rural Greece, older people order their juniors to do small services for them, often with a loud, imperative exhortation, such as “grigora!” (fast!). Such a term is never used by a younger person. Friedl notes that the tone of command and dismissal is the “most telling expression of a superordinate person’s relation to a subordinate.” A younger person will reply, “immediately” or “I have already arrived” (1962:88).

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223 In Fernea’s experience, an old woman came to her home and took the best chair (1965:132-35). She expected deference and cooperation from Fernea, assumedly because of her age.

224 Sometime rendered “gligora.”
Kinship terminology confers respect for older persons who are not necessarily kin relations. A title of courtesy for an older man might be “uncle” (thiós, or perhaps bárbas, which is more familiar) or “grandfather” (papús) and for an older woman “aunt” (thía) or “grandmother” (yáya) depending on whether the elder is in one’s parents’ or grandparents’ generation (Kenna 1976:360). Older people address younger people by their given names (Friedl 1962:88; cf. Abu-Lughod 1986:63). Terms of respect for elders might be used when one is requesting a favour, based on a reciprocal model of close kin helping one another (so as not to imply they are requesting a handout). Kinship terms may be used to indicate respect and affection, but can also represent the opposite. For instance, calling an old man “uncle” instead of “kyrios” (meaning “mister” or “sir”) in Greece implies the old man does not command respect. Thus, terminology indicates a moral dimension to exchanges between people of different generations (Kenna 1976:360-61).

In modern urban areas, adult children still maintain an attitude of respect for their parents, but may find ways to avoid the practical aspects of filial duty. For instance, in modern Greece, many people under the age of 40 or 50 live in the cities while their parents remain in villages. Adult children financially support and respect their parents, but do not interact with them on a daily basis. Adults who have grown up within the cities live with their parents until they marry, for financial reasons, but also because of tradition. They may have some conflict,

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225 These modern Greek kinship terms are specified by John Andromedas (1975:1086-87). According to M. Miller, ancient Greek kinship terminology was similar (1953:47, 49). Grandfather is παπάς; grandmother could be μαμά or μαμή (both terms could also be used for mother; the latter occurs in 2 Tim 1:5), or at times, τεθή, τεθίς, θύνι, or νινη. Uncle is θείος, and aunt is θεία (perhaps father’s brother and sister). Aunt could also be νόννα, νόννη, τεθή, and τεθίς (the last two terms are the same as grandmother). These kinship terms are rare in early Christian literature. The term μαμή in modern Greek evolved to mean “midwife.”

226 In a Turkish village, older women are also called by a kinship term out of respect for their age (Stirling 1965:174). Likewise, in Sicily, Chapman notes a great respect for old age demonstrated in the term of address, Vossia, used “for anyone whose age status or relationship to the speaker commands respect” (1971:51). This term is considered the highest honour. If an older person has a good reputation, even his peers may call him Vossia.
but rarely overt quarrels. Public deference to elders is still important, even if some of the traditional activities of filial duty are no longer kept.

### 3.2. Honour and age

Younger people’s deference for older people is similar to women’s deference to men in that it is based on modesty (shame). Not just women, but anyone who is subordinate, weak and dependent is expected to act with modesty (shame) when in the company of their superiors (Abu-Lughod 1986:80-82; cf. Friedl 1962:88). That is, Abu-Lughod describes modesty as, “the honor of voluntary deference, which is the moral virtue of dependents in Egyptian Bedouin society” (1986:165). Dependents gain honour and “escape moral stigma” through their willingness to choose deference in the presence of their superiors (i.e., those who deserve respect, and have responsibility over them). “Women and other dependents are morally inferior because of their dependency (hence, lack of autonomy), but they can achieve honor by showing deference to those on whom they depend” (Abu-Lughod 1986:166). Thus, they are not passive in maintaining honour. A subordinate person is held responsible to have modesty (Abu-Lughod 1986:117). Abu-Lughod points out that among the Egyptian Bedouin, wilfulness can be a positive quality, even for women, as long as a person knows how to be deferential (and display generosity and honesty) in the right settings (1986:109-11).

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228 In Freidl’s analysis, the analogous behaviour of women and the young is meant to highlight women’s deference: “The strength of the conceptual difference of men and women in the village may be judged from the expectation that the women will give men the kind of deference the young give the old” (1962:90). However, her description of deferential behaviour is valuable in visualizing how the young were conceptualized and expected to act with their elders. Women and young people (I am not sure if she means children or youth or young adults) both have modesty, greater emotion, a longer struggle for self-control, less rationality, greater vulnerability, and a need for mature men’s or supernatural assistance.

229 This includes younger men deferring to their father and father’s generation as well as older brothers; clients defer to their patron and anyone who shares the same status as the patron; women defer to some older women, especially older women in their husband’s family, and to most older men (Abu-Lughod 1986:112-13).
Age is similar to gender in that “subordination or devaluation may exist in one context and not in another” (Dubisch 1986:15). Abu-Lughod notes that although men typically have precedence over women, some women achieve more honour than men who are younger or of lower status. Some men are deferential to older women, or women from an important family (1986:118). Egyptian Bedouin women do not defer to younger men (even if they are dependent on them). Neither do they defer to men who are their husband’s clients. Abu-Lughod reasons that if a person has witnessed someone dominated by others, she or he does not show deference to that individual.

People feel embarrassed in front of their elders not just because the latter control resources and currently have authority, but also because the elders may have known them in an earlier state of extreme weakness and exposure. By the same token, individuals do not feel fear or shame in front of anyone they have seen exposed or vulnerable. (1986:113)

Concomitantly, women and young people are socially segregated from older men because, as vulnerable persons, they are uncomfortable around those more powerful (1986:116).

In addition to appropriate preference and deference, honour is expressed and retained through the fulfillment of obligations and reciprocity. For example, one behaves honourably by being hospitable and treating visitors or those with social standing with proper respect (Herzfeld 1980:343). Since others can observe this action, its proper fulfillment is perceived as honourable behaviour. Similarly, caring for one’s aging parents is a family obligation, and part of honourable, moral behaviour (Chapman 1971:230; Brandes 1995:1; Friedl 1962:86). Hospitality and filial duty are both publicly visible actions; others pass judgement about how honourable a person and family is based on such actions.

In sum, proper behaviour based on age status is a matter of family honour. All family members have a concern for and a stake in the honourable standing of the family. Since public

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230 For example, a wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law are normally subordinate in the private realm, but in urban Turkey, they are treated according to their rank within the company in the world of work, even having authority over men in some cases (Fallers and Fallers 1986).
behaviour reflects on and affects honour, proper age status behaviour and deference to older people, including filial duty and hospitality, is honourable and virtuous behaviour (Stirling 1965:233; Fernea 1965:150; Friedl 1962:86). If younger people challenged their elders in public, they would compromise their own reputation, so they maintain deference in their public behaviour. Moral behaviour in the public realm with regard to age stems from and contributes to a stable social structure.

4. Intergenerational relationships and power

Ideal public behaviour does not necessarily correlate with private conflict. In general, a father has rightful authority over his son, and the son respects and obeys his father, especially when his father is active and competent. In patrilineal Mediterranean cultures, a man usually inherits the headship of the household when his father dies (although premature death has been relatively frequent in peasant society). Thus he occupies a liminal position from the time of marriage until his father’s death. He does most of the heavy labour, yet his aging father retains authority to make decisions and control the money (Lisón-Tolosana 1976:306; cf. Chapman 1971:79; Stirling 1965:224; Campbell 1964:159-63).

Within this age structure, the young and old have conflict. Nancy Foner notes that if conflict is not overt, it can be mitigated in various forms of accommodating behaviour (1984:124-55). Formal behaviour, such as the proper honourable behaviour observed in Mediterranean cultures (e.g., maintaining silence in the present of elder and the use of respectful titles), is one form of accommodation that stresses familial relationships and cooperation (1984:138-40). But familial relationships are more complex than this.

The relationships between young and old in Mediterranean societies involve power struggles. If power involves not only authority and prestige, but also influence, then people who
are otherwise considered dependent and subordinate can also be said to have power, albeit perhaps illegitimate power, or latent power (such as when female behaviour determines the reputation of men; Dubisch 1986:19). Those whose age makes them dependent, and thus less powerful in the material realm, may possess other kinds of power. Dubisch applies these ideas to men and women, but they can also apply to old and young. In a manner similar to the ways that women employ resistance to power, so the young (and the very old) employ resistance to challenge the power structure, and ensure their needs are met. Thus, intergenerational relationships represent ideal relations between young and old, as well as innate power struggles, conflict and strategies for cooperation between people of different ages.

The relationships of parents to children, of sibling to sibling, of adults of both genders to each other, of youngsters to elders, and of kin to kin and to strangers communicate to the young and to adults a comprehensive picture of how people are supposed to behave in these relationships and the cultural meaning of these bonds. In communicating intangible meaning and values, domestic relations also re-create invisible social structure, as well as the tangible persons organized by that structure. This is because domestic relations, like all social relations, are simultaneously behavioral and symbolic: they are what they are, as well as what they represent. They re-create not only the structure as it is supposed to be, but also its hidden contradictions; thus, what child and adult absorb from the domestic process of social reproduction is both social compliance and social criticism. (Dimen 1986:60)

As Muriel Dimen points out, people are socialized not only to uphold an ideal by behaving properly, but to test ideals for their efficacy and value. Similarly, Foner argues that cultural norms help mitigate the power differential between old and young. For example, the promise of

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231 Dubisch reminds us that how we perceive power may not be how someone in another culture perceives power, particularly since we tend to emphasize economic control as power (the power most associated with young-old men). “Overemphasis on material factors as the root of power, then, may lead to neglect of other possible sources of power” (1986:23).

232 Perhaps this is why the author of 1 Timothy found the household such an apt metaphor for the Christian community (3:15). The household was the most familiar set of relationships that demonstrated how he desired the community to function. It may also reflect how they already operated to some extent. The analogy provides all members of the community with common ground since they have all be socialized in their own households in ways that dictate behaviour based on gender, age and class. The author of 1 Timothy is making explicit the “invisible social structure” discussed by Dimen, as well as the “simultaneously behavioral and symbolic” significance of considering the community as a family.
future rewards as one ages may encourage younger people not to rebel against their elders (1984:130-32).

The context of the Mediterranean family provides strong social bonds, but also the potential for change, because it is an arena for private challenges to age-related power. Whereas social inequality based on gender (and social position, for the most part) is constant, inequality based on age is not. Unlike the immutable nature of gender, age is a social category that shifts with the life stage of the individual. However, within the generational cycle, the young fulfill relatively consistent roles. In some ways these subordinate roles parallel the kinds of roles outlined by anthropologists focusing on women. Dubisch states:

Private and public do more than delimit spheres of activity and domains of power. They also define realms of experience of self and society. Within the confines of the domestic realm are found safety, security, and the freedom to be “oneself,” however that is defined. This inside also represents the hidden, the secret, the ability to manipulate the outside. Women, the “insiders,” the “weaker,” the subordinate, the “hidden,” symbolize this “inside” aspect of personal and social life and the qualities associated with it. (1986:36).

Dubisch’s notions about women’s inside, hidden stature in the domestic realm might apply to the young—particularly safety, freedom to express oneself, and the ability to manipulate the outside.233 Of course, young men (and women) eventually grow older and take on more powerful roles, at which time their children are subordinate to them.

In the typical life course, individual roles and access to power change over time. “Every household and every relationship within it is changing all the time. As people grow older they move from one socially defined group to another, and the circumstances in which they have to play their rôles change constantly” (Stirling 1965:98). Although an individual’s age is constantly changing, and her or his age status shifts through the life course, the overall social order remains relatively stable. Specific behaviour connected to social roles, such as the role of

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233 Young Sarakatsan men, for example, who are in their twenties and not yet married, are particularly close to their mothers (who represent the domestic realm) while they challenge the authority of their fathers (who represent the source of their current subordination as well as their future power; Campbell 1964:164-66).
the father, or how the young and old interact, is similar over time. However, culture is never completely stagnant and social structure can change (Stirling 1965:99). Power struggles involve room for negotiation, and potential social change. Young people are often dependent on their older kin, but older kin are likewise dependent on younger people. Specifically, they need their labour, the benefits of their marriages (e.g., inter-family alliance, grandchildren), and the security of their care in old age (Foner 1984:135-38). The following specific examples involve negotiations of power between young and old involving advice, marriage, inheritance and folklore.

In Milocca, young people have a right to make suggestions or give advice to their elders, but the latter retains authority and responsibility (Chapman 1971:79). In the Greek village of Vasilika, Friedl justifies this as a “stream of comment and advice.” During routine activities, expressing opinions is part of typical conversation, but very few of these constant opinions have any real effect. The older man has the final say. On the other hand, she notes that he will not usually choose something that will anger his juniors (1962:81, 88). This sort of benign exchange in which it appears the younger person has no real influence over his elder may actually be a mechanism for cooperation and allaying conflict when it comes to larger issues.

Marriage in Mediterranean societies is a pivotal part of honour and interfamilial relationships: “Both as an event and as a relationship marriage is at the centre of village society” (Stirling 1965:178). In the face of competition between families, marriage negotiations require cooperation and trust between families that challenges the self-sufficiency and independence of a family (cf. Campbell 1964). Abu-Lughod observes that attitudes toward sexuality and marriage challenge the hierarchy between elders and juniors. Marriage gives a young Egyptian Bedouin man a chance to rule over his own domain (similar to the Sarakatsani). Senior men avoid weddings, perhaps because of the implicit challenge to their authority (1986:147). By
focusing on marriage as the joining of two kin groups, senior men have control over who their adult children marry (1986:149), and kinship bonds trump marriage bonds (1986:148). The conformity and cooperation of the young bride and groom are required in order for the elders of the family to retain honour, especially since this union involves the carefully guarded female sexuality of the bride, representing the honour of the family.

Inheritance is an important issue for intergenerational relations, particularly among men.\textsuperscript{234} There are numerous variations of inheritance patterns,\textsuperscript{235} but they are inevitably linked with care for parents in old age, and thus intergenerational negotiations: the reward of inheritance is exchanged for bearing the burden of caring for elderly parents (Lisón-Tolosana 1976:310-11; Kenna 1976:358; Brandes 1995:16). Practices around the Mediterranean vary. Sons may resent the power and authority of their fathers, and exert pressure on them to hand over economic control. In some areas parents may retain control to ensure their own well-being into old age (Brandes 1995:22-23). In the Turkish village, land is usually handed over to sons at the father’s death, unless the father is senile. The land might be divided if the brothers do not get along (Stirling 1965:94). In other cases, if the father is senile, the eldest son may control household affairs, but still give formal respect to the father as nominal head of the household (1965:103). If the father is not senile, however, he retains control of the household, and his grown sons are reliant on him, even for cash (1965:95).\textsuperscript{236} Among the Sarakatsani, there is increasing tension when an adult son with young children is waiting for his father to step down

\textsuperscript{234} In urban Athens inheritance continues to be of utmost importance. According to Panourgiá, after her grandfather’s death in 1986, friends and relatives came to see him laid out in his home, and someone asked, “Had he divided the property among his sons before he died?” (1995:112).

\textsuperscript{235} In Spain, inheritance patterns can vary within one fairly homogeneous area in Spain (Lisón-Tolosana 1976:305). One child may inherit all or the majority of the inheritance and be solely responsible for caring for aging parents, or the inheritance may be split between the sons, or sons and daughters (equally or not), and children expected to rotate care for elderly parents (Brandes 1995:15-24).

\textsuperscript{236} In Turkey, Benedict observes that only about a quarter of households at any given time conform to ideal of the patrilineal joint household due to the early death of the father, disputes among brothers, or the desire for autonomy over time and resources (1976:220, 222).
as active head of the family. It is thought a grown man should relieve his elderly father of duties, or face ridicule for not doing so. The son may show disrespect to his father before he is assured his inheritance, but not usually in public. A father’s retirement resolves this tension (Campbell 1964:69).

In these cases, inheritance represents male economic control. In the Turkish town of Ereğli, Mübceccel Kiray observed changes related to father-son relationships regarding inheritance as the authority of fathers/husbands changed with laws giving women more rights (established in 1926). Concomitantly, adult sons were in a position to demand more financial independence from their fathers in the form of money or responsibility in the family business, and threatened to leave their parents in order to achieve independence. Mothers often negotiated between sons and fathers, allowing the son and his bride to set up an independent household, and even finding a different job for her son that would keep him close by. Fear of abandonment in old age partly fuelled her efforts. To mitigate this fear, mothers also began to rely more on daughters (1976:263-70).

Folklore, such as songs or poems, is used by different age groups to mitigate conflict by expressing ambivalence or resentment without compromising family honour (Foner 1984:147-48). This is evident in Miloccan sayings. On the one hand, they say: “Listen to old people, for they do not deceive you” and “The old hens make the best broth”; on the other hand, they say, “Have no faith in old people and strangers” and “The old flower stinks” (Chapman 1971:47). Young Egyptian Bedouin men recite lyrical poetry among the women, both in mundane conversation and at weddings, as a way of expressing personal emotion (which is unacceptable for honourable behaviour) and resisting elder men’s control over their lives (1990:46-47). In rural Spain, where sons-in-law find themselves under the power of their wives’ mothers, David D. Gilmore records songs that depict mothers-in-law in a negative light (1986). In Turkey,
folksongs, folktales and jokes about conflicts between mother-in-law and bride are plentiful (Kiray 1976:264). The songs are a latent form of resistance on the part of younger people.\textsuperscript{237}

A traditional Mediterranean folk tale demonstrates the anxiety older people might feel about their reliance on their children, and helps to reinforce the generational cycle of filial care.

The legend states that one day an old man was taken to Papa’s Peak [a deserted mountain] by his son. About to suffer abandonment, the old man counseled [sic] the son to leave him only half a blanket and take the other half for himself when it was his turn. Startled and confused by his advice, the son asked whether he would also eventually die on the mountain. “Well, what else?” responded the old man. “I brought my father here, you bring me here, and your son will treat you the same.” Upon hearing this response, the son hurriedly put the old man back in the cart and carried him home. (translation from Portuguese in Brandes 1995:13)\textsuperscript{238}

As Stanley Brandes notes, folklore echoes and reinforces aspects of social structure. In this case, the young person cares for his father for his own future self-preservation (1995:13), but the old man is notably active in prolonging his life.\textsuperscript{239}

Generally, in traditional Mediterranean societies, older people’s authority is assumed, but can be challenged. Intergenerational relationships within the family are the basic arena for age status conflict and resolution. Within the domestic sphere, younger and older people engage in power struggles, such as by giving advice, getting married, negotiating inheritance and expressing emotions and needs through folklore. Those who feel less powerful have socially acceptable ways to express a kind of latent or illegitimate form of power, often within the context of the family or private sphere, which can challenge those who have authority over

\textsuperscript{237} Cf. Chapter 4, §5. The poems of older Egyptian Bedouin women and laments of older Greek women can also be seen as an expression of resistance to social structure and authority.

\textsuperscript{238} Brandes notes that this folktale is found in other parts of the world as well, including Japan and northern Europe (1995:27, n.1).

\textsuperscript{239} Older people are not passive in securing care, even when they are dependent. In Iberia, parents traditionally controlled property in order to secure care in old age, but in recent times adult children rely more on urban work than on rural inheritance. Old parents have less economic influence, but may offer their social security to a care-giving son or daughter and/or other incentives to encourage them to care for them in old age (Brandes 1983:22-26). Likewise, an elderly informant in northwest Spain expresses how dismal it is for old people without children to care for them. Even so, they actively seek ways to be sure they have what they need, even if that means entering a nursing home, however foreign to their experience and desires (Lisón-Tolosana 1976:309).
them. In all four examples, intergenerational conflict is acted upon and resolved within the family structure, not publicly. In this way, the young can question or challenge the authority of their elders, and elders can negotiate their power, in a sphere that does not dishonour the family.

5. **The family and social change**

“The family, the most sensitive barometer to social change, may reflect the stresses of transition through intergenerational tensions which are highlighted in transitional cultures…” (Datan 1982:149). We have seen that intergenerational relationships and public behaviour of deference and preference are both focused on the family and kin in Mediterranean cultures. The safety within the family enables the potential for social change. At the same time, however, the solidarity of the family promotes the continuity of the generational cycle. Growing old itself seems to sustain a conservative force that inhibits or slows down fundamental change in family hierarchy.

The possibility for social change occurs within the family mechanism of young-old conflict and cooperation, for this where the young test out the efficacy of cultural values, and their elders respond. In other words, external influences may cause cultural changes, but such changes begin to take root in the family context. This is because, as we have seen, the family context, or domestic realm, is a safe social space to work out conflict and resentment.²⁴⁰

Cultural change occurs in every society (Foner 1984:238), but the most salient example of social change in many ethnographies relates to effects of modernization—changes brought about by the encroachment of modern Western (European and American) culture with its

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²⁴⁰ Dimen suggests that, for a man, the household is the repository of pride, self-esteem and security. The private sphere offers a place to “reconstruct” his sense of self, which is “damaged” by personal and social expectations that he faces in the public realm, enabling him to resume his duties the next day (1986:62). Whether this is an emic or etic assessment, and whether it is an ideal or a reality, is hard to ascertain, but it is suggestive of the kind of “safety” the domestic context may provide to its members. Panourgiá comments on the tension between individuality and emotional support found in modern Athenian families (1995:72).
technological, economic, commercial, consumerist and social influences, especially in the
twentieth century. Modernization theory (Cowgill and Holmes 1972) and age stratification
theory (Riley, White and Johnson 1972) both attempt to connect social change to age. The
former focuses on how the status of the elderly declines when modernization influences a
traditional culture. The studies that support this hypothesis often fail to look at whether the
elderly continue to have lower status in a succession of several generations after modernization.
Age stratification theory suggests that the social system determines behaviour in age-related
roles, but in turn, the uniqueness of an age cohort in its historical context influences changes in
the social system. The theory assumes the kind of rapid change from generation to generation
that occurred in twentieth-century American society, but does not necessarily apply universally.
However, some aspects of social change due to modernization might provide ideas about social
change in other circumstances.

Abu-Lughod’s observations demonstrate the safety of the family context for the young to
resist their elders in the face of modernization. For example, with exposure to Western notions
about weddings and marriage that focus on the newly wed couple rather than kin connections,
young women ally themselves with young men in rebellion against older women (and thus their
fathers and uncles as well). For example, young women buy lingerie, which draws attention to a
women’s sexuality rather than her moral reputation, childbearing, and ability to manage a
household and help kin. Abu-Lughod interprets this kind of resistance as a way for young
women to express their openness to change based on external influences, but also their
uncertainty that the traditional ways can adequately address the implications of these foreign
influences. “Young women, in resisting for themselves the older women’s coarseness by buying
moisturizing creams and frilly nylon negligees are, it could be argued, chafing against
expectations that do not take account of the new set of socio economic circumstances into which
they are moving‖ (1990:50; cf. 1990:48, 52). The young are using an ambivalent, but important, Egyptian Bedouin value of assertiveness to express their consideration of what external change means for them as young people (1986:110-11). The older women complain that younger women have no modesty in order to discipline the younger women within the female context (Abu-Lughod 1993:78). It is quite possible that as these young people grow old, they will reinforce values and privileges similar to the ones they resist now.

The continuity of the age structure is based on the generational cycle, where young people age and fulfill roles similar to those their parents filled, and their children fulfill roles similar to the ones they had in years past. It is also based on the solidarity of the family. Children are socialized to respect their elders, but they also learn that throughout their lives, family members rely on each other for their needs and keep each other accountable for honourable behaviour (Chapman 1971:73; Stirling 1965:99). It is the duty of kin to help and support one another, spend leisure time together, cooperate in work, help in small crises, such as an unexpected guest, and in large crises, such as times of sickness, food shortage, or rites of passage (1965:148). The pivotal role of the family allows old people to find ―repose and respect‖ in their children’s homes (Fernea 1965:185; cf. Johnson 1983).

According to age stratification theory, intensely hierarchical relationships based on age in the private sphere primarily manifest ―in conflicts of authority, succession and inheritance.” Such a context would encourage people of a similar age who are disempowered within the domestic sphere to seek “egalitarian” camaraderie outside of the household, especially if rapid social change made power differential in age status more obvious (Kertzer and Keith 1984:40). This hypothesis does not generally apply to traditional Mediterranean cultures. The family forms one’s primary identity, and one’s primary loyalty belongs to the family. Those of a particular age group may share similar interests and be at ease with one another, but they do not
have the kind of solidarity that we often observe in modern Western culture (Chapman 1971:49; Stirling 1965:119, 224). In other words, women, youth or old people, for example, do not “unite” in extra-familial causes as equals against their own families. Egalitarianism is not part of traditional Mediterranean cultures: all family relationships are ordered according to age and sex, and relationships outside of the family compete for honour and social standing. This does not preclude peer friendships outside of the family (even complaining about some aspects of their family), but family members would not risk the family’s honour and reputation except in extraordinary circumstances.

Furthermore, hierarchical relationships are not necessarily always in conflict; they can be cooperative (Cain 1987:284-85). Abu-Lughod suggests that the structure of the family provides a prototype or analogy for other hierarchical relationships in society that tempers “the potential conflict in relations of inequality by suggesting something other than simple domination versus subordination.” The family analogy includes the complementary roles of family members, love and identity, and caring for weak members (1986:81-82).

Friedl observes that older people in Vasilika are “no less progressive” than younger ones, agreeing on important family goals and how to achieve them. For example, the older generation agreed that the use of chemicals and machinery was more efficient for agriculture (1962:26) In general, these goals seem to include “enhancement of the honor and prestige of the family” (1962:37), and transmitting wealth and property to the next generation, which is an “essential family obligation” (1962:18). They ensure dowries for daughters, education for sons, and material improvement in the household (1962:37-38). Friedl comments that each generation, including grandparents, has their part to play in Vasilika (1962:89), demonstrating cooperation between generations. Her examples are all economic ones, likely important to all
generations in the aftermath of the Greek civil war. In fact, such ardent family solidarity may have been a reaction to the divisions within families that occurred during the civil war.

Intergenerational relationships function in realms other than economic ones, demonstrating contrasting and/or complimentary interests. In Hirschon’s study of a Greek village, younger people are preoccupied with material and secular concerns, whereas older people are more focused on religious concerns. She questions whether this apparent social change is related to a decrease in traditional values as material and secular concerns increase in an urban setting (i.e., effects of modernization), or whether what she observes as “change” is actually cyclical, or “generational change.” In other words, different stages of the life course might define variations in a person’s focus. Younger adults (in their 20s to 50s) are more concerned for family advancement, competition and concern for family prestige, as expressed in possessions, wealth and appearance (1983:115, 124-5).\(^\text{241}\) Having less need for honour, older adults of both sexes have an increased concern for religion, especially spiritual matters (not just practice; 1983:115, 120).\(^\text{242}\) They often comment on the brevity of life, trust in God and the inevitability of God’s will (1983:123,125). Older women venture out on pilgrimage to shrines (1983:121). Though this activity is criticized by younger men, Hirschon concludes that the concerns of both young and old are socially acceptable to their time of life. Older people’s spiritual focus encourages younger people to consider values which transcend the present concerns of family prestige. Importantly, the old and young are in constant, daily close contact,\(^\text{241}\)

\(^{241}\) On appearance as part of honour, see Freidl, where she describes people as embarrassed about their “rags” worn for work in fields (1962:24).

\(^{242}\) Older people are increasingly associated with religion according to other studies as well. According to Stirling, “the elderly are generally more pious in their personal conduct than the young” (1965:234-5). In Milocca, older people spend more time in church (Chapman 1971:46). Piety is important for men and women (although being overly pious is seen as suspicious, especially for self-appointed unmarried, celibate “house-nuns”; 1971:42). Women more often attend daily mass “with an occasional man whose age or infirmity makes him useless in the fields” (1971:42). Egyptian Bedouin women who are postmenopausal, and thus past the taboos of menstruation (e.g., their clothes can be washed together with men’s), are considered pure and religious. They pray regularly, in contrast with younger women, who pray less often because they are both busy and impure because of children and menstruation (Abu-Lughod 1986:131).
so the older people influence the younger ones, who will expect to grow old themselves (1983:125-26).

These examples point to a conservative element in social change in the Mediterranean, for as the young grow older, they tend to fall back on the familiar patterns of their parents and elders. In other words, generational change may in fact promote cultural continuity. Hirschon is careful to note that “the study of social change must be firmly grounded in long-term empirical study in order to avoid the uncritical imposition of our own culturally biased preconceptions and assumptions” (1983:128). Foner argues that if social change challenges the age stratification system itself, older people’s domination is questioned, but may not be completely eradicated. “Young rebels, of course, often turn into respectable citizens and staunch upholders of customary ways when they become older.” Furthermore, “cultural traditions, we know, often die hard, and age norms are no exception” such as the notion that age deserves respect (1984:225; cf. Stirling 1965:27). If the first men to become important leaders in a revolutionary movement were young, and they hold on to that leadership in old age, they may restore or maintain some the rewards of old age, thereby claiming traditional respect for age in their elder years (Foner 1984:248-49). Among the Sarakatsani, the young men were literate, and able to communicate with the outside world when their illiterate fathers could not. But what kind of power might

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243 Kertzer and Keith warn of two problematic theoretical assumptions. First, the “life course fallacy” means attributing differences between age cohorts to life course changes rather than the experience and character of the cohorts themselves. Second, the “cohort fallacy” means attributing differences between age cohorts to different slices of history when there is actually a change as people age and move through the life course (1984:34). Hirschon is highlighting the latter. The unique nature of social change in the form of modernization should make us wary of the cohort fallacy. Anthropological fieldwork and early Christian texts both reflect a moment in time—a snapshot—of a particular culture, which makes it easy to miss the changes that occur because of life course changes, thus falling into the cohort fallacy.

244 In Malawi, for example, President Banda claimed the traditional respect for age, having been a young rebel in the late 1950s. Whether or not traditional respect was adopted by other revolutionaries was undetermined in Monica Wilson’s study (1977:19).

245 Campbell emphasizes how older Sarakatsan men (past sixty years old) traditionally step down from their active control in the family, but he also notes that during his fieldwork, the older men were generally illiterate. The outside world was more accessible to their literate sons (Campbell 1964:161-62; cf. Achebe 1959). One wonders if
they have as old men? Social change is not always predictable, but the resilience of age structure may be a delaying factor.

In a study of Italian immigrants, Johnson adds further evidence for the tenacity of age structure and the generational cycle in the midst of challenges to age status norms. For Italians living in Syracuse, New York, the family is the focal point of people’s social relationships, characterized by the kind of solidarity and pursuit of family honour we find in traditional Mediterranean ethnographies. Even with the educational, occupational and social status changes that occur between generations, children choose to live near their parents, promoting interdependence and constant social contact and support. Authority follows the lines of traditional Italian families where the old have power over the young, and men over women, reinforcing conformity to the family hierarchy and duties, even at the expense of personal interests. The family context provides an “escape valve” for frustrations and ambivalence of the young, who were caught between their personal interests (endorsed by the larger American culture) and their family’s expectations for conformity. An emotional outburst within the family challenges the norms, but is an acceptable way to vent feelings without comprising family honour. Frequent family contact continues to reinforce family solidarity and loyalty. Because of this continuity, the elderly retain their roles of authority in the family (1983:94-102). Johnson’s study demonstrates the enduring quality of the generational cycle common to Mediterranean cultures, even in the midst of tremendous change for Italians who migrated to New York.

In sum, the generational cycle in modern Mediterranean cultures is (1) the basis for honourable behaviour toward different age groups in the public sphere, and (2) based on familial relationships in the private setting. The stability and safety of the household provides for the

literacy and access to the outside world that was slowly infringing on the Sarakatsani exerted more influence on the timing and quality of male “retirement” than he accounts for. It is possible that the younger sons disregard their old fathers’ views (1964:163-64) because they no longer consider them relevant in changing times. It might be that Campbell was invested in describing traditional culture and/or typical generational changes in rural Greek culture, and downplayed the influence of modernization.
possibility of social change (especially through the resistance of young people to their elders), as well as social continuity (because young people grow old and come into the power positions of their parents). This is the model of the generational cycle and social stability.

6. A moment in time in early Christian communities

Modernization arose under very specific historical circumstances. Comparison with the ancient world must be done with great caution to avoid ethnocentric bias and insensitivity to the ancient world view and way of life, which was “pre-clock, pre-monastic, pre-Newtonian, pre-Enlightenment, pre-Industrial Revolution and pre-Einsteinian” (Malina 1989:9-10).

The historically specific circumstances of early Christianity in the late first and early second centuries requires us to consider the specific point in time (the “generation”) of the community of 1 Timothy.

The second important element to acknowledge in our examination of the early Christians in the late first and early second centuries is the historical moment related to age, the “generation” of Christians operating at that time.246 A marked event is often important in the

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246 The notion of “generations” in the early church has been used to describe diachronic church development (e.g., MacDonald 1988), but the definition of “generation” in early Christian communities is unclear. For example, Jesus’ disciples or Paul’s “first converts” (e.g., 1 Cor 16:15-16), who became Jesus followers at least 20 years later, might be called the “first generation.” If we focus on one community, the second generation would correspond to the adult children of the “first converts.” We might ask: Is the basis of a “generation” the passing on of leadership roles? Can we assume a figure like thirty to forty years per “generation”? Does this assumption fit with the demographics and social reality of the ancient world? How do we account for new converts, who could be of any age? In the anthropology of aging, a generation is defined by biological family where father and son are not in the same generation (e.g., Fortes 1984:117). The term “generation” cannot easily be used outside of biological kinship structures. Where generations of the Christian community are discussed using approximate dates of texts, rather than reflecting the parent-child relationships in the life course, what constitutes a “generation” is not clear. Anthropologists prefer to use the term “age cohort” to refer to people of approximately the same age. “Generation X” or the Baby Boomer generation are really terms for people in particular age cohorts in our society, born within a certain time period. However, since early Christian communities included a range of ages, the term “age cohorts” is not very useful either. Conceiving of cohorts of people connected to particular events (e.g., the origins of the community of Jesus followers in a particular city) might be useful. Tangible timelines might help us reconstruct people’s ages (and corresponding status and roles) more clearly in the crucial period of Christian development around the end of the first century and beginning of the second century, but we only have a few chance references of age to work with. Nevertheless, this may help us to see more clearly the apparent shift from mongenerational to multigenerational language from Paul to 1 Timothy/Titus/1 Peter/1 Clement, and the potential role of age, especially for people who grew old within the movement. They had personal connections to an earlier cohort.
history of a group, and the community values the individuals who are connected to that event. The founding of the early Christian communities marked a specific event in their communal history, namely the death of the older people who formed the last living links to the foundation of the movement.

The early Christians identified themselves with specific persons, namely Jesus (e.g., 1 Tim 1:1), and those appointed as “apostles,” like Peter (1 Pet 1:1) and Paul (by his own admission in Gal 1:1; cf. 1 Tim 1:1). As the community developed, some people in the community who knew the founders died, and a few grew old. Children of the first group of converts grew up and may have grown old within the group. Others joined the group along the way. Papias reveals that people who knew the apostles and founders of communities kept valuable connections to this history as they aged (Irenaeus Against Heresies 5.33.4; see Chapter 6).

I hypothesize that at the beginning of the first century and beginning of the second century was a peculiar stage of development in the early church, a transitional phase that made age categories more evident than they had been before. As the movement faced a new phase beyond the living memory of its founders, the authority and experience of older people who had grown up and grown old in this community reflected the age hierarchy of society in a more prominent way. More than a century ago, E. von Dobschütz commented on Pauline communities immediately after Paul’s death:

…we must not neglect a fact usually undervalued, viz., that in the interval [between Paul’s death and the “danger” of heterodoxy] a class of old experienced Christians had been formed. For years, in some cases from earliest youth, these had been under the discipline of the Christian spirit, and represented, so to speak, the conscience of the

247 Richard Bauckham mentions older Christians in the context of the eyewitnesses of Jesus and their connections to the canonical gospels, though probably oversentimentalizes the unique privilege of these people (2006). Enrico Norelli discusses social memory in the early church, considering the importance of old people as sources of living memory (2006). Both scholars cite Papias as an especially important source for considering old people who were connected to the founders of Christian communities. See Chapter 7, §3.2).
Church, reacting against all degeneracy quite otherwise than the Apostle, with all his authority, had been able to do from without. (1904:175)

Von Dobschütz goes on to say that these people “who belonged to [the Church] since its foundation… enjoyed a natural authority” due to their age and seniority (he hints that this authority may also have to do with previous social position, particularly those with wealth). When they died, this “natural claim to authority” was replaced by “specially energetic persons” with “spiritual ambitions,” and the creation of “offices” (1904:190). It is apparent that von Dobschütz was quite concerned to extol proto-orthodoxy (especially in his comment that the old Christians formed the “conscience” of the community), and to question the development of “Catholising Christianity” (1904:174). Even so, his idea that people who grew up and grew old in this era of early Christian communities had some kind of authority (perhaps more “social” than “natural”) is suggestive.

While they were not necessarily the only, or even the most important, authority figures in the community, the elderly Christians of this period probably reflected cultural norms in terms of receiving both respect and ridicule from younger people. For the late first and early second century communities, some of the elderly people were living connections to the past. Their particular connection to the past was soon lost, and compensated for, in later age cohorts of the church (e.g., apostolic succession, written gospels, preservation of Pauline letters). However, as with other forms of authority, some young people would resent their power. In addition, Christian forms of authority had inroads for younger people to gain authority—perhaps not quickly enough for some. Eventually age was not much of a prerequisite for leadership positions, but this was a later development (Gnilka 1983).

Two ethnographic examples demonstrate what issues might be important for a community that values the individuals who represent a specific event in their history. First, aging individuals who are connected to a specific historical event can help define community
identity, especially when community identity is threatened. Linda Evers Cool studied elderly Corsicans who immigrated from the Niolo valley to Paris. Care and respect for the elderly was maintained as an important value in the immigrant community. The elderly felt socially valued, and the young, who felt supported by the elderly, had a greater sense of belonging to the ethnic group. Cool argues that this respect for the elderly is a potentially widespread phenomenon for minority ethnic groups.

Whenever an ethnic group depends for its special identity on a traditional heritage separate from that of the larger sociocultural context, its consciousness of belonging demands respect for the old as individuals who actually lived or were chronologically nearer that different life to which the membership collectively aspires. The old always represent proximity to that mythical time of ethnic purity before the contamination by the larger society and its values. However, the elderly’s control of power resources is only valid and existent to the extent that the young value those resources.

For elderly Corsicans, ethnicity became their “identity and source of potential power (or control)” especially for those who had little else, like the poor and the sick (1980:167-68). The parallel to early Christian groups is that both formed a minority group in the larger society and saw themselves as having a “special identity” that distinguished them from “the larger sociocultural context.” Also, the older people of the community represented an earlier time, perhaps perceived as a “mythical time” of religious or doctrinal “purity” when the apostles and community founders were still around.

Second, the death of old people connected to a specific historical event can create an identity crisis. In the early 1970s, Hirschon studied Greeks in an urban setting, some of whom were refugees from Asia Minor and their descendants. In 1923 the Lausanne Convention forced the exchange of over 1.5 million Greeks and Turks. This event marked the identity of the community for the next several decades. The death of an old person who was an original refugee

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248 At the meal following Panourgiá’s grandfather’s funeral, his son told a story about resistance in war, connected to his own and his father’s experiences of World War II. Panourgiá ties these memories into her own memories of violence and oppression during the junta (a draconian regime that ruled from 1967 to 1974).
caused “collective anxiety about their sense of identity and awareness of their bonds as ‘refugees’. The loss of a direct link with their Asia Minor past showed how the continuity of their identity was being threatened” (1989:207; 1983:123). In the early Christian communities there may a similar anxiety with the death of those involved in the founding community, creating a time of uncertainty about their identity, especially in light of a delayed parousia—Jesus had not yet come back like the earliest communities thought he would (e.g., 1 Thess 4:13-5:11; Mark 13).

As I examine 1 Tim 5 as a proto-orthodox early Christian text, I see evidence of a conservative element amid social change, such that the stability of the generational cycle reinforced age hierarchy. This was not necessarily an inevitable change, as the various heterodox strands of Christianity demonstrate (such as the opponents in 1 Timothy), but the generational cycle and identity of the Christian group as fictive kin (including the requirement for “family” loyalty) might have been a powerful social force in allowing proto-orthodox Christianity as a new religious movement to continue to grow as it did.

7. Conclusion

The model of the generational cycle provides a culturally sensitive way to view age and aging in early Christian communities. Age hierarchy is a crucial part of social structure in Mediterranean cultures. As an innate cultural construct, age hierarchy challenges the notion that early Christian groups were egalitarian in nature (e.g., Fiorenza 1983, Horrell 2001; see Chapter 1), and affirms that social hierarchy, including age hierarchy, was an integral part of the cultural system and values, and was thus always the norm for early Christian groups (e.g., Balla 2003, Campbell 1994, and Aasgaard 2004; see Chapter 1).
The goal of this study is to consider how old age, aging and intergenerational relationships in the ancient Mediterranean relate to a time of peculiar social change in the late first and early second centuries, when the last of those who were part of the originally founded Christian communities were dying. In the midst of such change, the movement also became more visible to outsiders. Proto-orthodox authors want to encourage honourable behaviour of community members in order to enhance their reputation with suspicious outsiders. 1 Tim 5 lends itself to studying age and aging because it explicitly mentions age-related groups: older men (5:1, 17-22), older women, younger men, younger women (5:1-2); widows who were at least sixty (5:9); and younger widows (5:11-15).
Part III: Age Structure in 1 Timothy 5

Chapter 7: Social Change, Intergenerational Conflict and 1 Timothy

1. Introduction

The early Christian communities were likely always composed of a range of age groups, yet age as a social category became strikingly more visible in the late first century and early second century proto-orthodox Christian texts. This is evident in the first letter to Timothy (especially 5:1-22), which provides a case study for why age became more visible. The goal of this chapter is to introduce the social setting of 1 Timothy with a focus on intergenerational conflict, and to contextualize this conflict in its ancient Roman setting.

I begin with literary issues related to 1 Timothy, including social setting, purpose and the opponents. I highlight the crisis they faced at the end of the first century when the Christians were losing their living connections to the movement’s founders. This crisis of identity precipitated a time of social change within the movement. Next, I consider the Roman historical context of intergenerational relationships and social change within which the real audience and author of the letter existed. Challenges to the age hierarchy by the young are evident. Generally, however, age hierarchy was reaffirmed in the context of the generational cycle.

2. Context of 1 Timothy

2.1. One letter, two stories (and age)

The first letter to Timothy is probably “doubly” heteronymous, meaning that Paul himself did not write it, nor was Timothy the original recipient. Although Timothy is ostensibly

249 On this term as a replacement for “pseudonymous,” see Chapter 1, §4.
receiving instructions to pass along to his community, the actual audience, the true recipients of
the instructions, did not receive them from Timothy himself, but from the fictive letter, imbued
with the authority of Paul. The author wrote the letter with this real audience in mind (rather
than Timothy’s real historical situation). Thus, he had two main purposes: to have the audience
apply the specific instructions to their own situation, and to have them label certain teachings
and teachers as deviant.250

Applying John W. Marshall’s ideas about double heteronymity (in Titus), we might say
that as the original audience “listened” to Paul’s conversation with Timothy, they “overheard”
Paul’s assessment and advice about situations that resembled their own. Marshall describes the
fiction in narrative terms: there is “one letter, two stories” (2008:784). Rather than having
“Paul” address the actual audience directly, the author fabricated the characters of “Paul” and
“Titus” (or “Timothy”). The author was rhetorically successful in creating a narrative of the two
characters that the actual original audience believed to be a letter from Paul (2008:799-800).
The fictive story in 1 Timothy includes Paul’s bequest to Timothy of that which promotes
proper teaching and behaviour, and Paul’s rejection of what he deems deviant teaching and
behaviour.

By “overhearing” Paul’s half of conversation, the audience was able to “insert”
themselves into the narrative by applying “Paul’s” instructions to their own situation. The
original author of the fictive letter intended his actual audience to see their own situation in what
he wrote. Like the directives for specific age groups in Titus 2:1-10 (Marshall 2008:800), certain
instructions in 1 Timothy were directed to the problems in the recipient community: how (and
why) to demonstrate respect to governing authorities (2:1-2), how women and men were to
behave in the community gathering (2:8-15), how to choose appropriate leaders based on

250 Horrell encourages modern readers of 1 Timothy “to read the author’s rhetoric (and every author’s rhetoric!)
with a degree of suspicion, and to resist taking (often stereotypical) polemic at face value” (2008:112).
honourable characteristics (3:1-13), how to treat older and younger members (5:1-2), how to solve problems associated with widows (5:3-16), elders (5:17-25) and slaves (6:1-4), and how to direct those who were materially wealthy (6:17-19). In these sections we can gain an understanding of the author’s view of the social situation of the real audience to whom he is writing as he utilizes the medium of a fictive letter from Paul to Timothy.\textsuperscript{251}

In short, the letter is a mix of fictive elements (e.g., Timothy’s commission from Paul in Ephesus) and “real” elements (e.g., the problems with widows), in the guise of a fictive letter from Paul to Timothy. In this, I assume that 1 Timothy is written to a particular community, addressing a particular social situation.\textsuperscript{252}

It is significant that the rhetoric of the letter is based on an age hierarchy—Timothy is young. “Let no one despise your youth (σου τῆς νεότητος), but set an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (4:12).\textsuperscript{253} Paul appears to be old (Malherbe 1994). Timothy is addressed as “my child in the faith” (1:2; cf. 1:18), which assumes Paul’s seniority or age, or both. Given the cultural value of age hierarchy in the ancient Mediterranean, an age differential is almost certainly implied. That is, the letter was intended to look like instruction from an older man (Paul) to a younger man (Timothy, a well-known companion of Paul). The historical Paul considered Timothy to be like a son who adhered to and promulgated Paul’s teaching.\textsuperscript{254} In 1

\textsuperscript{251} The author of 1 Timothy seems to have employed the third person imperative as a way the audience could insert itself into the fictive story (Appendix 4).

\textsuperscript{252} It is not a general letter of traditional material (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:8-9)—a view that is generally rejected in current scholarship (Verner 1983:3-26; Donelson 1986:2; Towner 2006:37-53).

\textsuperscript{253} Christopher Roy Hutson has gathered ancient evidence on youth in the ancient world. He argues that the letter was written to youthful leaders rather than the church community as a whole (1998:10), but this view does not adequately account for the rhetoric between the “old” fictive Paul and the “young” fictive Timothy; nor does it adequately address the layers of narrative and reality in the letter.

\textsuperscript{254} There is ample historical evidence for Timothy’s close association with Paul, and Paul’s fatherly affection for Timothy. Paul assigned Timothy to work with churches in Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1-10), Corinth (1 Cor 4:17, 16:10-11), and presumably Philippi (Phil 2:19-24). Paul praised Timothy’s worth, “how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Phil 2:22), calling him “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” He was sending Timothy to Corinth as his protégé, to remind them of his teachings (1 Cor 4:17; cf. 1 Thess 3:2), stating that Timothy was “doing the work of the Lord” just like Paul (1 Cor 16:10). He is listed as co-author in four of Paul’s undisputed letters (2 Cor 1:1, Phil 1:1, 1 Thess 1:1, Phlm 1), and two disputed letters (Col 1:1, 2 Thess.
Timothy, Paul is a mentor and example (1:12-16; cf. Plutarch *Moralia* 796A), but also an ambassador and apostle (κῆπος καὶ ἀπόστολος)—that is, he sees himself as a man with a special calling from God, to be God’s messenger. In the fictive letter, he was handing down his wisdom, defined as a deposit (παραθήκη) to be guarded (6:20), to his trustworthy protégé. Timothy would in turn become an example for the rest of the community (4:12). The author portrays Paul as a sort of testator, bequeathing to Timothy (and thus to the real audience through the fictional Timothy) an inheritance of “truth” (2:4, 7; 4:3). This was comprised of healthy teaching (ἡ ὑγιεινούση διδασκαλία, 1:10, 4:6, 6:3) that God entrusted (πιστεύω) to Paul (1:11).

In the Roman world, inheritance was important, and not just for the elite (Shepherd of Hermas *Visions* 20.3.12). Given the demographic realities, life was precarious, and longevity was not certain. People sought to ensure their property would be passed on to the people they intended through wills (Saller 1994:155-60; cf. P. Mich 322, Chapter 3, §4). In the story of 1 Timothy, the inheritance in question was not property, but “truth” and “healthy teaching” from God (1:11). The inheritance being passed on from the fictive Paul, the founding apostle, to the fictive Timothy, a trustworthy heir, was also shared by the real audience in their reading of the

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1:1). Timothy also offers a greeting as Paul’s co-worker in Rom 16:21. While its historicity is not certain, according to Acts 16:1-3, Timothy was from Lystra, and had a good reputation among the Christians there. His mother was Judean, his father was Greek (meaning he was a pagan). Paul had Timothy circumcised to bolster his reputation among the Judeans, and they travelled together.

255 Donelson argues that the author is creating the concept of Pauline tradition as he presents the tradition as a “trust” (1986:163-69).

256 In the *Visions* of the Shepherd of Hermas, an unexpected inheritance is considered rejuvenating. In a series of visions, Hermas is visited by an old woman who represents the church. An explanation about why she becomes younger in the visions includes this description of the effect of an inheritance:

Someone who is older (πρεσβύτερος τῆς) and has already given up all hope because of his bodily weakness and poverty looks forward to nothing except the last days of his life. Then suddenly an inheritance is left to him. And when he hears about it he rises up and in his excitement grows strong. No longer does he recline, but he stands and his spirit becomes rejuvenated even though it has been wasting away because of his daily life from before; and he no longer sits, but becomes manly (or courageous; ἄνδριζεται). (20.2; Ehrman 2003:222-25).
letter. Their share of the inheritance solidified an identity that had continuity with the past, but relevance for their present problems and perspective.\(^{257}\)

The real audience in 1 Timothy had to forge a new self-definition as they faced two significant (and intertwined) challenges. First, they had to work out differing interpretations of the teachings of the founders, made more poignant as the living connections to the founders of the movement dwindled. Second, they experienced social sanctions imposed by outsiders, who perceived the group as problematic. The author condemned the opposing teachings because they were promoting behaviour that was causing outsiders to look at the community with suspicion. As a solution, the portrayal of Paul as an older man introduced a conservative element, a return to traditional Roman-type virtues in terms of household behaviour in the community, even if the younger historical Paul may have been less concerned about hierarchical order with regard to age (cf. Barclay 2007:239-41). In the fictive story of the letter, not only was Timothy called by God and adopted by Paul, he also had the approval of the council of elders (4:14). As the fictive example of a young man \textit{par excellence} (4:12), Timothy dutifully submitted to the authority of elders, reflecting proper order and behaviour. The rhetoric of Timothy’s age in the letter may point to what he perceives as a significant behavioural problem among younger men in the real community (5:17-22; Chapter 12).

\(^{257}\) Malherbe argues that the author is setting up an image of “the old man who is concerned about the future of the church” (1991:201). While there is some element of forward thinking in bequeathing an inheritance and in teaching the young, I am convinced that the ancient Romans were past-oriented and/or present-oriented, in contrast with modern Western culture, which is future-oriented. See Malina (1989), whose initial evaluation of time orientation is suggestive for future work on this theme (cf. Bettini 1991). Thus, the author’s primary concern is about solidifying tradition from the past and addressing the present problems of the community. I do not think the author was looking into the future, except to ensure the younger generation adopted the “right” teaching and behaviour as they matured. There may have been a vague notion of future generations, but not nearly as poignant as the current need to secure healthy teaching in the present crisis. Joseph H. Hellerman highlights the past orientation of Roman culture as exemplified by their concern for ancestors (2001:51-55). He then suggests that inheritance is important for the \textit{future} of the kin group (2001:55), but again, I think it is not so much the future that is important, but the continuity of the family patrimony. In fact, Hellerman’s definition of ancestors and inheritance makes this point well: “Passionate preoccupation with ancestral origins. Personal honour is strongly dependent on one’s ancestral lineage. Inheritance \textit{is} understood collectively—it belongs to the patriline as a whole and must be preserved as such” (2001:57).
In sum, as we consider the fictional nature of the first letter to Timothy, we encounter two stories: a fictive story of an older Paul instructing his successor and heir, a younger Timothy on the one hand, and an implied story of a late first century audience facing various teachings and public suspicion of their behaviour largely based on what the author considered heterodox teachings.

2.2. The opponents

The author’s purpose in writing 1 Timothy is related to an urgent, divisive problem caused (in his view) by a group of people who are promoting perspectives and behaviour that opposed his own. The main problem was those who were teaching “different” things than the fictive Paul wishes them to teach (ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖν; 1:3; τῇ ἑτέρῳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ διδασκαλίᾳ ἀντίκειται [whatever is opposed to healthy teaching], 1:10; ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖ 6:3). They “occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training (ὁκονομία) that is known by faith” (1:4; cf. 4:7). These opponents fancy themselves teachers of the law (νομοδιδάσκαλοι), but the author argues they do not understand the law (1:7). They “reject conscience” and blaspheme (1:19-20), they “forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods” (4:3). They seem to have led young widows astray, perhaps compelling them not to remarry, and not to act as proper young women (5:11-15). They are “conceited, understanding nothing, and [have] a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words,” considering “godliness as a means of gain” (6:4-5), making wealth more important than the true faith (6:10). Paul rejected the opponents, specifying Hymenaeus and Alexander as two men that he has “handed over to Satan” (1:20).

258 I prefer the terms “opposing teachers” or “opponents” instead of the term “false teachers” because the latter does not reflect the Greek notion of “teaching different things” (not false things), nor does it honour the struggle this community must have faced. Neither the author nor his opponents knew that his letter would become part of “orthodox” Christianity. The two rival factions taught disparate doctrine, vying for followers in their way of behaving and thinking.
The fictive Paul’s advice as conveyed to Timothy would make clear to the real audience the deviant nature of these teachings. The real audience would have easily heard their own situation in the fictive teachings and character of the opposing teachers. But the content of the opposing teachings offers a hazy picture compared to the impact of the deviant teachings on the behaviour of the community. “Paul” advises Timothy himself to behave differently from the opponents (4:7, 12-16; 6:11-14, 20) and to convey the proper instructions to the (fictive) community so that they will avoid the improper behaviour encouraged by the opposing teachers (1:3, 11; 3:15; 4:6; 6:17-18).

Nevertheless, the identity of the opposing teachers has much interest in early Christian scholarship, even given how little information we have about the opponents’ point of view (e.g., Towner 2006:41-47). Typically, the identity and characteristics of the opponents are not specified for 1 Timothy alone, but derived from three letters: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. Admittedly, in all three letters, deviant teaching is a problem, and there are some striking similarities in the description of the opponents. However, to begin with an assumption that these are derived from one unified “heresy” is methodologically unsound. I am cautious about deriving information about 1 Timothy directly from 2 Timothy and Titus, as if they were all one text. Instead of a complete picture of the opponents (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:65), the blending of the three letters may provide an erroneous, fabricated picture of opponents that does not reflect any one letter accurately. I assume that each letter was written for a different purpose, and perhaps to different audiences.

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259 For example, they are associated with teaching (1 Tim 1:7, 6:3; Tit 1:11; cf. 2 Tim 3:7), but reject or are bereft of “truth” (ἀλήθεια; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 2:18; Tit 1:14) and talk foolishly (ματαιώνω; Tit 1:10; ματαιώματα, 1 Tim 1:6). They are labelled as disobedient, conceited, and generally immoral (1Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Tit 1:16), perhaps out for dishonest gain (1 Tim 6:5; Tit 1:10) (cf. Marshall 1999:42-43; Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:135).

260 For example, Dibelius and Conzelmann suggest that putting clues together from all three letters gives us a relatively complete picture: “If all these sections are interpreted as referring to the same heresy, and a distinction is made only between the seducers and the seduced, a comparatively clear picture can be attained” (1972:65).

261 See comments in Chapter 1, §4 on the methodological question of the unity of the three letters.
In the typical view, taking all three letters together, the following attributes are apparently discernible (e.g., Marshall 1999:44-46). First, the opposing teaching was related to Judaism (or possibly circumcised Gentiles) who taught the law (1 Tim 1:7) and advanced Judean myths (Tit 1:14). Note that 1 Tim 1:4 mentions myths as well, but with no suggestion of a Judean context. Second, the opponents encouraged asceticism, prohibiting marriage and promoting abstinence from foods (1 Tim 4:3). Third, the opponents “spiritualized” the resurrection, saying it had already happened (2 Tim 2:18). Fourth, their influence was widespread, but had a special appeal for women. They captivated weak women by infiltrating households (2 Tim 2:6). Women were deceived (like Eve; 1 Tim 2:14) and led astray (like the young widows; 1 Tim 5:15). Fifth, doctrinally, they may have rejected the idea that all people can be saved by God (1 Tim 2:4-6, 4:10), and perhaps questioned the humanity of Jesus (1 Tim 2:5, 3:16).

Given these particular attributes, the identity of the opponents as compared to known features of early Christian groups has never been clear. They have been compared to known features of Gnostic, Judean-Christian and ascetic groups.

Although Gnosticism was a second century movement, J.L. Houlden is convinced of the Gnostic nature of the opponents in a generalized, nascent sense (1976:30-31). Their asceticism (1 Tim 4:1-3) reveals they reject the material world; their myths and genealogies reflect esoteric and speculative elements found in Gnostic thought (1 Tim 1:4), their realized eschatology (2 Tim 2:18) denies the need for a future parousia; they may have a docetic view of Christ (1 Tim 2:5, 3:16); and in 1 Tim 6:20, the author explicitly states they have false knowledge (γνώσις).

262 For abstinence from food, sometimes 1 Tim 5:23 is cited (drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach) as is Tit 1:15 (on purity). For prohibition of marriage, several texts suggest that women were not marrying and/or raising children (1 Tim 2:15, 5:14 and Tit 2:4).

263 Pauline communities had rival factions from the beginning (e.g., Gal 1:6-7; 2 Cor 11:3-5), but the opposing teachings in the letter to Timothy reflect a later time period, some decades later, when the community faced intense crisis.
J.N.D. Kelly refers to a “Gnostizing form of Jewish Christianity” so as not ignore the Judean elements found in Tit 1:4, 7 (1963:12; Hanson 1966:16-17, 23; Young 1994:10-11).

The label of “Gnostic” is problematic. We cannot derive much from the one instance of term “gnosis” in 1 Tim 6:20. The texts do not clearly suggest salvation through knowledge, and there is no discernibly negative view of creation or various divinities (Marshall 1999:50). There is not enough specific information to compare the opponents’ teaching with what we know of Gnosticism (Towner 2006:43), and the information we do have does not conform to any known group of Gnostics (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:65-67). For this reason, Dibelius and Conzelmann suggest that the letters do not reflect a real historical situation; instead, they convey a broad anti-Gnostic apologetic (1972:65-66). More recent studies of the real and specific social aspects of the letters born of a real power struggle are more persuasive (e.g., Verner 1983, MacDonald 1988; Pietersen 2004:4, 139).

The second major characterization of the opponents is that they are Judean in character and not Gnostic. For example, I. Howard Marshall is confident that the Judean basis is “very clear” and “beyond question” (1999:41; Pietersen 2004:4). In Marshall’s interpretation, the opponents reflected a Judean-Christian teaching interpreting the law allegorically to promote a radical asceticism (perhaps like that found in Qumran; 1 Tim 4:3), claiming true knowledge of the law (1 Tim 1:7), but leading people astray with their speculations. They disregarded Christ as the saviour, and did not desire Gentiles to be in the movement (1 Tim 2:4). Their teachings appealed to women because they promoted “emancipation” (1 Tim 2:9-15). They were greedy for money (1 Tim 6:5; Tit 1:10) and were generally immoral (1Tim 6:4; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Tit 1:16; 1999:51).

264 Donelson states: “Their Jewishness is unmistakable not only because of a direct accusation of Jewish myths, and of being of the circumcision, but also because of their anchoring their thoughts in scripture. Moreover, μνήμειας and γενεαλογία, which they pursue, are popular Jewish concerns at this time, whatever the terms actually mean” (1986:122). He clearly treats the letters to Timothy and Titus as one unit, which I do not find tenable (see Chapter 1, §4).
Marshall’s view is problematic for a number of reasons. Marshall himself admits that the ideas of resurrection and the “freedom” of women are not “particularly Jewish” (1999:46). The letters never attack circumcision (like Paul does in Galatians), nor is there anything about the “works of the law” (as in Romans; 1999:44). He rightly warns that the teaching of the opponents in Titus need not be exactly the same as what is found in 1 Timothy (1999:365), but he makes no practical distinctions.265

The opponents in Titus are most certainly Judean. Tit 1:10 specifies those of the circumcision, and 1:14 refers to Judean myths. Within this context, when Tit 3:9 mentions the law, it likely refers to the Hebrew Law. However, I am not convinced that the opponents in 1 Timothy are “Jewish” or “Jewish-Christian.”266 The only basis for a Judean identity of opponents in 1 Timothy is the phrase “teachers of the law” (1:7) and subsequent discussion of the “law” (ὁ νόμος). It is not certain from the context of 1 Timothy alone that this refers to the Hebrew Law. The author of 1 Timothy does not specify that he means the Hebrew Law.267 Houlden posits that “the law” refers to moral Christian teaching rather than Judean law (1976:53, 56). The word ὁ νόμος can refer to a more general sense of “law”—a rule or set of rules governing a person’s actions, principles and norms (cf. Rom 7:21). According to BDAG, 265

265 There are other difficulties with Marshall’s view. First, he gives little credence to the polemical nature of the discussion. The mention of speculations, meaningless and foolish talk, greed and immorality are all meant to exaggerate and demonize the opposing viewpoint. Second, he assumes the opponents attacked proto-orthodox Christology, but this is not explicit. The author may have intended for the formulae in 1 Tim 2:5-6 and 3:14-16 to be used for evangelism. Similarly, Jesus’ confession before Pontius Pilate (6:13) might be intended as an example for the community members when confronted by pagan authorities. Third, he assumes women want to be “emancipated” but this is a modern feminist ideal, not a first century Mediterranean one.

266 Marshall exaggerates the Gentile-Judean divide and the Judean nature of the opponents based on circular reasoning. Specifically, his early date of the letter (just after Paul’s death) leads him to look for Paul’s discussions on the law (e.g., in Romans) and problems with Jewish Christians (Galatians). For Marshall, the law here must refer to the Hebrew Law and the opponents must be Judean Christians if they desire to be “teachers of the law.” These Judean elements are more reflective of Paul’s time than a later era, so they confirm an early date for Marshall.267

267 The author of 1 Timothy states: “now we know that the law is good (καλὸς) if one uses it legitimately (νομίμως—literally, “lawfully”). This means understanding that the law is laid down (κειμένοις) not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient…” (1:8-9). For legal matters, the verb κειμένοι means “be given, exist, be valid” (BDAG), and does not necessarily imply that God has given the law. In fact, there is not indication that God has provided “the law.” Those who need the law, however, behave in ways that are contrasted with the “sound teaching” of the “glorious gospel of God” (1:10-11).
“the primary meaning relates to that which is conceived as standard or generally recognized rules of civilized conduct esp. as sanctioned by tradition” (2000:677). It is worth considering whether ὁ νόμος has this sense in 1 Timothy.

Inscriptions for voluntary associations used the term ὁ νόμος to refer to rules for the association. For example, IG II² 1275 specifies that members should assist a fellow member if his family member dies or if he is wronged; such actions demonstrate piety (εὐσεβέω) to the gods and to their friends and bring blessings. The inscription then reads:

Whenever the thiasōtai have ratified this law (ὁ νόμος), let there be nothing to take precedence over it. And if someone should either speak or act in contravention of the law (ὁ νόμος), an accusation against him may be lodged by any of the thiasōtai who so wishes; and if he convicts him, let the them assess the penalty, whatever seems appropriate to the association” (Kloppenborg 2011 [8]).

Here, ὁ νόμος refers to a set of rules set out and policed by the association itself. The rules outline proper behaviour toward fellow members that reflects piety, and is outlined along with consequences for non-compliance. It is possible that ὁ νόμος in 1 Tim 1:7-10 refers to similar association “rules” that dictate proper behaviour in the ἐκκλησία.²⁶⁸

A third characterization of the opponents suggests that they promoted a form of Pauline asceticism. MacDonald argues that the opponents encouraged sexual asceticism based on oral legends that were eventually written down in the Acts of Paul and Thecla (1983). Philip H. Towner finds parallels to sexual asceticism in the “spiritual enthusiasm” and misunderstood resurrection in 1 Corinthians, where the Corinthians questioned the validity of marriage and

²⁶⁸ Several cognate words in 1 Timothy also suggest a more general meaning for the “law” (ὁ νόμος) in this letter. First, the phrase οἰκονομία θεοῦ (1:4) in this context suggests that proper ordering and behaviour, as found in the typical household is the focus of proper teaching (vs. speculation of myths and genealogies, which are not specified as Judean). The phrase is variously translated as “divine training” (NRSV) or “administration of God” (NASB), for example, but “management of the household of God” captures the Greek better. For example, in Ign Eph 6.1 the word refers to caring for a master’s household affairs: “For we must receive everyone that the master of the house sends to take care of his affairs as if he were the sender himself” (πάντα γὰρ, ὁν πείμει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἰς ἰδίαν οἰκονομήν, σύτως δεὶ ἡμᾶς σύτων δέχεσθαι, ως σύτων τὸν πέμψαντο). A parallel phrase in 1 Tim 3:15, ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ, also refers to proper behaviour in the “household of God.” Second, the author employs the cognate verb νομιζεῖν in 6:5: the opponents believe (νομιζεῖ) that εὐσεβεία is a “means of gain” (6:5; πορισμός). Perhaps he chose this verb to parallel the desire to be teachers of νόμος in 1:7.

The characterization of the opponents in 1 Timothy as ascetic is convincing for 1 Timothy for two reasons. First, sexual asceticism in the form of forbidding marriage is explicitly stated as one of the opponents’ teachings (4:3). Second, the text alludes to the superiority of marriage and household duties (implicitly in contrast to celibacy) several times. One problem with Towner’s view is that certain aspects of his argument are made conveniently clearer by combining information in 1 Timothy with that found in 2 Timothy. Specifically, Towner’s description of a “spiritualized Christianity” relies on clues from both 2 Timothy (the opponents taught that the resurrection had already happened; 2 Tim 2:18) and 1 Timothy (their ascetic tendencies; 1 Tim 4:3). Nevertheless, an ascetic aspect to the opponents’ teaching in 1 Timothy seems probable.

In conclusion, although the author’s language about the opponents is polemical and part of the fictional narrative, it does reflect a real threat to the community. While the identification of the opponents in 1 Timothy as Gnostic or Judean-Christian is tentative at best, an ascetic element of the opposing teaching is more convincing. Lloyd K. Pietersen suggests that “the opponents’ rejection of the household structure is deeply threatening to the community of faith which is addressed by the author as ‘the household of God’ (1 Tim. 3:15)” (2007:24). The opposing teachers were promoting behaviour that was causing outsiders to be suspicious of the group, namely behaviour that appeared to disrupt household relationships and appear dishonourable: women teaching and exercising authority over men (2:11-12), adult children not caring for their parents (5:4), young widows running about in public (5:13), younger men

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269 There are references to the importance of women marrying, managing a household, bearing and raising children (2:15; 5:9-10, 14), and an overseer and deacons must be married with children (3:2, 4, 12).

270 Towner views the letters to Timothy and Titus as separate, but posits that the author indirectly addressed the same community in the two letters directly addressed to Timothy. 2 Timothy represents a later moment time (2006:41).
accusing and not submitting to older men (5:19-20; see Chapter 12). The instructions to Timothy promoted a vision of the community that reflected the “household of God” in which proper order and behaviour was culturally appropriate and publicly honourable.

3. A time of crisis

3.1. Date of 1 Timothy

We cannot date 1 Timothy with any certainty, but there are some good clues for its approximate date. First, Paul was likely not the actual author of the letter. The vocabulary and style are substantially different from Paul’s undisputed letters. In Table 4, I present the percentage of words unique to each letter attributed to Paul (LaFosse 2001:77).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Total number of words (tokens) in the letter</th>
<th>Words not found elsewhere in the 12 other “Pauline” letters (including repetitions)</th>
<th>Percent of tokens unique to this letter in the 13 “Pauline” letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tim</td>
<td>1586</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tim</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tit</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom</td>
<td>7094</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor</td>
<td>6807</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Cor</td>
<td>4448</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gal</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>Col</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Thess</td>
<td>1472</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

271 I use “tokens” (the total number of words, including repetitions) rather than “types” (vocabulary words that do not account for repetition). For the proportion of unique words in each letter attributed to Paul, this calculation is more accurate than P.N. Harrison’s calculation which used number of vocabulary words (types) rather than total number of words (tokens; 1921). See LaFosse 2001:72-81.
Philippians (an undisputed letter) has approximately the same number of total words as 1 Timothy, but proportionally less than half as many unique words: Philippians has 4.3% compared to 1 Timothy, which has 9.3%. First Timothy has the largest proportion of unique words among the letters attributed to Paul of any of these letters.

Moreover, typical Pauline concepts such as the redemptive metaphor of the cross of Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 1:17-18, Gal 6:12,14; Phil 3:18), freedom from the law (e.g., Rom 8:2; Gal 3:13), and the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ (e.g., Rom 8:1, 12:5; 1 Cor 1:30, 4:15; Gal 3:28; Phil 1:13, 2:1) are missing from this letter. Concepts such as εὐσέβεια (1 Tim 2:2, 3:16, 4:8, 6:5-6, 6:11, cf. 1:9; see Chapter 9), ὑγιασμόν διδασκαλία (healthy teaching; 1 Tim 1:10, cf. 6:3) and καθαρὰ συνείδησις (clean conscience; 1 Tim 1:5, 3:9; cf. 1:19) are not found in Paul’s undisputed letters. The gospel (ἐγγέλιον; e.g., Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 9:23; 2 Cor 4:3; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:7, 5, 12; Phlm 13) has become the faith (ἡ πίστις; 1 Tim 4:1, 6; 5:8), the truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια; 1 Tim 4:3) and the deposit to be guarded (τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον; 1 Tim 6:20). Whereas the “good news” of the gospel reflects Paul’s enthusiasm of a new revelation, “the faith” and “the truth” are concepts that suggest a more philosophically developed definition of what constitutes the Jesus tradition. The “deposit” suggests a tradition that no longer apocalyptic in nature, but handed down like an inheritance (see §2.1).

Thus, the first letter to Timothy was probably written by someone in Paul’s name sometime after Paul’s death (which occurred circa 65 CE). Marshall advocates an early date of 70-80 CE, shortly after the death of Paul (1999:92), positing an author who promotes the same core theology as Paul (1999:102; also Pietersen 2004:138). This early date is plausible, but may not account for some of the developments in the letter (see §3.2). Most other commentators
suggest a range of dates for all three letters to Timothy and Titus, either 80-100 CE (e.g., Treblico 2004:204) or 100-140 CE (MacDonald 1988:3-4; Hanson 1966:7-8), increasingly favouring the former.\footnote{Young is more vague, dating them in the first, possibly second century (1994:5).}

These dates are usually supported by comparing the letter to the other texts in this range of time (80-140 CE). The later half of the range is less likely for several reasons. First, 1 Timothy was probably written before Polycarp’s \textit{Letter to the Philippians}, since Polycarp (4.1) seems to quote 1 Timothy (6:7, 10). Polycarp brings two thought together from the same section of 1 Timothy.

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Polycarp \textit{Phil} 4.1 & 1 Tim 6:10 \\
\hline
\textit{ἀρχὴ} δὲ πάντων χαλεπῶν φιλαργυρία & \textit{ρίζα} γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἡ \phiλαργυρία (6:10) \\
The love of money is the beginning of all difficulties. & For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (NRSV). \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Polycarp \textit{Phil} 4.1 & 1 Tim 6:7 \\
\hline
\textit{εἰδότες} οὖν, ὅτι οὐδὲν εἰσηγήγακαμεν \textit{εἰς} τὸν κόσμον \\
\textit{ἄλλῳ οὐδὲ έξενεγκεῖν} τι \textit{έχομεν} & \textit{οὐδὲν γὰρ εἰσηγήγακαμεν} \textit{εἰς} τὸν κόσμον \\
\textit{οτί οὐδὲ έξενεγκεῖν} τι \textit{δυνάμεθα} \\
And so, since we know that we brought nothing into the world, we can take nothing out of it…. & For we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it (NRSV). \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Polycarp’s letter was written between 110 and 140 CE (Towner 2006:4; Treblico 2004:204; Johnson 1996:23).\footnote{Dibelius and Conzelmann propose that Polycarp and the author of 1 Timothy draw from the same tradition (1972:85), but the other evidence I list suggests 1 Timothy was written earlier than Polycarp. It is more difficult to justify Towner’s claim that the author of \textit{1 Clement} quoted from 1 Timothy (\textit{1 Clem}. 60.4 shares the phrase “in faith and truth” with 1 Tim 2:7, and \textit{1 Clem}. 61.2 is remotely similar to 1 Tim 1:17; Towner 2006:4).} Second, 1 Timothy had to have been written early enough that people would accept it as part of the Pauline corpus. There were other letters purportedly by Paul that were clearly rejected in the second century (e.g., \textit{3 Corinthians}; Johnson 1996:23).\footnote{In his influential study in 1921, Harrison attempted to demonstrate that the vocabulary of the letters to Timothy and Titus was closer to second century authors than to Paul’s undisputed letters, but his arguments are unconvincing. He asserts that 93 of the 175 so-called \textit{hapax legomenon} (he erroneously uses this term for...}
Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker point out that “if the PE originated in the second century, it is striking that they, intent on transmitting the Pauline heritage, do not quote the apostle’s own words,” especially since other authors like the author of 1 Clement (96 CE) and Ignatius (110 CE) quote Paul’s letters (2000:19).\(^{275}\) Finally, the letter implies movement toward greater community structure (e.g., choosing overseers; 3:1-7), but not necessarily the more advanced structure evident in the second century.\(^{276}\) Thus, I date 1 Timothy the end of the first century (between 80 and 100 CE).

3.2. Identity crisis

At the end of the first century, the proto-orthodox community that was the real audience of 1 Timothy probably experienced a shift in their identity for at least two reasons. First, the imminent return of Jesus that was expected at the beginning of the movement did not occur, so the community had to adapt to thinking about their faith as a long-term, life-long commitment. In the 50s, Paul had written to the Thessalonians that they should not be alarmed that some of their members were dying because they would join the believers when Jesus returned (1 Thess 4:13-17). This apocalyptic notion of Jesus’ imminent return is not evident in 1 Timothy; rather the community was to pray for “kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quite a peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (2:1-2). The author characterizes the faith as a life-long struggle (“fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses”; cf. 1:18),

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275 E.g., Ign Eph 8.2: “Those who belong to the flesh cannot to do spiritual things, nor can those who belong to the spirit do fleshly things” cites Rom 8:5.

276 For example, in 110 CE Ignatius states that overseers are recognized as leaders in many locations: “Jesus Christ... is the Father’s mind, just as also the bishops who have been appointed (ὁρισθέντες) throughout the world share the mind of Jesus Christ” (Eph. 4.2).
admonishing his readers to “keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation (ἐπίφανεία) of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about in the right time” (6:14-15; NRSV), literally “which he will display in his own right timing” (ἡ καιρὸς ἰδίος δεῖξει; cf. 2:6). In other words, Jesus would come back sometime, but his return was no longer imminent. The author of 2 Peter suggests the delayed parousia was an issue in early Christian communities. He writes, “in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts and saying, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died [literally: our fathers fell asleep], all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!’” (3:3-4, NRSV; cf. 1 Clem. 23.3).

Another element of group identity that changed at the end of the first century was the dwindling presence of the original members of the group. By this time, those who had been part of the original community were mostly dead or very old.

Based on demographic trends outlined in Chapter 3, we can suppose that a few members of the original community would still be alive in the last two decades of the first century. For example, a person who was 20 years old in 50 CE (a time when the community in Ephesus might have been well established) would be 50 years old in 80 CE, 60 years old in 90 CE, and 70 years old in 100 CE. In a stable population with a life expectancy at birth of 25, a person at 20 would have an average life expectancy of another 31.3 years. After the age of 60, life expectancy dropped significantly, and people were more likely to die. For instance, while a 50 year old had about a 15% chance of dying before age 55, a 60 year old had about a 27% chance of dying before reaching age 65. A 65 year old had a 35% chance of dying before age 70, and a 70 year old had a 47% chance of dying before age 75 (see Appendix 1). However, some people likely did live into their 70s and 80s. Thus, many of original community members were
probably dead by the last two decades of the first century, and the survivors were dwindling, with only a few old people still around.277

Losing the remaining members who had a tangible connection to the community’s beginnings would create a crisis of identity for the audience of 1 Timothy because they would no longer have a living memory of Jesus, his disciples, Paul or other foundational figures (see Chapter 6, §6).

Ancient evidence from the late first century suggests that such crisis of identity precipitated a number of the written texts that are now important primary sources for early Christian scholarship. There was a need to record the gospels as written records about Jesus and the movement’s inception. Eusebius documents that a desire to have Peter’s oral recitation of Jesus’ teachings recorded in writing led to the beginnings of the Gospel of Mark (Ecclesiastical History 2.15; cf. Bauckham 2006:155-82). The author of Luke characterizes the events of Jesus’ life as “handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word” (1:2).278

Other texts promoted the memory of certain influential people connected to the foundations of the Jesus movement, such as Peter and Paul. The author of 2 Peter wrote in

277 Young suggests, “The implication that these texts carry is that the original ‘seniors’ (presbyters) and leaders of the community received appointment from Paul’s envoys” (1994:5). In other words, Paul’s representatives appointed elders and leaders in the community. While this is fairly clear in Tit 1:5 (“I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you”); cf. 1 Clem. 54.2), it is not so clear in 1 Timothy, where the elders are described as if they are already a well-established fixture (e.g., 5:17: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching”). The heteronymous nature of the letter means that this could be a fictional portrayal aimed at promoting a proto-orthodox claim for Paul’s authority for leaders who were already in place, or it could actually be referring to older men and women who had connections to Paul and/or his co-workers (in other words, they were alive near the beginning of the movement). Unfortunately, there is little tangible evidence in 1 Timothy to confirm either.

278 The date of Luke-Acts is not certain, except that it was written after Mark (probably after 70 CE). Commonly dated at the end of the first century, recent assessments lean toward the first quarter of the second century. For example, Pervo bases his dating of 110-120 CE, or more precisely, 115 CE, in part on the kind of formal organization of leadership he parallels with 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, as well as 1 Clement (e.g., 2006:343-44). Pervo’s assumptions about the well-established nature of leadership structure in these documents are more certain that they should be. Joseph B. Tyson argues that the final form of Luke and Acts were written in part to combat the influence and teachings of Marcion ca. 120-125 CE (2006).
Peter’s name (1:1) as a way of affirming Peter’s authority over against opposing teachers (2:1). The letter is framed as a “testament,” or a statement of Peter’s wishes made before his death: “I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things” (1:13-15). The author of 2 Peter affirms the authority of (and implicitly the need to preserve) Paul’s letters (even though historically Peter and Paul experienced conflict according to Gal 2:11). The author of 2 Peter states: “So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters” (3:15-16). Likewise, Polycarp praises Paul, affirming that his letters carry authority for his own generation at the beginning of the second century (Phil. 3.1-2).

For modern scholars, and indeed for Christian scholars through the centuries, the written texts are the most important evidence for the early Jesus movement. However, writing in the early second century, Papias suggests that for first century Christians, the living memory of their founders was superior to written texts.279

I also will not hesitate to draw up for you, along with these expositions, an orderly account of all the things I carefully learned and have carefully recalled from the elders (πρεσβυτέροι); for I have certified their truth… But whenever someone arrived who had been a companion of one of the elders (πρεσβυτέροι), I would carefully inquire after their words, what Andrew or Peter had said (ἐπευγενέστεροι), or what Philip or what Thomas had said, or James or John or Matthew or any of the other disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the elder John, disciples of the Lord, were saying (λέγοντες). For I did not suppose that what came out of books would benefit me so much as that which came from a living and abiding voice” (Fragment 3.3-4, Ehrman 2003:98-99; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 3.39).280

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279 On the importance of living witnesses and oral tradition, see Bauckham 2006:21-30.

280 Worded slightly differently, Jerome also quotes Papias, “For books that can be read are less useful to me than a living voice that resounds through authorities still alive in our own day” (Fragment 5, Ehrman 2003:106-7; Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men 18).
It is clear that Papias values testimony from people who were with Jesus himself or had heard from his disciples. It is commonly thought that his use of the aorist εἶπεν indicates that the first list of Jesus’ disciples (Andrew, Peter, etc.) were dead, but the present tense λέγουσιν indicates that Aristion and John the Elder were still alive in Papias’ day. Yet, if Papias wrote in between 110 and 140 CE (Ehrman 2003:87) it would be very unlikely or impossible for any of Jesus’ disciples to still be alive. Bauckham convincingly argues that Papias refers to an earlier time when he collected his information, perhaps in 80-90 CE when Aristion and John the Elder, who knew Jesus, were still alive, and Papias was perhaps 20-30 years old (2006:19). If we can equate this John with the one described by Irenaeus who lived to the time of Trajan, he may have been 90-100 years old. John’s designation of “elder” and Papias’ admiration of his “living and abiding voice” is suggestive of old age.281

Papias’ insistence on living witnesses when he himself is providing a written account is ironic (and even more ironic that his account only survived in fragments in others’ writings). His written account attempted to capture the “truth” they passed on to him, but for him it was clearly an inferior way to learn about the historical teachings and events associated with Jesus. Papias recognized that few living witnesses who knew Jesus’ disciples were still around. Those with a “living voice” were most likely to be older persons, and when they were gone, that living link to Jesus would be gone as well. Papias captures the intensity of what this living link meant for his

281 The identity of “the elders” here is debatable. Johannes Munck focuses on the first mention of the word, positing that the term πρεσβύτεροι was deliberately vague about whether or not it referred to the disciples of the apostles. It probably referred to an “old and reverend person who is cited with respect” and who was a teacher; that is, a person who had “antiquity” due to their age, and “authority” because of his connections to the early movement (1959:233-35). For Munck, the term πρεσβύτεροι included both the disciples of the Lord (from Palestine) and influential men who had not known Jesus personally (and were not from Palestine), but had been part of the movement from its inception (1959:237-39). However, it is fairly clear that the disciples and the elders are two different sets of people. Bauckham focuses on the second instance of the word πρεσβύτεροι, separating the elders from “the Lord’s disciples.” He posits, “The elders are the senior Christian teachers in various cities of Asia at the time to which Papias refers in this passage”—specifically teachers with firsthand knowledge of the teachings of Andrew, Peter and other disciples of Jesus (2006:16-17).
age cohort. In a similar vein, Irenaeus recounts how, as a child, he heard Polycarp’s speeches that recall conversations with John and others who had seen Jesus (eyewitnesses), remembering what he had heard about Jesus’ miracles and teaching (Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 5.20.6; cf. Munck 1959:229). If Polycarp was born around 70 CE (Ehrman 2003:362), he would have been a young man when the disciples of Jesus were old. Papias and Irenaeus valued the living connection of Jesus’ disciples, suggesting an analogous desire to retain connections to the founders of the Christian churches in Asia and elsewhere.

For the audience of 1 Timothy, such an identity crisis, precipitated by the deaths of the original community members, was coupled with the threat of opposing teachings and public suspicion, as outlined above. The resulting crisis triggered a defensive reaction and created a need for defining lines of authority that could boast continuity with the founding movement, and most importantly, with founding members. That is, the author invoked Paul’s and Timothy’s names to endorse what he considered proper teachings and behaviour in the face of the crisis because Paul and Timothy represented authoritative continuity with the past.

We know from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians that early on factions rallied behind certain teachers and/or founders involved in the community, namely Paul, Apollos and Cephas (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-9). In arguing for unity, Paul downplayed the role of the founding teachers as

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282 As an analogy, we might consider our living link to the men and women who fought and served in World War I or II and survived. Today, only a handful of veterans who fought in World War I are still living, and they are all over 100 years old. See http://firstworldwar.cloudworth.com/still-living-veterans-of-world-war-one.php <accessed July 12, 2009>. The last Canadian World War I veteran died at the age of 109 on February 18, 2010. See http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2010/02/18/war-veteran018.html <accessed August 16, 2010>. Those who served in World War II and are still alive are elderly (in their seventies at the youngest). Their direct memories, recounted in Remembrance Day services for example, will no longer be readily available within the next decade or so. We have films and history books to allow us to continue to connect to the events of World War II. The early Christians had oral teaching and text (gospels and letters), but the living connection was significant, at least to some.

283 This concern about continuity from Jesus’ disciples was solved in the subsequent centuries in the orthodox church by “apostolic succession”—the notion that authority vested in the apostles by Jesus was handed down to successive leaders (usually bishops) by the laying on of hands. In this discussion, I am only concerned about the slice of history at the end of the first century and beginning of second century when it is not clear yet how the teachings of Jesus and his disciples would be disseminated when those who knew them were dead, or old and near death.
those who “plant” and “water” the seeds, and God who grants “growth” (1 Cor 3:6-8), but clearly some people in the community found these connections important for their identity (apparently to the detriment of unity). In a similar way, the directives in the letter to Timothy from Paul (and even the letter itself) seem to represent a written form of the teachings connected to persons (Paul and Timothy) who helped established the Christian community. It was a text that perhaps became necessary as those who actually knew Paul (and Timothy) were dead or very old. The statement that Paul was “appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (1 Tim 2:7) would then function as a validation and reminder of his foundational role in the community.284

At the end of the first century, as tangible ties to the founders of the communities were disappearing, this identity crisis of the community made age structure as found in familial roles more important. The household metaphor provided continuity for the movement just as generations provide continuity for biological families. Family honour dictated that the members of the “household” acted appropriately. The conservative element of the generational cycle reinforced age hierarchy, and thus continuity, that could be replicated as the members of the Christian community grew up and grew old. In the midst of the intensity of this time of crisis and change, 1 Timothy seems to represent polarized opinions about how the community should proceed. The author represents a conservative bent, advocating proper behaviour that reflects ideal virtues and honourable behaviour in the public realm. In this sort of crisis those in subordinate roles (such as young men and older women) might challenge the authority of older men, prompting an exhortation to proper behaviour. I explore older women’s roles in

284 Donelson argues that the idea of succession in the letter to Timothy makes the author’s “fiction” successful (1986:164).
subsequent chapters, but in the remainder of this chapter, I outline evidence that in times of social change, young men did challenge their elders in the ancient Mediterranean.\footnote{Winter argues that elite women (“new women”) also challenged societal norms during the late Republic and early Empire, suggesting that non-elite women may have followed similar trends (2003:17-74).}

4. Intergenerational relationships and social change

Meyer Reinhold argues that in the ancient Near East social norms were maintained by myth, ritual, the economic dependence of the young, and socialization of the young to be obedient and respectful toward elders (1970:347-48). Older men had precedence over young men; this ideal was evident in the public sphere in ways that are similar to the modern traditional Mediterranean (see Chapter 8, §3.3).

Reinhold suggests that “insecurity and fear of change served to maintain basic generational harmony as being mutually advantageous to both younger and older generations” (Reinhold 1970:347-48). These sentiments reflect my basic hypothesis in Chapter 6, that the conservative nature of the generational cycle in Mediterranean cultures keeps cultural norms relatively stable. My hypothesis also suggests, however, that social and cultural change is inevitable, and challenges to the system of age structure are more frequent and constant than Reinhold’s statement suggests.

Intergenerational conflict was pervasive in the ancient Mediterranean world.\footnote{Generational conflict as a theme in classical literature has an “exhaustive collection of literary references” (Parkin 1997:139).} There were two main types of conflict: familial (usually associated with life course changes like marriage or the introduction of stepparents; Dixon 1999:166-67), and political, where the younger generation publicly conflicted with elders in a time of crisis (Parkin 1997:140; Plescia 1976:143). Reinhold traces intergenerational relationships throughout the ancient world, with a
focus on public conflict. In the political histories of Greece and Rome, Reinhold highlights two major times of intergenerational conflict: the heyday of democratic Athens (5th century BCE), and the end of the Roman Republic and beginning of the Empire (1st century BCE – 1st century CE). We cannot know if the Greek conflict was “the first massive challenge to the older generation in the history of mankind” as Reinhold contends (1970:353) nor if these were the two most intense times of intergenerational conflict in the ancient world as Reinhold also argues. The intergenerational conflicts captured in these two time periods might be evident only because our data for these two cultures centres primarily around these two eras. Nevertheless, these data can at least illustrate the connection between intergenerational relationships and social change.

4.1. Intergenerational conflict among the elite in Athens and Rome

In the city-state of Athens when democracy dominated political life (508–322 BCE) a number of surviving literary texts reflect conflict between the younger and older generations.

Reinhold notes the emergence of a “polarized two-generational pattern” of νεωτέροι and πρεσβυτέροι, similar to the fluid designations in 1 Tim 5:1 (see Chapter 12, §2.3). He attributes the uprising of youth, and its generational consciousness, to the failure of the older generation to protect Athens in the Peloponnesian War (1970:356). More generally, Reinhold suggests the conflict involved several factors: democracy made all male citizens politically “equal” thus ostensibly putting fathers and sons on the same level;288 loyalty to the city-state contended with

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287 There is a long history of this motif. For example, in late 8th or early 7th century BCE, Hesiod laments that in the “fifth generation,” or age of iron, there would be discord between children and parents; children would dishonour their parents, rebuking them and refusing to support them in old age (Works and Days 170-89; Reinhold 1970:350).

288 For Reinhold, “Plato isolated generational disequilibrium as a significant mechanism in political change.” Certain forms of government tend to contribute to a loss of respect for the older generation, including democracy because “equality for all destroy[s] the authority of the older generation” (1970:359-60). Plato advocated age hierarchy with elders ruling over youth, but observed the young competing with the old, and the old imitating the young to be in their good graces.

The father habitually tries to resemble the child and is afraid of his sons, and the son likens himself to the father and feels no awe or fear of his parents so that he may be forsooth a free man… And in general the young ape their elders and vie with them in speech and action, while the old, accommodating themselves
loyalty to fathers (whose authority was remote anyway when sons were raised by household slaves); respect for elders’ wisdom but glorification of youth in art produced dissonance about valuing age; and, most importantly, young people sought reason over tradition, epitomized in the trial of Socrates (1970:353-54).

In Athens, the implementation of democracy among male citizens of all ages, along with the Socratic teaching of reason above obedience, gave young people impetus to assert their ideas in the public realm. Intergenerational tension was a topic of comedy, tragedy and philosophy. Aristophanes’ comedy *Clouds* (written in 423 BCE) deals with intergenerational conflict, namely differences between a traditional father and a young adult son with new ideas learned from Socrates—the so-called corruptor of youth (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.2). In one scene, the tension builds as the son refuses the father’s request to sing during dinner, a traditional element of the feast. He also refuses a compromise to recite Aeschylus, but rudely puts forth a piece from Euripides about incest. The ensuing argument ends in the son beating the father—a reversal of the parent-child roles (Reckford 1976:92-93) and an allusion to parricide (1976:108-9), but ending in comedic laughter, “the sign of life” (1976:109). Kenneth J. Reckford notes that at one level this scene reflects typical generational conflict. However, the son’s education had changed his values and thinking radically (1976:99). Thus, at another level, given its late fifth century BCE context, Aristophanes used humour to highlight the difficulties of social change (1976:104-5), bringing healing and hope to his audience (1976:117).

By contrast, Reinhold describes Roman society overall as intergenerationally integrated, with little generational consciousness, replicating a sense of duty and reverence for elders in each generation. He attributes this continuity to the *mos maiorum* (ancestral models of virtuous behaviour), the discipline and virtues taught to and expected of the young, and the power of the

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to the young, are full of pleasantry and graciousness, imitating the young for fear they may be thought disagreeable and authoritative. (*Republic* 562D-563B)
*paterfamilias* in the household, all of which promoted deference to the elderly (1970:363).

Reinhold argues that for elite youth, the future reward of political and military power promoted harmony between the generations (cf. Foner 1984:130-32). He posits that even when age structure was questioned, the youth did not rebel against their fathers, though they did challenge traditional moral standards. The evidence suggests otherwise. For instance, Parkin observes two main themes in intergenerational conflict in popular literature: the elderly wanted the young to behave morally (and they did not), and a son rebelled against his conservative father (usually in comedy; 1997:140).

The tumultuous time around the beginning of the Roman Empire was an intense time of intergenerational conflict.289 Emile Ebyen suggests that the young men had won the Punic War (218-201 BCE) for Rome, but the older men were threatened by them, and actively sought to restrict their power (1993:7). They passed laws to limit young men’s financial responsibility, to prevent men under twenty-five from entering the army, and to restrict access to public office (1993:24-28).290 There was an explosion of wealth and building in Rome after their conquests. The residents of Rome experienced great extravagance, which especially affected youth, elite and non-elite alike (Polybius *Histories* 31.25.2-8).291 When its resources were exhausted, Rome experienced an economic crisis around 138 BCE, resulting in unemployment, debt and food shortages. A constitutional crisis arose in 134 BC when Tiberius Gracchus garnered support from the *populares* (a non-elite political body that previously had no *de facto* power) for a bill to relieve unemployment in the city. In addition, a cultural revolution resulted from the political

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289 Eyben detects intergenerational conflict from the time of the early Republic, but an intensification as the Republic came to an end (1993:52-56).

290 The *Lex Plaetoria* (c. 200 BCE) legally protected a person under age 25 against financial exploitation. The *Lex Villia annalis* (180 BCE) established the minimum age for public office at 30. Augustus reduced the age to 25 for quaestorship. According to Eyben, elders used these laws as “the creation of a new sub-category or age-group, the ‘real’ youth” and as protection against the assertiveness of the younger generation in public law (Eyben 1993:7-8).

291 Contra Eyben, who suggests that Rome’s extravagance probably did not effect non-elite youth as much, who had no chance for education or leisure at this age (1993:22).
and philosophical influence of Greek teachers among the progressive elite—especially among young men—because of their openness to Hellenistic ideas (Plescia 1976:156-59). In a conflict similar to the one in Athens, when the economic crisis was not adequately addressed by the older generation, young men acted against the older generation (Falkner and de Luce 1992:27).

In the late Republic, young men gained political power. Cicero, Caesar and others vied for support from young men, including non-elite youth, who likely had hopes of social advancement (Ebyen 1993:56-65). According to Sallust, in 63 BCE Catiline capitalized on the gullibility, inexperience, passion and foolishness of young men to follow him in a life of vice and crime (Catiline 12-14; cf. Harlow and Laurence 2002:70-71).

Few elite men attained public office before the age of thirty.292 The cursus honorum was a progression of public office, based on increased status, authority and political position with increased age. Power and control was always in the hands of the older generation (Harlow and Laurence 2002:121, 198; Saller 1994:131). Anyone under 30 was considered too “rash” for public office, and restricting ages for each position meant that those competing for office were of roughly equal age (Harlow and Laurence 2002:106-10). However, Octavian (who renamed himself Augustus) came to have political power at a strikingly young age—he was named Julius Caesar’s successor at the age of nineteen. He “was to place a challenge on the entire age structure of the Republic and, more importantly, challenge the very basis for such age restrictions themselves” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:111). He gained power in the face of opposition from the older generation. Cicero, who was an older man in his sixties when Caesar was assassinated, publicly supported the young Octavian, but had private reservations about his competence. According to Appian, Cicero recommended to the Senate that Octavian be made consul, but with the provision “that some man of prudence from among the older ones should be

292 Cicero was elected for each position at the minimum age allowable: quaestor at 30, praetor at 39, consul at 42.
chosen as his colleague to be a firm guardian of the immature nature of Octavian” (*Civil Wars* 3.82; cf. Cicero *Atticus* 16.8.1, “But look at his age”). Octavian forced his way into the position of consul at an age earlier than anyone before him (Eyben 1993:66-67), having skipped the age requirements of the *cursus honorum* (*Res Gestae* 1). Octavian was an exception; he “succeeded in spite of his youthful age” (Eyben 1993:69).

Although Augustus challenged the age structure by gaining power as a young man, he promoted traditional Roman values and *pietas*, especially when it came to family roles (Harlow and Laurence 2002:119). On the one hand, Augustus dropped the ages of when people could hold office, in part to have political peers who were younger than him, but also to encourage young men from senatorial families to participate in public office. He also lowered ages for entering the military. Demographics played a part in lowering ages, since from the first century CE, there was a population decline due to low fertility (Osiek and Balch 1997:64-65; Angel 1972:100-1). Even with the drop of ages, the conservative element of the generational cycle still held. In general, “As age increased, if things followed the expected course or according to a man’s or family’s aspirations, he could expect to rise up the career ladder, to increase his wealth

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293 Cicero and Octavian exemplify the tension between those who climbed the *cursus honorum* through traditional age ranking and someone who skipped age specifications to hold office at a young age. Cicero wrote *On Old Age* at the age of 62, the same year as Caesar’s assassination and his sidelining in politics, thus “appealing for the honour and position he considered his experience entitled him to” (Harlow and Laurence 2003:24). This work also expresses some anxiety about young men taking over (2002:111-12, 123).

294 After Augustus, young emperors included Nero (became emperor at 17), Commodus (at 19), Elegabalus (at 14), Carcalla (at 23), and Alexander Severus (at 13). They were not always well received because they introduced too many innovations (1993:67-68).

295 Augustus lowered the age to be the quaestor from thirty to twenty-five, when he himself was thirty-four, making the magistrates some nine or ten years younger than those in the same positions in the Republic. He also essentially dropped the age of incoming senators, patterned after his own experience, and passed legislation that encouraged senators’ sons to follow in their footsteps, particularly sons of patrician families (versus plebeian and “new men” *novi homines*) who held political office at younger ages than their Republican counterparts (Harlow and Laurence 2002:104-16).

296 From the time of Augustus on, the state issued laws to encourage the elite of Rome to have more children because of the low birth rate and high mortality rate, and it began to appoint political positions to elite men from the provinces. The ages for public office were also lowered, perhaps to encourage the traditionally political families to involve their sons (Osiek and Balch 1997:92). Senator positions had became *de facto* hereditary (Eyben 1993:70), but senatorial families were not reproducing. Over two-thirds of senatorial families were replaced every generation despite adoption and freedom to give three-quarters of the patrimony to whomever one wished (Saller 1994:162).
and to widen his social and economic networks through the marriages of his children” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:121). On other hand, Augustus promoted traditional Roman values by instituting laws that required men and women to remarry in order to receive inheritances, and encouraged women to have children by offering them freedom from tutelage. In addition, he advanced a familial metaphor for the Empire, characterizing himself as the Father of Rome. It became a citizen’s duty to submit to the Emperor as a son submitted to his father. In a time of social turmoil, Augustus encouraged the traditional definition of hierarchical relationships balanced with “forces of cohesion,” namely the metaphor of the household and family (Garnsey and Saller 1987:107).

The public challenge to the age structure, politically active younger men, and the young Octavian taking control of the Empire, all occurred among the elite in Rome. Age status likely was also challenged among the lower classes in the provinces. The non-elite had little political power, but the ideas and behaviour of the upper classes could affect the attitudes and behaviours of the lower classes. Bruce W. Winter (2003) makes a similar argument about “new women” among the Roman elite, who exercised a kind of social freedom that women before them had not. But besides elite women, women who had financial influence as patronesses, and even political influence exercised similar freedom. Winter suggests that non-elite Christian women

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297 At this time, women were usually marriage *sine manu*; that is, a woman continued to be under her father’s power rather than her husband’s. This referred primarily to her property, which was under her father’s control, and to which she had exclusive rights to use and bequeath after her father died. Such financial independence spurred other kinds of social independence, including sexual freedom for some elite women, which Augustus tried to suppress.

298 This is this case for a first century woman in Corinth named Junia Theodora who was commemorated for her benefactions in an official Greek inscription (*SEG* 18, 143; Kearsley 1999:191-98, 203-8; Winter 2003:183-91). She is described as “a fine and worthy woman (γυνή καλή καὶ ἄγγελη)” (line2; cf. line 48), and as “a woman of the greatest honour (γυνὴ τῶν πλείωτῷ τειμῆ), living modestly (ζῶσα σωφρόνως)” (lines 23-24; translation by Kearsley 1999:203). Her deeds of benefaction are illustrated throughout the inscription. She bequeaths her estate to a man named Sextus Iulius, who is described as being devoted to the city just as Junia was (lines 54-55). He does not appear to be her son or other close relative, which suggests to R.A. Kearsley that she acted independently in her benefactions. She appears to have interacted in the public, male political and financial realm of Corinth. The fact that she is called *σωφρόνως* further suggests to Kearsley that she “may have been widowed or unmarried” (1999:196-97). Kearsley does not take age into account, but it is most likely that she is an older woman based on the kind of social freedom that she appears to have.
were imitating these “new women” in dress and behaviour, and were chastised by early Christian authors for behaving improperly. In view of the transitions that occurred among the elite and in the military, it is likely that younger non-elite men (and women, perhaps) took their cue from public politics and felt they also could challenge age norms, such as deference to elders.

4.2. Intergenerational conflict among the non-elite in 1 Timothy

The first letter to Timothy shows evidence of concern for intergenerational dynamics that would affect the public reputation of the Christian community. The author works with two levels of “family” and intergenerational relationships—a literal household and a metaphorical “household of God” (3:15). The author outlines proper behaviour in both.

Literal household relationships were part of the private realm (1 Tim 3:4, 12). How a man managed his household was a private matter, but the results of his management (or mismanagement) would be evident in a public way (e.g., if his children were acting dishonourably in public places). Another example is the author’s instructions to some adult children who were remiss in their duties toward aged parents (5:4, 8). This, too, was a private matter, but was subject to social sanction, reflecting honourable or dishonourable behaviour (see Chapter 9, §4.3).

But the early Christian community had a clearly “public” side. In its greater social context, it may have been viewed as a voluntary association (Tertullian Apology 39; Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:273-74). Intergenerational dynamics were sometimes part of voluntary

299 Specifically, he analyzes 1 Cor 11:2-16 (women who pray without their head covered), 1 Tim 2:9-15 (an exhortation for women to be modest in dress and behaviour), 1 Tim 5:11-15 (young widows exhorted to remarry), and Tit 2:3-5 (young married women taught by the older women to behave properly). See further Chapter 11, §2.2.

300 Several distinct groups in the ancient world have been proposed as possible models or analogies for Christian communities are philosophical schools, synagogues, mystery cults, voluntary associations and political associations (Ascough 1998:9, 21; Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:273). None of the proposed models are adequate on their own to explain the character of early Christian communities, but they can be used to describe particular aspects of a community (Ascough 1998:95-97). Stegemann and Stegemann describe the group as follows:
associations, and may have reflected similar age conflict that was evident in the political context of the elite.\(^{301}\)

### 4.3. Voluntary associations

In the Roman Empire, the non-elite in general had little chance of being involved in public office, but they did have opportunities to gain honours and offices in voluntary associations. Voluntary associations commonly had non-elite or lower classes members (i.e., the urban poor, slaves, freedmen), ranging from poor to relative wealthy and influential. They had a formal organization and “organizational hierarchy.” Associations often had patrons, who may or may not have been involved in the group (Wilson 1996:10-11). In the first and second centuries, ease of travel and movement due to trade, slavery and veterans settling in provinces created a need to replace kin and village social structures (Kloppenborg 1996a:17-18).\(^{302}\) Voluntary associations could function as fictive kin or “fictive polities,” especially when the state or kin had failed to fulfill a person’s needs (Walter-Ramisch 1996:132, 134). On the other hand, holding meetings in households suggests that for some members associations might be an extension or “expression” of family life instead of an alternative to it (Wilson 1996:14; 1996a:23).\(^{303}\)

The institutional character of the *ekklēsia* can best be compared to with the popular assemblies; the character of fellowship is best compared with the ancient household or nuclear family. The connection of meeting and meal fellowship suggests an analogy with the associations. The social community *ekklēsia*, within the context of the social system of its time and its society, bears traits of a *fictive kinship group*, whither in the narrower sense of the family or in the broader sense of a household. Its actual assemblies, by contrast, show the traits of a fictive political institution… (1999:286)

While the specifics are debatable, this summary demonstrates how a mix of ancient institutions can usefully describe different aspects of the character of early Christian communities. In particular, it highlights the organizational structure as reflective of political assemblies or voluntary associations to which the non-elite might have been belonged, and the social aspects of the community as reflective of fictive kin.

\(^{301}\) The term covers a wide range of associations in the ancient world, but “private” associations (as opposed to government sanctioned associations; Kloppenborg 1996a:16) are the most pertinent analogy for early Christian communities.

\(^{302}\) On travel and the spread of religious cults, see Meeks 1983:16-19.

\(^{303}\) Association inscriptions demonstrate that fathers and sons joined the same association. For example, see the Rule of the Iobacchoi (*IG II*\(^2\) 1368) discussed below. Even if they were not members, an association might provide support to a person’s family in crisis (*IG II*\(^2\) 1275).
Voluntary associations provided avenues for the non-elite to pursue honour and prestige, and thus to gain status (MacMullen 1974:77). The non-elite had very little chance to gain status by serving in civic government because of their social position. The associations themselves had little political influence and little interest in political affairs, except perhaps at a local level. However, political ambition could be pursued within the collegia, since positions and titles were similar to municipal organizations. Non-elite persons could “participate in a cursus honorum to which he or she could never aspire outside of the association” (Kloppenborg 1996a:18; also 1996a:23, 26). The voluntary association was a “polis writ small” (Kloppenborg 1996a:26); they were “miniature cities” (MacMullen 1974:76), “miniature republics” (Meeks 1983:31). Whether or not the “power” was real, titles and rank were important for honour.

Voluntary associations were often intergenerational in nature. Similar to the elite, younger men were encouraged to join and participate in associations to keep them viable for subsequent generations. At least some voluntary associations encouraged intergenerational involvement. The Rule of the Iobacchoi (IG II² 1368; Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011), an inscription detailing rules of an association dedicated to Dionysius, demonstrates that the association encouraged multigenerational membership. Those whose fathers were members

304 There were some rare exceptions, such as the North African farmer’s son who rose from poverty to become a wealthy city senator (CIL 8.11824; see Chapter 5, §3).

305 They were “mainly social clubs which perhaps on rare occasions flexed some political muscle” (Kloppenborg 1996a:22). An association could be connected to civic or imperial politics through benefactors (e.g., Roman senator), or associations connected to services regulated by the state, like the grain trade, could provide mediation between the non-elite and elite in cities (Kloppenborg 1996a:27). Associations could be perceived as threatening if they moved beyond the local level, but public duty and loyalty to the state (expressed as pietas or ευευσεβεία) were not usually compromised (Wilson 1996:3; Walker-Ramisch 1996:134-36).

306 This kind of continuity was likely quite important in a context where fathers often died when their sons were becoming adults. Sometimes sons were forced to grow up faster than they expected. Eusebius notes that when disease took great numbers of people of all ages in third century Alexandria, “the youngest in appearance have become, as it were, of equal age with those who formerly were the oldest.” This may mean that younger men had to step up to positions of authority and responsibility before the usual time because so many of their elders had died. (Eccl. Hist. 7.21.9-10). Although this is an extreme example, the demographic realities suggest that some young men had such experiences throughout Roman history.
receive a discounted membership fee (lines 39-41), and a young boy (παῖς) could be a member if he had paid the fees and his father offered a libation (lines 55-58). Some associations had tutores (guardians) from their own membership rather than outsiders serve their fellow members’ children (Digest 27.1.17.3), which also encouraged intergenerational membership.

The organizational structure of voluntary associations related to age because as senior members grew old, junior members took over more responsibilities. It is evident in the public political struggles of the Roman elite that junior members could resent the power of their elders, causing conflict. Elders could be threatened by juniors. Such attitudes toward age probably affected smaller scale groups in urban settings such as voluntary associations, where leadership roles were important sources of influence, authority, decision-making and judgements. Some people likely joined these groups in hopes of gaining personal prestige (like Lucian’s character Peregrinus). Many younger men were already establishing themselves as paterfamilias when their fathers died; others left their homes to find work away from their father’s influence. Young men may have joined associations in hopes of gaining prestige before their rightful time came according to age status. Older men may have been threatened by younger men’s potential. Unfortunately, we have little evidence for intergenerational conflict in voluntary associations.

We can imagine, however, if the challenges to age structure in the elite political realm affected non-elite young men, voluntary associations (and early Christian communities), would be a setting in which they could try to gain power, honour or office.

Voluntary associations provide a useful analogy for some aspects of Christian communities. They were made up of non-elite persons, normally had religious and social functions, offered a sense of belonging, provided social and financial support for those who did not have the security of kin (especially in the city), and allowed the potential for honour.

307 Evidence of conflict among rival families within association is common. It is possible that some of the warnings in IG II 1368 (The Rule of the Iobacchoi) address intergenerational conflict (e.g., speaking out of turn, sitting in someone else’s seat, lines 73-74), but this is far from certain.
prestige and authority by replicating the political structure of the polis. They were free to join voluntarily, and membership entailed reciprocal obligations (similar to the expectations within a household; Ascough 1998:74-78).

4.4. Age hierarchy in the military

In the community associated with 1 Timothy, I hypothesize that younger men were trying to push their way into positions of power before their “turn,” challenging the traditional age structure. In 1 Tim 3:4 and 3:11, a man aspiring to leadership must be married with children and manage a household. For a non-elite man, marriage (at age 25 or 30) probably denoted maturity and responsibility beyond the rashness of youth (see Chapter 4, §4.1.2). At the same time, the fiction of the letter suggests that Timothy himself is a young man. However, Timothy exemplifies the traits of a mature young man, in contrast with the problematic rash young men implied by the letter. A military analogy is used in 1:18, “fight the good fight” (στρατεύω ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν κολήν στρατείαν, literally “in these things, serve as a soldier [in] the good military campaign”). This follows the author’s address of “Timothy, my child.” In the military, the younger soldiers were sent to the front lines in battle (Polybius 6.20-22; Harlow and

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308 The fact that men must fulfill this requirement suggests that some men vying for leadership may not yet have been in this stage of life. Perhaps they had not married (4:3), leaving their age status ambiguous at best, for marriage denoted a level of maturity.
Laurence 2002:75). Indeed, Timothy is portrayed as on the “front lines” of the fight against the opponents, and by his example directing the community toward godliness (εὐσεβεία).

Non-elite men would experience intergenerational relationships outside of the family in the military context. All male citizens of Rome were expected to do military service. The army based enrolment, military role, and “retirement” on age (Harlow and Laurence 2002:146). The young fought in the more dangerous positions in front of the older men, who assessed the young men’s performance and created strategy (Harlow and Laurence 2002:75). Men were no longer expected to fight after age sixty (2002:76).

Valerie M. Hope’s study of first century CE military inscriptions in Britain demonstrates that the army could function as a “pseudo-family” in setting up commemorations for soldiers who did not die in the battlefield, but must have found the military base their home (2007:115-16; cf. Saller and Shaw 1984:133-34). Recruits could be any age, but tended to be young adult males who could serve for twenty years. Young soldiers were thought to need discipline and role models (Hope 2007:118). An experienced soldier was still considered in his prime at

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309 Polybius describes military formation according to age:

When they come to the rendezvous, they choose the youngest and poorest to form the velites; the next to them are made hastati; those in the prime of life principes; and the oldest of all triarii, these being the names among the Romans of the four classes in each legion distinct in age and equipment. They divide them so that the senior men known as triarii number six hundred, the principes twelve hundred, the hastati twelve hundred, the rest, consisting of the youngest, being velites. If the legion consists of more than four thousand men, they divide accordingly, except as regards the triarii, the number of whom is always the same.” (6.21.7-9).

Leaders were chosen from each age group, except the velites (6.24). The velites had less elaborate equipment and dress than the others (6.22-23). The camp was formed with the triarii in a central (protected?) position among the legions (6.29). On specific ages for military duty see Parkin 2003:95-96.

310 Similarly, 2 Tim 2:3-4 reads: “Share in suffering like a good soldier [στρατιώτης] of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army [στρατεύομαι] gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier’s aim is to please the enlisting officer” (NRSV). This text serves to define Christian members as separate from the people around them (as soldiers are separate from civilians), and identifies military hierarchy. On the other hand, 1 Tim 6:12, also translated “fight the good fight of the faith” (NRSV), introduces a different analogy. The phrase ἀγωνίζομαι τὸν καλὸν συγώνα τῆς πίστεως indicates a contest or public competition, perhaps involving bravery and honour. Also related is 1 Tim 4:7, which introduce a third analogy of the physical training of an athlete (who competes) compared to training in godliness (cf. 2 Tim 2:5).

311 The distribution of age at death, ranging from 20s to 60s (and a few older), represented mostly men in their twenties and thirties (around two-thirds), and about 20% in their 40s (2007:117).
the age of forty or forty-five, and soldiers might continue military service into their fifties and beyond. Duties differed according to age: the young fought, and the older soldiers ideally moved up in rank (2007:119). Age conflict occurred in the military, though probably most subordination was dealt with through physical discipline (like flogging). According to Livy, the twenty-five year old Scipio stepped forward to be the supreme commander of the army when no one else would; the elders did not trust him because he was προπετεια (rash)—a trait of youth (26.18.11; 26.19.9). Scipio continued to climb the ranks before the usual age to do so.\footnote{He continued to be challenged by older men, too. When he became consul a few years later, Scipio had conflict with an older man Fabius Maximus, who called him “a foolish and young man” (ἀνήρ ἀνοητός καὶ νέος; Plutarch \textit{Fabius Maximus} 25.2; Eyben 1993:48-49).}

The models of Scipio and Octavian, along with Alexander the Great, the young Greek conqueror of the fourth century BCE, all made the military a “legitimate” sphere in which a capable young man could establish himself in leadership. This sphere may have been less threatening than the political or family realm because military rank could override age distinctions. It is notable, then, that the author of 1 Timothy has “Paul” employ a military analogy to exhort “Timothy” to “fight the good fight of the faith” (1:18; 6:12). As an older man in the fictive tale, Paul is directing the younger Timothy to act appropriately (e.g., speak kindly to an older man; 5:1), but also encouraging him to take responsibility, teach and be an example to others in legitimate ways. The military analogy might moderate the age differential, and demonstrate the way a “good soldier of Christ” (to borrow from 2 Tim 2:3-4) could legitimately rise up into positions of honour or responsibility even if he were young—namely by proper behaviour and teaching.

5. Conclusion

The first letter to Timothy represents a post-Pauline community in the late first century as a time of crisis, when Jesus had not returned and the original community members were dead...
or very old. The author employs the rhetoric of Paul as an old man exhorting Timothy as a young man, as a sort of inheritance of knowledge to combat opposing teachings that were pulling people in different directions and causing problems related to reputation.

Times of social change in the ancient Mediterranean were typically times when the elite young publicly challenged the authority of their elders, as evidenced in Rome before the fall of the Republic. As a young man Augustus became the ruler of the Empire, perhaps inspiring young people’s ambitions, but he also reinforced traditional Roman values. Among the non-elite, voluntary associations and the military provided common arenas for people of different ages to work together. Both types of organization moderated conflict, probably including intergenerational conflict. In general, seniority and age dictated hierarchical relationships, just as it did in the family, but authority based on age could be challenged. The generational cycle remained steady, and such challenges did not eliminate the basic form of the age structure. The cultural changes that brought about challenges and affirmations of the age structure were not unidirectional; they involved a combination of dynamics.

Intergenerational conflict was always more or less present, and seems to form part of the social situation in 1 Timothy. As we shall see, the author of 1 Timothy reinforced the conservative element of age structure, where the young should speak kindly to older people (5:1), display pietas in care for their parents (5:4, 8) and not disrespect their elders (5:19-20). The underlying message may be that they should build an honourable reputation through proper behaviour even in their youth. An honourable reputation was essential for a role with responsibility within the group (3:7).

As an older man Augustus highlighted the value of age—illustrating the strength of the conservative tradition when a person grows older. Addressing young men who were behaving

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313 Parkin notes that “a greater appreciation of the young, if indeed such occurred in later imperial times” was not “automatically… balanced by a devaluation of seniority,” nor was there “a greater valuation” of older people due to Stoic ideology or Christianity (Parkin 2003:9).
badly, he said, “Listen, young men, to an old man to whom old men listened when he was young” (Plutarch, *Moralia* 784D). The author may have intended for “Paul” to say something similar.
Chapter 8: Proper Behaviour in the “Household of God”

1. Introduction

The model of generational stability and social change from Chapter 6 suggests that the family (the household) is the most common forum for conflict and cooperation in intergenerational relationships in the Mediterranean. The author of 1 Timothy chose the metaphor of the household (οἶκος) of God for framing how one ought to behave in the community (3:15). His depiction of the fictive relationship between Paul and Timothy as analogous to a father and son contributes a narrative layer to the idea of age structure.

In this chapter, I explore the literary and social context of 1 Tim 5:1-2. I argue that the author faced challenges to traditional age-related behaviour in the community. In response, he promoted a conservative strategy that strongly encouraged submission to age hierarchies.

2. Proper behaviour in the “household of God”

In the fictional narrative of the letter “Paul” indicates an important reason for writing this letter to Timothy:

Ταύτα σοι γράφω ἐλπίζων ἔλθεῖν πρὸς σὲ ἐν τάχει ἕαν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἴδης πώς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζωντὸς, στῦλος καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

I am writing you these things hoping to come to you soon; but if I delay (I am writing) in order that you might know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and foundation of truth. (1 Tim 3:15-16; my translation)

In the narrative story of 1 Timothy, the letter itself substitutes for Paul’s presence and authority. The purpose of the letter, both in the fictional story and for the real audience, is to outline “how one ought to behave.” Used figuratively, the verb ἀναστρέφεσθαι means to “act, behave, conduct oneself, or live in the sense of the practice of certain principles… always with the kind
of behaviour more exactly described” (BDAG; cf. 1 Clem. 21:8). The “kind of behaviour”
associated with ἀναστρέφεσθαι in 1 Tim 3:15 is what is appropriate “in the household of God.”

As outlined in Chapter 4, §3.1, the household was the basic unit of social life in the
ancient Mediterranean, so that it would be familiar to everyone from her or his own involvement
in the daily life of households. Though household relationships entail cooperation and (ideally)
concord, the analogy also implies hierarchy, with distinct roles of superiority and subordination
between men and women, slaves and masters, and older and younger members (Elliott

There are a number of behaviours that the author recommends as appropriate throughout
the letter: submission to political hierarchies (2:1-2), submission to gender hierarchies (2:11-12,
5:14), submission to hierarchies based on social rank (6:1-2), and submission to age hierarchies
and performance of concomitant responsibilities (5:1-2, 4, 8, 17, 20). He recommends quiet,
non-argumentative and harmonious behaviour (2:2, 8; 3:3, 8; 5:19), though he is willing to
argue with those who promote opposing teachings. He urges respectable behaviour for men
(3:2-5) and modest behaviour for women (2:9-10), which included good household management
(3:4-5, 12; 5:9-10, 14), good works (2:10; 5:10, 24; 6:18) and generosity (5:16; 6:19). There are
also a number of behaviours of which the author disapproves. He does not approve of disregard
for gender hierarchies (2:12) and hierarchies based on social rank (6:2). He condemns the
mistreatment of elders and widows (5:1, 4, 8), as well as false accusations (5:19), idleness
(5:13), drunkenness, slander, haughtiness and greed (3:6, 8, 11; 6:9, 17) and arguing over words,
especially when someone is ignorant of their meaning (1:6-7; 6:5, 20).

314 See Hellerman (2001) for a description of Mediterranean family structure, especially patrilineal kinship.
Hellerman argues that the Christianity provided a new “surrogate family” in place of natural family, which was
particularly attractive for urbanites (2001:25). Hellerman discusses the Jesus movement, Pauline communities, and
second century Asian and North African communities, but curiously skips over the letters to Timothy and Titus.
In the fictional narrative, Paul directs Timothy in two ways: to watch his own behaviour and to teach others what is proper behaviour. The real audience is invited to follow Timothy’s example and Paul’s instruction. Though proper behaviour is a main theme in the letter, the author does not explain why it is “proper.” Rather, he implicitly appeals to a code that is self-evident to his readers. For example, the author directs men and women to behave properly according to an unspecified code related to gender roles: men were to display concord with one another (2:8), and men suitable for leadership should teach and model proper behaviour (3:1-10, 12-13). Women were to marry and raise children (2:15, 5:14), not gossip (3:11), dress modestly, remain silent while learning, not participate in teaching and not have authority over men (2:9-15). The author expected his readers to recognize these behaviours as proper, but why this was proper is not explained. Other behaviours are portrayed as self-evident as well. The author directs members to pray for governing authorities and seek a peaceable life (2:1-2), but he does not specify why they should. The author expects proper behaviour of and toward different age groups (5:1-2), widows (5:3-16), elders (5:17-29) and younger men (5:20-22; see Chapter 12), and he expects slaves to respect their masters (6:1-2).

There are two reasons for why the author recommends or condemns these behaviours. First, the author’s stance on particular behaviours stems from his concern for harmony within the community as they faced divergent teachings (see Chapter 7, §2.2). The narrative suggests that the opposing teachers were upsetting the order of the community (1:3; 4:1-4; 5:15). Even though the opponents and their followers evidently had been, or were still, part of the community (Pietersen 2004:28-34), in the fictional narrative of the letters, the author specifies that opponents have turned away from the best interests of the group (1:6, 19; 4:1-3; 6:3-5, 10; 315

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315 Paul directs Timothy to “fight the good fight of the faith” (1:18, 6:14), to avoid “profane myths and old wives’ tales” as well as “profane chatter” and false knowledge (4:6; 6:20), to train himself in godliness (εὐσεβείαν, 4:7), and to live blamelessly (6:14). Paul also instructs Timothy to insist on and teach the behaviour outlined in the letter (4:11, 6:2b), to be an example to others, ensuring the scripture is read and taught in the community meetings (4:12-16), and guard what was entrusted to him (6:20).
The author encourages his audience (through Paul’s exhortation to Timothy) to maintain social distance from them (6:11, 20), and to correct behaviours that caused division (e.g., 2:8).

Second, he is concerned about how outsiders viewed the community. Their honour was based on how others perceived them. Failing to live up to the social code of conduct could bring shame on the community, incurring ridicule from outsiders.

The author’s apologetic stance is suggested in his instructions to pray for the state rulers (2:1-2), which would demonstrate the community’s loyalty to the Emperor and to civil order (even if they did not participate in the cult of the Emperor, which might have caused problems; e.g., *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 9.3). He wanted community members to conform to social norms, namely that which was deemed appropriate and honourable behaviour in Roman society, whilst retaining a distinct identity as Christ-followers (Donelson 1986:171-81; cf. Elliott 1981).

The household codes, or *Haustafeln*, were traditional codes in Greek and Roman times. They were intended to motivate proper behaviour between groups of people based on household groupings and roles. The behaviour is reciprocal, but always involves superior and subordinate parties, namely husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave. In Colossians, for example, wives are to be subject to their husbands, and husbands are told to love their wives and not be harsh. Children should obey their parents, and fathers should not provoke or discourage their children. Slaves are to obey their masters, and masters are to treat their slaves justly (3:18-4:1; cf. Eph 5:1-6:1, 1 Pet 3:1-7). The community in 1 Timothy is exhorted to

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316 *Haustafeln* were articulated by Aristotle, found in Stoic duty lists, and used by the Neopythagoreans and Hellenistic Judeans in the first century (see Crouch 1973, Balch 1992).
behave in the church—the household of God—in the same way they were expected to behave in ways that conform to the relationships described in the *Haustafeln.*

The author of 1 Timothy was concerned about the image of the community in the view of “outsiders” (ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθέν; 3:7). This explicit mention of outsiders is included in the attributes of an overseer: “he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil (διαβόλος)” (3:7, NRSV). The other attributes required of an overseer include typical virtues in ancient Greco-Roman culture (3:2-5), which would contribute to an honourable reputation in the public realm. In two other instances, the author hints at the importance of outsiders’ opinions. Slaves are exhorted to honour their masters for the sake of the community’s reputation (“so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed”; 6:1). Also, the author recommends that young widows remarry, have children and manage their households so that “the adversary” (ἀντικείμενος; the one who opposes) has no reason to scorn (λοιδορία) them (5:14). If the adversary is taken to be a person (see Marshall 1999:604-5), the text likely refers to outsiders.

The opinions of outsiders must have become more intense and concerning for the Christians as the group continued to grow, especially because of their exclusivity. The opinion of outsiders mattered to the author, but so did the distinct identity of the community. These were held in tension. The exclusivity of the group is evident in the statement: “[God] desires everyone

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317 Verner suggests that household codes in the letters to Timothy and Titus would help establish a good reputation (apologetic function) and help to control false teachers (paranaesis). He posits that 1 Timothy and Titus involve a complex application of the *Haustafeln* where the roles of women are especially limited, slavery is not questioned, and age becomes an important factor (1983:13-24, 83-111; cf. Lührmann 1981). The *Haustafeln* was used in early Christian texts to address real social needs. Balch, for instance, understands the codes in 1 Peter as used apologetically to demonstrate that the Christians were of solid social repute (1981). Crouch considers the codes in Colossians to have a paranaetic function; namely, it offered conservative directives to subdue deviant enthusiasts in the movement (1973). Elliott thinks that the author of 1 Peter employed the *Haustafeln* because the group’s internal solidarity was threatened, but also to establish the group as distinctive from its pagan neighbours (1981).

318 For example, in *On Choosing a General*, Onasander states: “I believe, then, that we must choose a general, not because of noble birth as priests are chosen, nor because of wealth as the superintendents of the gymnasia, but because he is temperate (σώφρονα), self-restrained, vigilant, frugal (αφιλάργυρον), hardened to labour, alert, free from avarice, neither too young nor too old, indeed a father of children if possible, a ready speaker, and a man with a good reputation” (1.1; Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:158).
to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all” (2:4-6; NRSV). An evangelistic goal is suggested here as well, which might be more successful (at least for some converts) if the community appeared to be a culturally “normal” group. The author characterizes the basis of proper behaviour, εὐσέβεια (explored more thoroughly in Chapter 9), generosity and good works as beneficial for the present situation as well as for the rewards in an afterlife (4:8-10, 6:19). In the context of instructions about proper behaviour he hints that outsiders are at least partly in view: God is the “Saviour of all people” (4:10). The obligation to defend and display honour in the perception of outsiders helped define the group.

The author encourages conventional behaviour in contrast to the opposing teachings, and in hopes that it would enhance outsiders’ opinions of their community, particularly the perception of their integrity, morality and/or honour. Their reputation with outsiders would improve, they would have fewer tensions internally, and they would be able to live “a quiet and peaceable life” (2:2).

3. Proper behaviour according to age status

Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς ἀλλὰ παρακάλει ως πατέρα, νεωτέρους ως ἀδελφοὺς, πρεσβυτέρας ως μητέρας, νεωτέρας ως ἀδελφᾶς ἐν πάσῃ ἁγνείᾳ.

Do not strike an older man but speak kindly to him as a father, young men as brothers, older women as mothers, young women as sisters, in all purity.

(1 Tim 5:1-2)
These verses set the context for the following two sections, which both deal with age-related issues. The first deals with widows of various ages (5:3-16), and the second with older men in conflict with younger men (5:17-22). These are the topics of subsequent chapters. In this remainder of this chapter, I consider the cultural context of interaction between the young and the old. In 1 Tim 5:1-2, proper behaviour means appropriate roles for certain age groups, based on the analogy of the household. The directives in 5:1-2 address a young man’s behaviour. The exhortation suggests that the author promoted the conservative element of the generational cycle with proper behaviour between age groups. By presenting his ideas in the guise of a fictional narrative involving Paul and Timothy, the author assumes that Paul’s authority will be recognized by his audience.

3.1. Older and younger

The term πρεσβύτερος can refer to age or leadership (see Chapter 12, §2). It is clear in 5:1-2 that πρεσβύτερος and πρεσβύτερα are age designations. By comparing an “older man” to a father, and an “older woman” to a mother, the author introduces patterns of age status in the Christian community. He contrasts young and old using the household metaphor.

The term πρεσβύτερος denotes a man from an older generation in comparison with the younger one (represented by Timothy, who is “youthful” (νεότητος); 4:12). The next three categories reflect generation and gender distinctions: younger men (νεοτέρους) are to be like brothers to Timothy, older women (πρεσβύτερας) are like mothers, younger women (νεοτέρας) are like sisters. All four age groups are to be spoken to kindly (παρακάλεστε; see §4) as family members, but each group was to be treated differently according to gender and age. Brothers functioned in hierarchical relationships that ideally strived for concord (Aasgaard

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319 Contrast Tit 2:2, where “Paul” directs “Titus” to tell the older men, older women and younger men what kinds of behaviours they should display.
Brothers and sisters were depicted as emotionally close in ancient literature, perhaps retaining a life-long bond even though a sister’s marriage may diminish their contact (Aasgaard 2004:64-65). The phrase “in all purity (or chastity)” (ἐν πάση ἁγνείᾳ) implies that the young man should protect her reputation as if it was his sister’s (and thus his family’s) reputation (cf. MacDonald 1996). These familial relationships display an idealization of these relationships.

The age structure revealed in 1 Tim 5:1 is based on fluid labels of “older” and “younger.” The binary age distinction of young and old was typical in ancient Mediterranean designations of age (Barclay 2007). The labels of “older” and “younger” establish age hierarchy, but are not based on strict chronological ages. As I discussed earlier, in the ancient life course, physical and social attributes related to life stages were more important to a person’s relative age than chronological age labels (e.g., when a person became a grandparent, or stepped down from public duties). One ancient legal expert demonstrated the fluidity, and potential confusion, over the definition of young and old. He does not mention chronological ages, but stages of the life course.

Titius provided in his codicil as follows: “To Publuis Maevius I wish to be given all the young men in my service.” Question: By what upper and lower limit of age are young men to be defined? Marcellus replied that it was for the person taking cognition of the matter to decide whom the testator wished to indicate by the words stated. For in the case of wills,

**320** Plutarch declares that brothers must strive for concord (e.g., “On Brotherly Love” 484D).

**321** In the classic Greek play, Antigone proclaimed loyalty and affection toward her brother over husband and children (Sophocles Antigone 909-12). Martial, a first century poet, denounces a mother and son whose affection leads them to call each other brother and sister:

Oh, how fondling you are, Ammanius, to your mother! How fondling your mother to you, Ammanius! Brother is what she calls you, and she is called sister. Why do disreputable names attract you? Why are you not content to be what you are? Do you imagine this conduct is play and amusement? It isn’t. A mother who desires that she should be “sister,” is not content to be a mother or a sister either. (Epigrams 2.4)

Aasgaard argues that this odd situation highlights the normality of brother-sister affection (2004:64-65, 107-8).

**322** For references to fluid definitions of νεότεροι and πρεσβύτεροι in Classical Greek literature, see Reinhold 1970:353, 356. For example, in political rhetoric, νεότεροι could be used for someone who is in the older generation to label him as imprudent.
one surely must not stoop to definitions, since most people speak carelessly and do not employ the right names and words. But one could hold that a young man is one who has passed adolescence and has not yet begun to be counted among the older men. (*Digest* 32.69)

In the ancient Mediterranean, how the young and old interacted with one another, was largely based on life course expectations and experiences; designations of “old and young” depended on context. Harlow and Laurence note that, “in practice, qualities of the young or the old might have been emphasised for the benefit of the participants” (2002:150). In 1 Tim 5, the author employs these fluid designations for old and young to denote proper behaviour.

### 3.2. Old age and seniority

In the ancient literature, older persons are often described in the context of their relationships with younger people. Parkin is adamant that older people cannot be studied apart from the social and cultural context of the Roman world, nor “as an isolated element” (2003:11). To understand the contrast of young and old in 1 Tim 5, we need to understand what “old” and “older” meant in the ancient world. Old age was the last stage in the life course, but when this stage began and how long it lasted was variable (as noted in Chapter 4).

Thomas M. Falkner and Judith de Luce assert that the treatment of the elderly was a measure of morality (1992:28). Harlow and Laurence disagree: “Only in the mythical golden age of the past were the elderly respected for their years” (2002:118). Cokayne states that attitudes toward the elderly were ambiguous: “only the strong and feisty, those who were still contributing to society, were admired and shown the traditional reverence; only those who were still fit and active, whether in public life or through the subsequent pursuit of intellectual studies, had respect and status. The old and weak were tolerated at best, and often viewed with

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323 In Chapters 9-12 I focus on the gendered aspects of old age for women and men; I focus here on more general notions of old age in Roman culture.
contempt or ridicule” (2007:209; cf. de Luce 1993). Aspects of all three opinions are evident. Respect for age was not automatic. Whether or not an older person received respect depended at least in part on whether he or she had and maintained an honourable status in the perception of others.

In the modern Mediterranean, Campbell suggests there is honour in a past honourable life (1964:286); older men have already “proven” themselves as much as they can, and their reputation generally remains intact. Similarly, Harlow and Laurence posit that “the position the individual held in late life was dependent on the status, wealth and character that they held in earlier life” (2002:117). Plutarch argues that old men should continue to be active in politics, to keep themselves in vigorous health (Moralia 792D-E) and to be models and teachers for the young (790E-F, 795A-F). An old man who was inactive, ill and unable to function could be a target for ridicule.

Younger people did not always treat older people with respect, but respect for elders was a strong cultural value. In this treatise on old age, Plutarch promotes respect for old age:

\[\text{τὸ δ̣ ἀ̣ π̣ τοὺ̣ χρόνου̣ πρωτείον̣, ὃ̣ καλεῖται̣ κυρίως̣ πρεσβείον̣, ἀξιολογημένου̣ ἐστὶ̣ καὶ̣ παραξεφορμένου̣· οἴδεμα γὰρ̣ ὑτω̣ τιμὴ̣ συμβέβηκε̣ τῶν̣ τιμωμένων̣ μᾶλλον̣ ἢ̣ τῶν̣ τιμωμένων̣ κοσμεῖν̣, ὡς̣ τῇ̣ τῶν̣ γερόντων̣.}\]

The primacy which comes from time, for which there is the special word *presbeion* or “the prerogative due to seniority in age,” arouses no jealousy and is freely conceded; for of no honour is it so true that it adorns the giver more than the receiver as of that which is paid to old age. (Moralia 787D)

Likewise, Cokayne points out:

Respect… had to be earned by conforming to what society believed was the correct behaviour in old age. Industriousness and diligence (*industria*) brought that respect, which in turn led to self-confidence and a way of coping with physical burdens of old age. It was not necessarily old age itself that earned reverence, but the actions of individuals stimulated by the drive for affiliation and (self-)esteem. Nor did old age itself invite contempt; rather, those who failed to live up to society’s expectations of them were marginalised—which in turn encouraged many to remain physically and mentally active as long as they were able” (2007:219-20).
In other words, when someone gives honour to an older person as an act of deference based on age, that younger person acts honourably. The younger person does not compete for this kind of honour, for (hopefully) he will receive it himself as he grows older.

Seniority was usually based on age, and with seniority came the right of precedence. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in Asia Minor during the reign of Augustus, stated that the “proper” order of offering opinions within the senate was to begin with the oldest, then allow a turn for those progressively younger (Roman Antiquities 11.6.3, 6). “I ask you to come forward and deliver your opinions—first the oldest members, as is customary and fitting for you, next those of a middle age, and last the youngest” (11.6.6).

Philo gives us a clear sense of hierarchical ordering of age, both in the family and in other social settings.

And a father and mother deserve honour [τίμη], not only on this account, but for many other reasons. For in the judgement of those who take account of virtue, seniors are placed above juniors, teachers above pupils, benefactors above beneficiaries, rulers above subjects, and masters above servants [παρ’ δις γὰρ λόγος ἀρετῆς ἐστί, πρεσβύτεροι νεωτέρων προκρίνονται καὶ διδάσκαλοι γνωρίμων καὶ εὐεργέται τῶν εὗ πεπονθότων καὶ ἄρχοντες ὑπηκόων καὶ δεσπόται δούλων]. Now parents [γονεῖς] are assigned a place in the higher of these two orders, for they are seniors and instructors and benefactors and rulers and masters: sons and daughters are placed in the lower order, for they are juniors and learners and recipients of benefits and subjects and servants.” (Special Laws 2.225-26)

The older has precedence over the younger. Proper behaviour took into account one’s position in the age hierarchy.

Barclay points out that Timothy is distinguished as an exception to the rule of age hierarchy (2007:238-39). He is young, but clearly experienced enough to take a leadership role in Paul’s stead. Yet, his position is tenuous, for “Paul” must argue that he is suitable for the responsibility: “let no one look down on you because of your youth” (4:12). Timothy is also

325 LSJ defines πρεσβύτερος as “a gift of honour,” often with the sense of “privilege of age” or “right of the eldest,” such as in the right to inheritance. It can also refer to “old age” in general. This exact term is not found in early Christian literature, but it is in the same semantic domain as πρεσβύτερος.
Barclay mentions is Damas, the overseer of the Magnesians. Damas is young, but wise, and the “holy elders” yield to his decisions. Ignatius’ admonishment for the church in Magnesia to respect him indicates that not all of the community members did. Ignatius exhorts them not to take advantage of your bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) because of his age. You should render him all due respect according to the power of God the Father, just as I have learned that even your holy presbyters (καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους πρεσβυτέρους) have not exploited his seemingly youthful appearance [or rank, or position; τὴν φαινομένην νεωτερικὴν τάξιν; but they have deferred (συγχωροῦντος) to him as one who is wise in God (ὡς φρονίμω ἐν θεῷ)...” (Mag 3.1).

In both cases, the authors must take pains to convince their audiences that these exceptional young men were worthy of respect despite their youthful age.326

The desire to be viewed as honourable by outsiders prompted the author of 1 Timothy to return to traditional proper behaviour with regard to age structure, especially as seniority became more connected with age within the movement. It is most likely that age always had some precedence associated with it because it was such an ingrained cultural value. People who grew up and grew old within the movement (such as those who were faithful “from youth to old age,” 1 Clem. 63.3) and retained a good reputation probably gained precedence through their seniority of age. Barclay points out that “as soon as time began to pass, and converts could be expected to mature in the faith, the typical links between seniority, experience, and wisdom would naturally emerge” (2007:241).

3.3. Ideal behaviour between older and younger men

The proper behaviour expected between older men and younger men, and between father and son (at least in public) in the ancient Mediterranean, was similar to what is expected in the

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326 In the ancient Roman world, the puer senex was also an exception to the rule. He was a young man with the wisdom of an older man.
modern Mediterranean (Chapter 6, §3). It was characterized by subordination and deference on the part of the younger, and precedence and authority on the part of the older. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus (55-135 CE), a freedman, described the duties of a son: “To treat everything that is his own as belonging to his father, to be obedient to him in all things, never to speak ill of him to anyone else, nor to say or do anything that will harm him, to give way to him in everything and yield him precedence, helping him as far as is within his power” (*Discourses* 2.10.7; Eyben 1993:206). The ideal behaviour of youth toward elders was deference, not only to one’s parents, but to anyone who was older, especially the age of a person’s parents or older. Philo determined the proof of filial piety by courtesy shown to a person who shared the seniority of a person’s parents. In other words, if someone respected an aged man or woman, this reflected his remembrance of his father and mother (*Special Laws* 2.237).327

Roman writers refer to a golden age in the past in which the young revered their elders. Juvenal describes a past time in which a youth would rise before his elders; even a wealthier (and thus higher status) young person would rise before a less wealthy older person (*Satire* 13.53-59). Ovid also recalls the traditional reverence for the old and their wisdom. The young would not dare to speak shamefully in the presence of their elders (*Fasti* 5.57-70). Valerius Maximus recounts an ideal past in which elite young men would treat older men like fathers. A young man would escort an older man to the senate, waiting outside the door to serve him and accompany him back home. This became training for future public service. At dinner parties,

327 In Greek thought Aristotle reflects similar sentiments:

> For the male is by nature better fitted to command than the female (except in some cases where their union has been formed contrary to nature) and the older and fully developed person than the younger and immature (τόν πρεσβυτέρον καὶ τέλειον τοῦ νεότέρου καὶ ἀτέλους)… The rule of the father over the children on the other hand is that of a king; for the male parent is the ruler in virtue both of affection and of seniority (πρεσβισίας)… For though in nature the king must be superior, in race he should be the same as his subjects, and this is the position of the elder in relation to the younger and of the father in relation to the child. (*Politics* 1.5.2)

Note age differences between the young and old are not defined, except by contrast of age status.
young men would be careful to arrive after older men so their elders could be seated first, and
allowed their elders to get up and leave before they did. They rarely spoke in the presence of
their elders, and if they did, it was with modesty (2.1.9). These writers lament that the youth of
their own day were not as reverent or respectful. Reinhold suggests that respect for parents rose
in the Hellenistic era because of a restoration of hierarchy after democratic levelling of

Plutarch lists honouring parents and respecting elders as important elements of proper
conduct: “that one ought to reverence the gods, to honour one’s parents, to respect one’s elders,
to be obedient to the laws, to yield to those in authority, to love one’s friends, to be chaste with
women, to be affectionate with children, and not to be overbearing with slaves” (The Education
of Children 10). Cicero similarly outlines his idea of how the old and young should interact.

Since, too, the duties that properly belong to different times of life are not the same, but
some belong to the young (iuvenum), others to those more advanced in years (seniorum), a
word must be said on this distinction also.

It is, then, the duty of a young man (adulescentis) to show deference to his elders and to
attach himself to the best and most approved of them, so as to receive the benefit of their
counsel and influence. For the inexperience of youth requires the practical wisdom of age
to strengthen and direct it. And this time of life is above all to be protected against
sensuality and trained to toil and endurance of both mind and body, so as to be strong for
active duty in military and civil service. And even when they wish to relax their minds and
give themselves up to enjoyment they should beware of excesses and bear in mind the
rules of modesty. And this will be easier, if the young are not unwilling to have their elders
join them even in their pleasures.

The old (senibus), on the other hand, should, it seems, have the physical labours reduced;
their mental activities should be actually increased. They should endeavour, too, by means
of their counsel and practical wisdom to be of as much service as possible to their friends
and to the young, and above all to the state. But there is nothing against which old age has
to be more on its guard than against surrendering to feebleness and idleness, while luxury,
a vice in any time of life, is in old age especially scandalous. But if excess in sensual
indulgence is added to luxurious living, it is a twofold evil; for old age not only disgraces
itself; it also serves to make the excesses of the young more shameless. (On Moral Duties
1.34.122-3)
For Cicero, the counsel and experience of old men was valuable, but they had to be worthy of respect through virtuous living and worthwhile activity. Older men should know better than to engage in indulgent behaviour. Elders should direct the young, training them in virtues. Not all old people were equally able to be models. Plutarch realized that older men could be hated by younger men if they held too tightly to their public responsibilities and squelched opportunities for younger men to pursue public work and the honour that went with it (Moralia 793D-E). Cicero advocates for the young and old to interact, even in leisure activities. Perhaps Cicero reasoned that the more contact the different age groups had, the more they would work together.

Cicero echoes what other ancient Mediterranean writers say about youth. Young men were not “complete” in their development. They were reckless and lacked experience; they were deficient in wisdom that came with age. Perhaps youth posed a threat to social stability if they did not follow the traditional ways. However, if older men like Cicero label youthful passion and innovation is as a temporary stage of the male life course that precedes responsible adulthood, the strength and unpredictability of youth would not seem as threatening to them. This is why Cicero considers youth a time of intellectual and physical training, particularly for service in the army and in politics. Young men are considered passionate and rash, but they grow up to be responsible (Osiek and Balch 1997:68)—the conservative element of the generational cycle.

Cicero suggests the young need to be reminded to be modest (verecundiae, which can also mean reverence or shame). In modern Mediterranean cultures, we saw that modesty was an attribute of the young in the context of their elders (Abu-Lughod 1986:113; Chapter 6, §3.2). Pliny complains that youth in his day did not always submit to age or authority, berating them in a sarcastic tone: “These young gentlemen begin life as sages, and know everything from the first; there is no one they revere or imitate, as they are their own models” (Letters 8.23.2-3).
Seneca the Elder praises a young man who blushes from modesty (Epistles 11.1). Eyben comments, “The greatest virtue a young man could possess, and his primary duty, consisted in showing respect for the older generation, parents and older people in general. That is not to say, however, that young were never remiss in this regard” (1993:203).

Josephus summarizes that according to Hebrew Law, parents should be honoured immediately after God himself, and young men should respect every elder because God is the oldest of all beings (Against Apion 2.28; cf. Balla 2003:91-92). David Noy suggests that Judeans might have treated the elderly with special care. He found proportionately more Judean than Roman epitaphs dedicated to the elderly (2007:92-94). It is possible that the epitaphs reflect less about the treatment of the elderly, and more about making sure the person who arranged for the inscription appears to honour one’s parents in death, and so procure social and divine approval for this tangible sign of filial duty (gaining or maintaining honour in the view of his peers). Noy’s study does confirm that the fulfillment of filial duty was a strong cultural value for Judeans of the Diaspora.

328 It is difficult to know how much Judean influence there was in 1 Timothy since the only possible allusion to it is ambiguous (1:7; see Chapter 7, §2.2). However, the Judean roots of Christianity might have had some influence on age structure and intergenerational relationships in early Christian communities, in part because the HB remained part of early Christian tradition. The Judean view of filial duty and respect for age was similar to that found in Roman culture—an ideal that may have required ethical exhortations for reinforcement, but was an important familial obligation (Yarborough 1993:53-56; Reinhartz 1993:87; Balla 2003:80-111). Regarding family, Shaye Cohen summarizes that “the Jewish family in antiquity seems not to have been distinctive by the power of its Jewishness; rather its structure, ideals and dynamics seem to have been virtually identical with those of its ambient culture(s)” (1993:2). In other words, the residual or direct influence of Judean culture on intergenerational relationships would not have been very different from the Roman influence for the early Christians of the late first century. For 1 Timothy specifically, any Judean influence in terms of age structure behaviour and expectations would complement rather than contrast with Roman polytheistic behaviour and expectations.

329 One Latin inscription of unknown provenance (3rd-4th century) reads: “Veturia Paulla, placed in her eternal home, who lived 86 years and 6 months, a proselyte for 16 years under the name of Sarah, mother of the synagogues of Campus and Volumnius. In peace her sleep” (Noy 1995:457, inscription 577).

330 This refutes Minois’ depiction of decreasing respect for old age in the course of Israelite and Judean history, particularly in the Hellenistic period (1987:38-39). Minois locates the early Christians in a Judean context arguing that as wisdom became less associated with old age over time, elderly Judeans faired better than elderly Christians in the first century (1987:34-37; see comments in Chapter 1). But although the foundations of the Christian movement in Asia Minor began with Judean influences, by the end of the first century those influences were weakened. At this time, the movement had attracted more Gentiles than Judeans and established itself largely
Respect for parents was a common motif for Romans and Judeans. However, a consistent and uniform expression of ideals does not necessarily mean such ideals were accepted and performed in an ideal way (cf. Yarborough 1993:53). Repeated ideals could just as easily point to a general lack of respect and perceived need to exhort people to respect their elders.\(^{331}\) Indeed, writers commonly lament the rebellious nature of youth. Although some writers portray the idealization of respect for one’s elders as hearkening back to a golden age, it is unlikely there was a “golden age.” Most likely, there were just ideals that continued to be lamented by each successive cohort of older men.

In the modern Mediterranean setting, we saw that conflict between old and young was quite common in private, but rarely happened in public because such behaviour would threaten family honour (Chapter 6).\(^{332}\) In the ancient Mediterranean, MacMullen notes: “Occasionally the young and old are found at odds with each other in public quarrels; more often the young are accused of disorders on their own” (1974:81). There are at least two elements at play for the ancient writers when they discussed intergenerational relationships. First, a strong ideal of respect for elders reflected the desire to retain honour in the eyes of one’s peers. Maintaining one’s honour in the public sphere was of utmost social importance. However, older men might be threatened by young men, especially as their own strength and vigour diminished. Whatever

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\(^{331}\) For example, Proverbs 23:22 states, “Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old” (cf. Micah 7:6), suggesting that filial respect was not always the behavioural norm, even if it was ideal (Malachi 4:6).

\(^{332}\) Of the ancient Mediterranean, MacMullen notes: “Occasionally the young and old are found at odds with each other in public quarrels; more often the young are accused of disorders on their own” (1974:81). For example, young men are targeted in the following. Note the stereotypical portrayal of young men in their “rash” behaviour.

Certain persons, who commonly call themselves “the lads” (juvenes) in certain towns where there is unrest play to the gallery for the applause of the mob. If they do no more than this and have not previously been admonished by the governor, they are beaten with rods and dismissed or also forbidden to attend public entertainments. But if after such correction they are caught doing the same again, they should be punished with exile; or sometimes capital punishment may be imposed, for example, when they have too often been guilty of sedition and riotous behaviour and after repeated arrests and over-lenient treatment persist in the same rash attitude. (Digest 48.19.28.3)
their actual behaviour, labelling them as rash and foolish kept them from having too much power.\(^{333}\)

In 1 Timothy, the author encourages the ideal of respect for one’s elders as a way to move the group in the direction of an honourable reputation. The directives that follow (5:3-22) suggest that some of the group was behaving dishonourably. In a counter-cultural move, the author portrays Timothy as young, but with exemplary behaviour (4:12). I suggest that this choice of character reflects the lack of respect for age hierarchies (along with political, gender and social rank hierarchies) that some members of the community displayed. Thus, Timothy’s character provided a corrective example for some members of the community, perhaps especially young, ambitious men (see Chapter 12).

4. A closer look at 1 Timothy 5:1-2

With the ancient Mediterranean context of proper behaviour between old and young in mind, I return to 1 Tim 5:1-2. The fictive Paul admonishes “Timothy” as a young man not to “rebuke” (ἐπιπλησσω) an older man but “speak kindly to” (παρακαλέω) him as a father. The comparison of the older man to a “father” implies the precedence that comes with seniority of age. The author is contrasting a public display of disrespect with an ideal familial model of concord. The directive of 1 Tim 5:1 may imply that some younger people in the Christian community were not treating their elders appropriately.

The meaning of ἐπιπλησσω ranges from “rebuke” to “strike at,” and occurs only here in early Christian literature. Other instances of this word in the Greek literature reveal a sense of having social power over someone else.\(^{334}\) In the ancient Mediterranean public realm, true

\(^{333}\) Octavian/Augustus, Scipio and Alexander the Great were notable famous exceptions (see Chapter 7, §4).

\(^{334}\) Josephus tells of how Joseph, a respectable self-made man, sent his son Hyrcanus to pay homage to the ruler Seleukos (king of Syria). Joseph’s steward rebuked Hyrcanus, who wanted more money than the steward thought
insults, including physical violence, were measured with honour because they denoted “domination and subjection” (Saller 1994:142). Public humiliation was a brutal affront to a person’s honour.\textsuperscript{335} In Acts 16:22-39, Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten in Philippi; the following day they demanded the magistrates lead them out of prison as a matter of honour (Acts 16:37-39; cf. Aulus Gellius \textit{Attic Nights} 10.3.17). Saller notes that proper conduct toward freeborn members of the household was similar to proper conduct in the public sphere, namely using words rather than beating, with the goal of instilling a sense of shame and honourable behaviour (Saller 1994:143-44). The author’s exhortation for “Timothy” not to “strike at” an older man alludes to the need for proper behaviour between adults in the public realm, but also between generations. In the ancient Mediterranean world, a son would rarely have rightful social power over his father (except perhaps if he was senile), and striking one’s father was a reprehensible action. Likewise in the modern Mediterranean, striking or insulting a parent is a grievous sin.\textsuperscript{336} In ancient literature it might be an allusion to parricide (1 Tim 1:9).\textsuperscript{337} In the HB, anyone who struck or cursed a parent was subject to the death penalty (Ex 21:15, 17; Lev

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\textsuperscript{335} There were several exceptions, namely beating slaves, who had no honour, corporal punishment of soldiers, and subjugation of provincials without citizenship (Saller 1994:137-41). Livy recounts how an old man, a former centurion who fought honourably for Rome, had the state demand taxes after all of his inherited property had been destroyed by enemies. His debt forced him into slavery. The sight of his recent beatings incited the crowd, prompting the first plebeian secession (\textit{History of Rome} 2.23.7). The historical accuracy of the story is uncertain, but Livy’s readers found the violence done to this old man deplorable enough to prompt a major historical event (Saller 1994:141).

\textsuperscript{336} “The idea of an adolescent or adult son striking his father is almost unthinkable. Only slightly less serious is swearing at or insulting a father. Both are acts of insolent and wanton violence… To curse or strike a father is, also, a grave sin (\textit{hamartia}) for it is an act which upsets a part of the absolute order of life instituted and sanctioned by God. The misfortunes of a person guilty of such acts are always considered to be punishments from God” (Campbell 1964:160-61). Personal sins against the family include maltreatment of age parents, striking a parent, and public insult of a parent by son or daughter (1964:324).

\textsuperscript{337} Cf. Aristophanes’ Greek comedy \textit{Clouds} (see Chapter 7, §4.1).
20:9; Deut 21:18-21, 27:16), and it was shameful to display disrespectful behaviour toward parents (Prov 19:26, 20:20, 28:24).

The author does not tell Timothy to obey the older man like he would obey a father, but to παρακαλέσεται him. The NRSV translates the verb παρακαλέω here as “speak,” but this translation is too weak. This verb is used elsewhere in 1 Timothy to mean “exhort” or “encourage” (2:1, 6:2), but this meaning seems awkward here. In modern Mediterranean cultures, as noted in Chapter 3, when younger people offered advice to their elders, it was usually unheeded, since the older person makes the decisions. In addition, unlike 2:1 (urging prayers) and 6:2 (teach and urge these things), there is no content for the exhortation. The author seems to mean the opposite of speaking harshly or “striking” a father, but since the verb is borrowed for the older women, younger men, younger women (all accusative), the meaning must apply to them as well. BDAG suggests it sometimes has the sense of, “treat someone in an inviting or congenial manner, someth[ing] like our ‘be open to the other, have an open door’: invite in, conciliate, be friendly to or speak in a friendly manner.”

Speaking kindly or being conciliatory with the intent of seeking goodwill and concord would seem to would work for all four groups in 5:1-2, and is appropriate for the author’s theme of promoting harmony.

The ideal presented here appears to be a higher standard than what is normally practiced in society at large, given the constant appeals (and laments) in the literature for more respect for

338 Interestingly, this meaning is found in father-son contexts elsewhere in early Christian texts, but the father tries to reconcile with the son. In Lk 15:28 (the parable of the prodigal son) the father tries to conciliate (“plead,” NRSV; παρακάλεσεν αὐτοῦ) with the older son, who was angry that his father treated his younger brother so well. In a less clear example, Paul writes, “As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you (παρακαλοῦσαν ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθοῦμενοι) and pleading that you live a life worthy of God…” (1 Thess 2:12). A sense of conciliation or apology is found in Acts 16:39. The city magistrates came to Paul and Silas, whom they had flogged the day before, and apologized to them (παρακάλεσαν αὐτούς) after they were told that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. Paul insisted that they not let them go in secret because they had dishonoured them by beating them in public (16:37-38; cf. 2 Macc 13:23). The apology was meant to restore honour. In each of these cases, the verb παρακαλέω is followed by an accusative of person, as in 1 Tim 5:1-2.

339 This seems to be Paul’s meaning in 1 Cor 4:13: δισφημοῦμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν: “when slandered, we speak kindly (or seek goodwill).” Cf. 2 Macc 13:23: when he was defeated, Antiochus the king “was dismayed, called in (παρακάλεσεν) the Jews, yielded and swore to observe all their rights, settled with them and offered sacrifice, honoured the sanctuary and show generosity to the holy place.”
elders. Timothy himself is portrayed as an ideal young man who displays honourable and proper behaviour. Holding up Timothy as an ideal might be a way of contrasting young men (and women) in the actual community who were not behaving ideally.

As we will see, not all of the instructions that follow 5:1-2 fall into the category of “idealous behaviour.” Some activity in the community was clearly violating normal cultural practice, namely not caring for parents (Chapter 9), older women not taking responsibility for younger women (Chapter 11) and young men falsely accusing their elders (Chapter 12).

Since the group was under suspicion from outsiders, the author advocated honourable behaviour as a way to demonstrate their moral uprightness. Thus, “Paul” begins this section of instructions to “Timothy” not by asking him to imitate actual practice of society at large (for writers often lamented or implied the lack of respect young people had for their elders in Roman society), but to strive for an ideal: have proper respect for your elders.

5. Conclusion

Through the fictive instructions of Paul to Timothy, the author invites the audience to behave in the “household of God” in the same way that they were expected to behave (ideally) in the literal Roman household. The author suggests that disregarding proper behaviour could incur judgment from outsiders: younger widows who remain unmarried and slaves who disrespect their masters may bring ridicule on the whole group (5:14, 6:1). Ideal intergenerational relationships involved the young deferring to their elders, acting with modesty, and the older generation modeling and teaching virtue. As in the modern Mediterranean, respect was not automatic; honour was due to an older person if she or he had cultivated virtue over her or his lifetime. The categories of “older” and “younger” were fluid, but were clearly based on seniority and age. A young man was not to rebuke an older man, but speak kindly to him. This
exhortation in 1 Tim 5:1-2 sets the stage for the following texts that deal with age status and exhortations about appropriate age behaviour. For the author, proper behaviour would function as an apology (to allay suspicions and appear honourable to outsiders), and as a promotion of concord in the face of divisive teachings.
Chapter 9: Widows and Filial Duty

1. Introduction

I have argued that in 1 Tim 5, the author is concerned with matters of age, promoting the conservative view of age structure based on the model of the household. In the narrative story of the letter, Paul directs the young Timothy to act toward his elders like they are his parents, and toward his male and female peers as siblings (5:1-2), reflecting an ideal pattern of age structure in the Roman world. The real audience is implicitly invited to take up this directive for themselves by observing proper age hierarchies. The next rather lengthy section of the letter focuses on widows (5:3-16).\(^{340}\)

Having studied this text for over two decades, Bassler still states: “The more one ponders the text, the more the questions proliferate.” She suggests that an “aggressive interpretation” and “imaginative historical reconstruction” are needed (2003:122). Utilizing a culturally sensitive understanding of age structure, demography and life course in the ancient Mediterranean world, I attempt a historical reconstruction of this text in the next three chapters that employs an “informed imagination” (see Chapter 2, §2.1).

In this chapter, I focus on 1 Tim 5:4 and 5:8. This investigation involves three aspects: first, an overview of 5:3-16, highlighting the author’s distinction between different categories of widows; second, the cultural context of filial duty; and third, the concept of εὐσεβεία or pietas as it relates to age and filial duty in 1 Tim 5.

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\(^{340}\) The prominence of women in 1 Timothy, particularly 2:11-15 and 5:3-16, is striking. Maloney comments: “here, almost alone among Christian Testament writings, women actually take centre stage from time to time” (1994:361). Similarly, Houlden points out that there is more space given to widows than any other group in 1 Timothy; they were a notable, and in his opinion, the most troublesome, group in the community (1976:91).
2. Widows in 1 Tim 5:3-16

(3) χήρας τίμα τάς ὄντως χήρας.

(4) εἰ δὲ τις χήρα τέκνα ἢ ἐκγόνια ἔχει, μανθανήσωσιν πρῶτον τοῦ ἴδιου ὀικὸν εὐαγγελίζων καὶ ἀμοίβας ἀποδίδοντο τοῖς προγόνοις· τότε γὰρ ἔστιν ἀπόδεκτον εὐαγγελίζω τοῦ θεοῦ.

(5) ἢ δὲ ὄντως χήρα καὶ μεμοιομένη ἡλίπικη ἐπὶ θεοῦ καὶ προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεις καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἠμέρας,

(6) ἢ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζωᾶς τέθηκεν.

(7) καὶ ταύτα παράγγελλε, ἵνα ἀνεπίληπτοι ὄσιν.

(8) εἰ δὲ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκεῖων οὐ προνοεῖ, τὴν πίστιν ἠρυθηκε καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρον.

(9) Χήρα καταλεγέσθω μὴ ἔλαττον ἔτων ἐξήκοντα γεγονοῦσα, ἐνος αὐτοῦ γυνῆς, ἐν ἐργοῖς καλοῖς μαρτυρομένη,

(10) εἰ ἐτέκνοντρόφηται, εἰ ἐξενοδόχηται, εἰ ἀγίων πόδας ἐνίσχεται, εἰ θιβομένως ἐπηρκεσθαι, εἰ παντί ἐργῷ ἀγαθῷ ἐπηκολούθησαι.

(11) νεωτέρας δὲ χῆρὰς παραίτου;

(12) ὅταν γὰρ καταστρημάζοσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, γαμεῖν θέλουσιν ἐξορισάς κρίμα ὧν τὴν πρῶτην πίστιν ἤλειπον;

(13) αἰμα δὲ καὶ ἄργας μακάρονουσιν περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας,

(14) δὲ μόνους δὲ ἄργας ἄλλα καὶ φλύσα καὶ περίεργοι, λαλοῦσα τὰ μὴ δέοντα.

(15) Βούλομαι οὖν νεωτέρας γαμεῖν, τεκνογονεῖν, οἰκοδεσποτεῖν, μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδοῦν τῷ ἀντικείμενῳ λοιποῖς χαρίν;

(16) αἱ γὰρ τινες εξετρέπασιν ὁπίσω τοῦ Σατάνα.

(3) Honour widows who are real widows.

(4) And if some widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to perform their duty to their own household and to make a return to their parents (ancestors); for this is pleasing before God.

(5) But the real widow is alone hoping in God and continuing in entreaties and prayers night and day,

(6) but the one who lives luxuriously is dead while she is living.

(7) And command these things, so that they might be above reproach.

(8) And if someone does not provide for his or her own, and especially members of a household, s/he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

(9) Let a widow who is not less than sixty years old, the wife of one husband and bearing witness in noble works be enlisted,

(10) if she has raised children, if she has shown hospitality, if she has washed the feet of the saints, if she has assisted those who are afflicted, if she has pursued every good work.

(11) But intercede for the younger widows;

(12) for when they live sensually against Christ, they want to marry, having incurred judgment because they rejected their first faith;

(13) but also at the same time, they are learning to go around households, and (they are) not only idle but also foolish and meddlesome, saying things that are not necessary.

(14) Therefore, I wish young women to marry, to bear children, to manage a household, to give to the opponent no occasion for reproach;

(15) for already some have turned away after Satan.

(16) If any believing woman has widows, let her aid them and do not let the church be burdened, in order that it might aid the real widows.
There is no grammatical transition between 5:2 and 5:3, but the author’s discussion about widows continues the theme of age categories and age hierarchy. As in 5:1, “Paul” begins the section using an imperative to express what “Timothy” should do: χήρας τίμα τὰς ὀντὼς χήρας (honour widows who are really widows; 5:3). Unlike 5:2, the directive does not imply anything about Timothy’s age. A grammatical shift occurs in 5:4. The author’s focus moves away from his fictive narrative (indicated by using singular imperatives) to discussing the situation in third person: εἰ δὲ τις χήρα τέκνα ἡ ἐκγονα ἔχει μονθανέτωσαν (and if some widow has children or grandchildren let them learn).  

2.1. The problem with widows

The author overtly presents what he considers two main problems related to widows in 1 Tim 5:3-16, one financial and the other behavioural. Before I explore these perceived problems, it is worth considering whether these are actual problems, whether they are part of the fiction of the letter, or whether there is mix of real and fictional elements. In other words, since the author constructed other elements of the letter, might he have constructed these problems for rhetorical reasons? Although the rhetoric is fairly consistent with the author’s fictional portrayal of Paul’s words to Timothy, the detailed, lengthy and rather perplexing descriptions and emphatic directives suggest that at least some of the problems are more real than constructed. If the rhetoric served only to regulate the general behaviour of women in the author’s day, many of whom would be widows (see Chapter 5), this section might have been much more straightforward. Instead, the section involves a complex array of social relationships and categories of women, implying a real underlying problematic situation involving widows. The

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341 Although the author does not abandon his fictional narrative in 1 Tim 5:3-16 (second person imperatives occur in 5:7, 5:11, and the first person indicative occurs in 5:14), the shift suggests that he may have in mind a specific situation that the real audience was experiencing rather than a general set of instructions. This is difficult to determine in this section, however, since the author’s conservative stance would fit well with the instructions for family to care for one another. On the other hand, as the section progresses, conceiving of a specific situation better explains the cryptic nature of some of the text.
author’s perception and proposed solutions to the underlying situations are idiosyncratic, to be sure, reflecting his own conservative stance and perspective. Nevertheless, however inaccessible the real situation behind his descriptions and suggestions might be, this section reflects situations the author himself was trying to alter through Paul’s authority. He weaves his conservative ideas with Paul’s fictional response to the situation.

Ostensibly, the first problem is that the church was “burdened” with its support for widows (5:16). “Paul’s” solution was twofold: have widows’ families care for them as an expression of proper filial duty (5:4, 8), and have any believing woman who “has widows” support them (5:16).

The second problem was connected to the first, but probably better reflects the problem the real author had encountered. Some widows were behaving dishonourably (5:6, 13, 15), which was affecting the community’s reputation with outsiders (5:14) and compromising the honour of the group (MacDonald 1996:157-60). The author suggests that younger widows, who were both compromising the community’s honour and burdening the community, should marry (5:14). They would then be taken care of by their husbands (solving the first problem), and kept busy with childbearing, childrearing and domestic duties (solving the second problem). These elements of “Paul’s” directives are fairly clear, but as we consider the real audience, a number of the other details are more difficult to explain.

In several early Christian texts, widows were defined less by their need for financial assistance, and more by their reputation and moral behaviour. For example, Polycarp instructs the elders not to neglect the widow, orphan or poor (6.1), but suggests they should be taught to be self-controlled (σεφρονέω) with respect to faith in the Lord, to pray without ceasing for everyone, and to be distant from all libel, slander, false witness, love of money, and all evil, knowing that they are God’s altar and that each offering is inspected for a blemish and that nothing escapes his notice, whether thoughts, ideas, or any of the things hidden in the heart. (4.3)
The list of vices to avoid might suggest that widows were prone to such actions. However, given the stereotypical nature of the vices and the focus on their reputation as “God’s altar,” it is more likely that they were prone to be viewed with suspicion (cf. Chapter 5, §4.2). They have a liminal status since they are not virgins, but not married women either. Polycarp’s mention of widows has more to do with their reputation than with their need.

Likewise, the widows in 1 Tim 5 are mentioned by the author not because of their need or because of establishing parameters for an office, but because of their role in the reputation of the community. Thus, the idea that church is financially overburdened by widows is probably a red herring, reflecting the construction of author’s rhetoric to deal with the real situation of problematic behaviour that was affecting the community’s reputation.

2.2. Categories of widows

There are at least four categories of widows in 5:3-16. They are:

1. real widows (τὰς ἀνεμώσ τὴν χήρας) who are without family (5:3, 5, 16)
2. widows with family (5:4, 8)
3. exemplary old widows (5:9-10), who also fit into category (1) or (2)
4. “younger” widows (5:11-15), who should remarry (5:14)

The author specifies that the church was to assist the “real widows” (5:16), but not be burdened with other widows who had other choices, namely the widows with family to care for them (5:4, 8), and the younger widows who can and should remarry (5:14).  

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342 The real widows are not equivalent to the 60+ widows (see Chapter 10, §4.2).

343 Horrell acknowledges the standard interpretation implies that “very large numbers of widows” would not be considered a “genuine widow” (2008:118-19). He concludes that there were two categories of widow following “two patterns of sanctioned cultural practice.” First, a “genuine,” enrolled widow (as defined by 5:9-10 in Horrell’s assessment) was old and qualified for support from her fictive household (the church). Second, the remaining widows “should be reintegrated into actual households, whether this involves their children and grandchildren showing the appropriate care to member of their ὀικος (v. 4) or their integration into a new household through marriage (v. 14)” (2008:124). While it is concise, this interpretation does not seriously account for age or demographics, nor for widows who do not fit into these categories (e.g., a widow under sixty with no children).
As noted above (§2.1), The author of 1 Timothy writes as if the church was burdened with supporting widows, and wants to reduce the burden so that only “real widows” received support from the church (5:16). Given the fictional nature of the letter, we may question whether this is a reflection of social reality, or whether the author is employing a rhetorical device (perhaps an exaggeration of social reality) that allows him to emphasize the significance of familial piety. The author’s proposed solutions to the problem (as above) suggest the latter. The author intimates that some adult children (and grandchildren; 5:4) along with believing women (5:16) were responsible to support widows associated with them, but were derelict in their duties. The real problem seems to be the behaviour of members of the community who are shirking their responsibility to support widows (who are not “real widows”).

The author makes two separate statements about family members who were not properly supporting widows:

εἰ δὲ τις χήρα τέκνα ἡ ἐκγονα ἔχει, μανθανέτωσον πρῶτον τον ἵδιον δίκου εὐσεβείν καὶ ἀμοίβας ἀποδίδοναι τοῖς προγόνοις. τούτῳ γάρ ἐστιν ἀποδεκτὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

And if some widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to perform their duty to their own household and to make a return to their parents (ancestors); for this is pleasing before God. (5:4)

εἰ δὲ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, τῇ πίστιν ἤρνηται καὶ ἐστιν ἀπίστοιχος.

And if someone does not provide for his or her own, and especially members of a household, he or she has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (5:8)

The author emphasizes that children and grandchildren were obligated to support the older widows who were their own blood relations. As I argue in Chapter 8, the author expected members of the “household of God” to behave properly in their familial roles in their own households (cf. 1 Tim 3:4). His emphasis on this proper behaviour here implies that adult

344 In this chapter I focus on the adult children, and in Chapter 11 I focus on the believing woman.
children in the community were neglecting this duty. The deference due to one’s elders (5:1) was an ideal the author wanted his audience to strive for. However, in this text, given the specificity of the instruction (“make a return to their parents,” 5:4) as well as shaming language (“he or she has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever,” 5:8), the author indicates that some people were failing to perform normal duties; they were behaving in culturally inappropriate ways.

2.3. Age of widows

The widows with family in 1 Tim 5:4 were probably meant to be older women. They had to be old enough to have adult children and/or grandchildren that were capable of providing for them, and were probably “permanent” widows—they would not remarry. If a non-elite woman became a mother sometime around age 20 (give or take a couple of years)\textsuperscript{345} and continued to have babies until her late 30s (Frier 1994:324), she would be in her mid-30s to late 50s when her sons reached an age of some adult responsibility (between the ages of 14 and 18). Her daughters would also marry around 20 years of age, when she would be between 40 and 60 years old. A woman could become a grandmother in her late 30s, but probably not a paternal grandmother until 50 or so (if a first-born son married and had a child at about 30). Her grandchildren would not be able to provide for her until she was in her mid-50s, at the youngest (assuming her daughter’s children might take such a responsibility), but more likely mid-60s.\textsuperscript{346} Therefore, based on waning childbearing capability and the age at which a woman would have grown

\textsuperscript{345} Saller concludes from inscriptions in the Western Roman Empire that non-elite women married at about age 20 (1994: 37; Appendix 2). There is no compelling reason to think that his findings would not be applicable to the East, such as in Asia Minor, so I adopt his figure here.

\textsuperscript{346} Saller’s simulation of the kin universe is not useful for envisioning these age ranges because it is based on average ages. For instance, at age 40, a non-elite woman’s children would, on average, be 12.7 years old. This tells us nothing about the number of children she might have, nor about the range of ages they might be (potentially 0 to 20 years old, or even older if she married before age 20).
children and/or grandchildren, we would expect these widows would be close to 40 years old and older. Some widows who were over 60 (5:9) would be in this category.

According to Saller’s simulation about half of all 20 year olds would have a living father, and about two-thirds would have a living mother. About a quarter (22-24%) of adults at age 20 would have a living grandparent, usually a grandmother. At age 30, about a quarter of people would still have a living father, just under half would have a living mother, and 5-6% might have a living grandparent. At age 40, less than one-tenth of people would have a living father, about a quarter still had a living mother, but less that 1% would have a living grandparent. By the age of 50, only about 10% of people still have a living mother; only 1% had a living father (see Table 5). The simulation also indicates that mothers and maternal grandmothers would have been involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren longer than fathers and other grandparents were. In sum, few people had living grandparents into their 20s and 30s, and the majority of people experienced their parents’ deaths in this time of their lives.

**Table 5: Proportion of non-elite men and women with living parents and grandparents**
(based on Saller 1994:49, 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>Exact age of ego (years)</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal Grandfather</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal Grandmother</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Grandfather</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Grandmother</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* figures of .00 indicate less than .01.
2.4. Responsibility for widows

In 5:4, the widow is a passive figure; if she has children or grandchildren (literally, “descendants”), they are responsible for her (rather than the community, 5:16). Grammatically, the subject of the sentence shifts from the widow (singular: if some widow has, \(\epsilon i \tau i \varsigma \chi iρ\alpha \varepsilon χ\varepsilon\)) to the children and grandchildren (plural): let them learn (\(\mu ανθανέτωσαν\)) first to perform their duty to their own household and to make a return to their parents (\(\pi ρογόνοι\))” (5:4).

The term \(\pi ρογόνοι\) means forebearers, and can refer to parents, grandparents or ancestors. Even though the specific situation in this text is widows who are in need of support, the author’s exhortation is based on a general notion of duty to parents and grandparents. Hierocles notes that children secured not only their parents’ care, but also their grandparents’ care in old age:

We should consider that in children we not only beget for ourselves helpers, persons who will take care of us in our old age, and who will share with us in every fortune and circumstance; we beget them not only on our own behalf, but in many ways also for our parents. For the procreation of children pleases them since, if we should suffer some calamity before they die we would leave them someone to take care of them in their old age. (24.14; translation in Malherbe 1986:103).

In practice, adult children would more often be required to support their mothers and grandmothers than their fathers and grandfathers. Parkin argues that, unlike the realities of the modern developed world, where women live an average of six years longer than men, it is unlikely that women outlived men in the ancient world (1992:102-5). However, mothers were typically five to ten years younger than fathers upon first marriage, so a person’s could expect his or her father to die before his or her mother. In addition, a man was more likely to remarry into his old age if he was widowed or divorced, and often married a younger woman who would outlive him (Harlow and Laurence 2002:97-98; e.g., Quintilian Institutes of Oratory 6.1-8).

\[347\] Therefore, when the ancient sources discuss care for parents, they probably imply grandparents as well.
The verb ἀποδίδωμι means to “recompense” or “make a return,” and carries a sense of obligation, duty and reciprocity (BDAG). The addition of the noun ἀμοιβᾶς, which also carries the meaning of a “recompense” or “return,” emphasizes the reciprocal nature of caring for aging parents. The use of τοῖς προγόνοις (to one’s ancestors) reflects a larger cultural ideal. In other words, this is not an idiosyncratic notion of the author.

On the one hand, the functionally “old-old” would require physical care in their last stage of life—a “return” that may resemble the care the parent gave the child in infancy (Hierocles On Duties 4.25.53; see §3.1). On the other hand, those who were “young-old” deserved recompense, albeit in the form of deference, and perhaps financial support. Women who were chronologically 40-50 years old were probably in the prime of their lives. According to anthropologist Judith K. Brown, “middle-aged women (matrons) are women who have adult offspring and who are not yet frail or dependent” (1992:18). They are no longer restricted in the way they were as younger women. They have fewer domestic responsibilities. They are no longer required to pay deference to the senior generation because they have become the “senior generation.” They have power over younger female kin (1992:18-20). This range of “older” parents according to functional age should be kept in mind.

3. Cultural context of filial duty

Since the topic of filial duty in 1 Tim 5:4 and 5:8 reflects an intergenerational problem, it is important to examine the cultural context of filial duty in light of age structure, demography, and proper behaviour toward parents in the ancient Mediterranean. As in the modern Mediterranean, duty toward parents, especially supporting one’s parents as they aged, was a cultural and social expectation. It was an important expression of proper behaviour, based on εὐσέβεια, or pietas.
3.1. Filial duty as reciprocity

Most people relied on their adult children to care for them as they aged, especially among the non-elite (Parkin 2003:221).\(^{348}\) It was a social expectation and common moral teaching that adult children would care for and support their elderly parents (e.g., Seneca *Consolation to Marcia* 1.1-2).\(^{349}\) Cicero, for example, thought a person’s duty (*officium*) to parents was crucial, coming only after following one’s duty to gods and country. Duty to dependents, namely children, the whole family (*domus*), and kin, were lower on the list (*On Moral Duties* 1.45.160; cf. 1.17.58). Similarly, the second century Stoic philosopher Hierocles stated: “After discussing the gods and the fatherland, what person should be mentioned before our parents?” (*On Duties* 4.25.53; translated by Malherbe 1986:91).

For both Cicero and Hierocles, children were obligated to care for their parents as an act of reciprocity. It is a kind of repayment for their parents’ care in earlier life, but a repayment that would never match the debt that children owe their parents for bearing and rearing them. For Cicero, parents’ “services have laid us under the heaviest obligation” (*On Moral Duties* 1.17.58). Hierocles states: “our gratitude to them is perpetual and unyielding eagerness to repay their beneficence, since, even if we were to do a great deal for them, that would still be far too inadequate.” He goes so far as to say that children’s actions are not even their own, but really an extension of their parents’. They are “the images of the gods” as well as “benefactors, kinsmen, creditors, lords and the finest of friends” (*On Duties* 4.25.53; Malherbe 1986:91; cf. Aristotle *The Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12.5). Similarly, Philo states that the “duty of honouring parents…stands on the border-line between the human and the divine,” suggesting that parents are like

\(^{348}\) For a discussion of children’s duty to parents in ancient Roman culture, see Parkin 2003:205-16. Parkin discusses the scope of children’s responsibilities, the lack of Roman laws regarding filial duty, and the limits of *patria potestas* for other elderly members of the family.

\(^{349}\) Osiek and Balch note: “Many couples in the Greco-Roman world wanted a child as an heir and one to care for them in old age” (1997:64). More accurately, they wanted a son, though a daughter might also support them. The *Digest* describes a woman living with her husband, children, freedpersons and parents (7.8.6).
God in that they have produced children, and children are obligated to honour them (Special Laws 2.225). A similar sentiment was expressed centuries before by Aristotle: “It would be felt that our parents have the first claim on us for maintenance, since we owe it to them as a debt, and to support the authors of our being stands before self-preservation in moral nobility. Honour (τιμή) is also due to parents, as it is to the gods…” (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 9.2.8).350

We might think of filial duty being particularly important in old age, when a parent is old-old and in need of physical care.351 However, filial support was expected before decrepit old age. In his Controversies, Seneca the Elder indicates that filial support can mean to give food to a parent in a time of need.352 In the so-called Laudatio Turiae inscription, the woman’s filial piety (pietas) was demonstrated in avenging her parents’ murders (1.4-9). In P. Mich. 322 (see Chapter 4), it appears that the father at age 69 and mother at age 60 were still functioning members of the family, evidenced by the forging of the document for the division of property. Their children were asked to provide them with wheat, oil and cash for expenses and clothing on a monthly basis, to take care of any private or public debts their parents incurred, and to provide

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351 Old age was a time of anxiety and vulnerability for elite and non-elite alike. As with old age everywhere, health and physical frailty were concerns. Pliny praises the healthy and active senator Spurinna, who was 76 (Letters 3.1), and bemoans the plight of Domitius Tullus, a wealthy man who physically deteriorated in his old age so that servants had to feed him and clean his teeth (Letters 8.18). In Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus is blind, led around by his daughters, exiled and poor, but still feisty and courageous. Seneca described an old slave as decrepit, toothless and corpse-like, only to faced with the fact that he and this man were playmates. The hard life of a slave may have aged the man faster, but Seneca admits his visit to the old estate made him face his own old age (Letters 12; Gardner and Wiedemann 1991:95-96). Slaves may have been particularly vulnerable in old age, especially if they could no longer do any useful work. Cato the Elder thought old slaves should be sold along with old oxen and old tools, and other superfluous items (On Agriculture 2.7; cf. Martial, Epigrams 11.70). Claudius made it illegal to kill an old or sick slave. Under Domitian, when slaves attained a certain age, they would be manumitted. Normally, a freed man or woman would continue to be indebted to his or her master for life, fulfilling a role as client (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:87). See Parkin 2003:402, n.207 for further references on slaves and old age. Cf. Leviticus 27:1-8 where slaves who are over sixty are monetarily worth less than younger slaves.
352 Seneca states liberi parentes alant aut vinciantur (“children must support their parents or be imprisoned”; Controversies 1.1, 1.7). The verb alo can mean to nourish, sustain or support, and in the first of the Controversies clearly means to feed, that is, to provide food (1.1.16-20).
an appropriate funeral when they died. The duty toward parents that involved material support would have been especially important for the non-elite.

Hierocles equates physical care of parents in old age with the care they gave to their children when they were infants: plenty of food suitable for old age, bed, sleep, healing salves, baths, clothing, and thinking ahead to what they need even before they ask for it (On Duties 4.25.53; Malherbe 1986:92). This seems to be the sense of the verb προνοεῖω in 1 Tim 5:8 (“if someone does not provide [προνοεῖ] for his or her own”).353

Hierocles also explains that children should pay close attention to their parents’ emotional and social needs (“soul”). Children should spend time with their parents especially as they near the end of their lives, “performing seemingly servile duties such as washing their feet, making their beds and standing ready to wait on them.” This attention would be especially well received from their own children (On Duties 4.25.53; translation in Malherbe 1986:92-93).354 However idealized Hierocles’ description might be, such attentiveness was not meant solely for the benefit of the aged parent. In a society where honour based on reputation was a pivotal value, such attentiveness toward one’s aged parent would be recognized as honourable behaviour, while neglect was dishonourable. Since no Roman laws existed to enforce filial duty, and a woman usually possessed none of the financial leverage of a paterfamilias, the obligation to care for widowed mothers and grandmothers probably rested on pietas (Parkin 2003:215-16).

In sum, children’s obligation of repayment to their parents was a binding cultural value. Adult children in the ancient Mediterranean would expect to care for their parents just as they

353 It means to care for with a sense of forethought: “to think about beforehand in a solicitous manner” (BDAG).
354 Filial duty may have held other perceived rewards. Sirach 3:12-16 states that helping one’s parents, not grieving them, being patient with them, is serves as “credit” for one’s sins.
would expect care from their children when they aged. This was, of course, part of the
generational cycle.

3.2. Residential patterns of adult children and parents

The evidence presented thus far suggests that parents of adult children retained important
roles in their children’s lives. Carter assumes that parent-child relationships continued into the
children’s adult life in multi-generational households (2001:45), but current scholarship on
family structure does not make this depiction clear.

Some recent reconstructions of the Roman family emphasize the importance of the
nuclear family (a husband and wife with dependent children) as the core of the household (e.g.,
Saller 1994:96). Saller and Shaw argue on the basis of tombstone inscriptions that extended
family arrangements would be rare. First, based on model life tables, not many young men
would have a living paternal grandfather because of short life expectancy and men married
relatively late (see Appendix 1). Second, the extremely low instances of paternal grandfathers
involved in commemorations (0-0.7%) compared to the numbers that would have been alive (3-
4%) suggests to them that they were not immediately involved in their grandchildren’s lives;
that is, they did not constitute three-generation households of a patriarchal type (with several
brothers and their families in one household) (1984:136-37). They conclude:

Though on the narrowest view these tombstone inscriptions tell us only who fulfilled the
duty of providing a memorial to the deceased, there are strong reasons for believing that
fulfilment of this duty was closely related to transmission of property, to a sense of
familial duty and feelings of affection. Consequently, we believe that the emphasis in the
funerary inscriptions on the nuclear family and the rarity of more distant kin offer a vital
counterweight to linguistic and legal evidence which highlights the extended family,

The nuclear family moved through the life course, so that individual roles shifted as children
grew up and parents grew older. As children reached adulthood, marrying and/or moving away
from their natal household, they retained emotional and financial ties to their parents. The
centrality of this relationship, which is so clearly in view in the inscriptions studied by Saller and Shaw, was not obliterated by the next stage of life. An aging parent would probably reside with one of their adult children when she or he was no longer able to care for her or himself (Bradley 1991:9-10).355

The evidence from Egyptian census returns corroborates the centrality of the nuclear family, but also demonstrates that elderly parents often did live with their adult children, at least temporarily. Indeed, few households contained three generations with a grandfather as paterfamilias as head. Bagnall and Frier calculate that 43% of households contained the conjugal family. However, in general, these were not young couples, but families with the husband in his mid-forties and the wife in her mid-thirties. They suspect these households were probably formed after the husbands’ parents’ death. Fifteen percent of households included a spouse’s parent (most often the husband’s), or other related kin. In 21% of households there was more than one co-resident conjugal family, most often two generations living together, but also a good number of brothers with their families living together. Sixteen percent of households were considered “solitary”; that is, a person lived alone or with lodgers or slaves, but without kin. These were usually men, often at an advanced age. Finally, 5% of households had multiple persons co-residing with no conjugal family (usually unmarried siblings). In general, in the urban setting, the conjugal family played a larger role than more complex families (Bagnall and Frier 1994: 59-74).

355 Bradley points out that current emphasis on “nuclear family” in Roman society, especially in comparison with the modern Western nuclear family, is problematic for several reasons. First, marriage was not based on equality, romance, or choice; it was arranged. The couple was expected to strive for concord, but public image was most important. As we saw in modern traditional Mediterranean cultures, marriages mark an important bond between two families who otherwise compete for honour. Second, the household was not a private space, but multifunctional (i.e., social, economic and political). It was the place in which the family displayed and acquired status. Third, even though multigenerational families are rare in the extant sources, aging parents must have been part of households (1991:6-10).
Bradley describes the family as “a constantly changing entity, the nature of which depends on the individual’s point of progress through the life course” (1991:4; cf. Harlow and Laurence 2002: 23, 31-33). Bagnall and Frier’s sample represents a snapshot of one moment in the life cycle of these families. Their composition would shift over time. The importance of the conjugal unit over time is evident, but so is the continued bond of parent and child. Saller and Shaw are most concerned with elucidating the limited power of the paterfamilias in Roman society, for few would survive to be grandfathers. However, according to Bagnall and Frier’s evidence, perhaps close to a quarter of households had an adult child’s parent or parents co-resident. Parkin argues that inevitably elderly kin would reside in the family home, especially among the lower class. They might have contributed to the family by looking after small children (Parkin 1997:134). If the parent was quite old or ill, this arrangement would not last for long. When the elderly parent passed away, the conjugal unit would remain (the family type that makes up the majority of households as found in Bagnall and Frier; 1994:57-60).

Some legal and literary evidence also demonstrates that aging parents probably did live with their adult children. This is implied in the Digest when it specifies that a woman with the right to live in a house can live with her father-in-law (provided her husband is there, too), as well as her parents, children, slaves and freedmen (7.8.4-6; cf. Bradley 1991:10). In the story of Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law, she is likely a resident of the home since she got up to serve them (Mark 1:29-31, Mat 8:14-15, Luke 4:38-39). In his description of how parents are like the gods, Hierocles is quite clear that parents resided with their adult children. He notes parents “guard our homes and live with us and are, furthermore, our greatest benefactors… we should acknowledge that we live in our father’s house as if we were attendants and priests of a

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356 Since this was not a question that Bagnall and Frier pursued, this approximation is based on 15% of households that had a parent or kin co-residing (assuming this represents mostly parents), added to the number of households with multiple families that included two generations (a little more than half of 21%; 1994:60).
sort of temple, appointed and consecrated by nature itself, and entrusted with our parents’ care.”

He goes on to say that in caring for their souls, “we should first afford them cheerfulness, which will especially be produced if nothing prevents us, by associating with them night and day, and as we walk, are anointed, and live with them” (On Duties 4.25.53; Malherbe 1983:91; emphasis added). In the so-called Laudatio Turiae inscription, the woman’s husband praises her familiae pietate (devotion to family), which included her virtuous behaviour and her diligent care for her mother-in-law (1.30-36). The fact that she moved in with her mother-in-law before her husband-to-be was back from abroad suggests that the couple may have lived with her when married as well.  

3.3. The vulnerability of old age

Romans dreaded the possibility of old age and poverty, even the elite (Cicero On Old Age 5.14; Parkin 1997:137, also n.53; Parkin 2003:224). Cicero’s only comment about aging and the non-elite highlights poverty: “an old age of extreme poverty cannot be tolerable even for a wise man, nor can it fail to be burdensome, even amidst the greatest wealth, for a fool” (On Old Age 3.8). Some elderly non-elite put cash aside as a “nest-egg” (peculium) (Digest 32.79.1), and some patrons left legacies (property to use for the remainder of their lives) for their dependents, such as freedmen or servants (Digest 33.2.33). Pliny granted a farm to his old nurse

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357 In some traditional Mediterranean cultures, married sons remain in their father’s household until he dies, then the brothers split into separate households (e.g., Stirling 1965:101-5). Where neolocal marriage is the norm, the newly married couple forms a new household. However, over the long-term, households shift in composition as the family members grow up, marry, raise children and grow old. There may be three generations in a household at certain times, depending on wealth and status and the life stages of family members. For instance, an elderly, ailing parent may reside with one of their adult children for a time (Seddon 1976:178-79). In David Seddon’s study of a Moroccan village, typical households are composed of a married couple with their unmarried children, but a few have three generations living together. In a sample of sixteen households, two had several brothers and their wives with unmarried children and an old mother, and four households were composed of an older married couple with at least one married son and his wife with their children. In a second sample, of twenty-six households, five had an old mother residing with the family (one of which had four brothers and their families living together), one had a married couple living with a married son and his wife, and two had a man with two wives. The latter were presumably older men, which may demonstrate that old widows move in with their adult sons, but old widowers remarry (1976:180). The Greek island of Nisos serves as an alternative example where a sick elderly person was cared for in her or his own home. There are no joint or extended households (Kenna 1976:348). This kind of set-up seems rare, and does not fit the ancient Roman data.
(Letters 6.3; cf. Gardner and Wiedemann 1991:92-94). But “the majority of the population did not have the luxury to do anything other than to work until they dropped” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:117). One of the most vulnerable parts of growing old as a non-elite person in the Roman Empire must have been not knowing if your children (or grandchildren) would survive to care for you in old age. An old person buried many of her or his loved ones, including parents, siblings, friends, spouse and especially children. Juvenal grimly describes the fate of an old man:

And though the powers of his mind be strong as ever, yet must he carry forth his sons to burial; he must behold the funeral pyres of his beloved wife and his brothers, and urns filled with the ashes of his sisters. Such are the penalties of the long liver: he sees calamity after calamity befall his house, he lives in a world of sorrow, he grows old amid continual lamentation and in the garb of woe. (Satire 10)

The emotional toll on women would be similar; for example, Seneca tries to comfort Marcia after the death of her son (Consolation to Marcia).358 For the poorer non-elite, the loss of children, both sons and daughters (Parkin 1992:102), would have meant a loss of material security (Parkin 1992:184, n.56).359

The fewer children a person had, the more vulnerable she or he would be. The loss of a child would be especially poignant if a person had no other children left to take care of him or

358 Cicero wrote his work On Old Age while mourning his daughter’s death. Judith de Luce suggests that his rather positive treatise on old age was in fact protesting too much; he saw how much old age did look like traditional literary representations (1993a). In the third century CE, the father of the young Christian martyr, Perpetua, appealed to his old age, indicating that her choice to be martyred would bring shame on the family. He also had great affection for her as his daughter, reminding her that he favoured her even above her brothers (5-6). The governor even appealed to Perpetua’s father’s “grey head” (and infant son), requesting that she renounce her decision to die (6). When she recounted her father’s last visit, tearing out beard hairs in sorrow, Perpetua wrote “I felt sorry for his unhappy old age” (9; translation in Kraemer 1988:99-101). While Perpetua chose to die and bring shame on her family, and though her father had other children to care for him in old age, he was still terribly distressed over her death.

359 From his study of epitaphs, Richmond Lattimore ascertains that the ancient Greeks and Romans greatly lamented the death of children. He argues, “it was in a way indecent for the elder to outlive the younger… and it threatened or broke the continuity of the family and its cult” (1962:191). However, as Hanne Sigismund-Neilsen’s study of epitaphs in CIL VI attempts to show, the economic loss of a child would be part of the grief of a parent (or master or patron, in the case of slave children). “Loss of profit will have played at least as important a rôle as the loss of the pleasure of the child had given to parents or patrons while alive” (2007:54). For examples from Greek literature on the death of a son and the grief of being left without care in old age see de Luce 1993b:43.
her. Quintilian recounts the story of a man who lost his young wife (at the age of nineteen, just after childbirth). Four years later, his younger son died. He put his hope in his surviving son as his heir and comfort in old age, but he also died, leaving the aging man alone and grief-stricken (6.1-8). Luke recounts a story of a widow whose only son, a young man (νεανίσκος), had just died (7:11-17). In the midst of the large crowd that had gathered to mourn with the widow (7:12), Jesus had compassion for her and raised her son from the dead. He then “gave him to his mother” (7:15). Luke highlights how important it was for the widowed mother, who had no one else to care for her, to have her son back. The text assumes the cultural expectation that the son would care for his mother.

If an old person had no children, she or he “was dependent primarily on the initiative they themselves showed and the authority they possessed” (Parkin 2003:217). Older men may have found care through a younger wife. Older women tended not to remarry (see Chapter 5, §3.2).

Failing the presence of children and spouse, there might be kin or neighbours willing to help an older person. No state care or public charities for the elderly were available (until later Christian times), nor was the public care of the elderly as such a great concern for the ancient Romans; it was a private affair (Parkin 2003:216-19, 225). Someone who was utterly poor in

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360 For example, Pliny praises his young wife for her devotion to him, especially in her encouragement of his writing as he grew old: “For it is not my youth or my person, which time gradually impairs; it is my glory of which she is enamoured” (Letters 4.19).

361 The gerusia, or associations for mature men, were apparently common in the Greek cities of the Roman period, though we only have evidence in papyri that were preserved from Alexandria and Oxyrhynchus. They may have been public associations with religious functions, or social organizations with no official or public function. Either way, people made application to join, and to receive benefits, namely to be maintained at the public expense (e.g., P.Oxy. 3099, 3101). However, the minimum age required is unknown (mid-fifties perhaps), and financial support appears to have been based on proof of social status based on birth rather than financial need (El-Abbadi 1964:168; Parkin 2003:171-72).
old age might become a beggar (2003:224-25), but relief would only come with death.\footnote{\textsuperscript{362} “Someone who is older and has already given up all hope because of his bodily weakness and poverty looks forward to nothing except the last day of his life” (Hermas Visions 20.2).}

Poverty in old age in the ancient world would be devastating:

If moreover poverty happened to befall a man (ὑπὸρέπα) when he had become old, he would himself pray to be free totally from life: this is because of his deprivation in all respects, not having anyone to guide him, nor a source of support, not having adequate clothing, and lacking shelter and food. There are times when he does not have anyone to draw even some water for him. (Juncus; Stobaeus 50.2.85; translated by Parkin 2003:225)

We can assume a similar situation would befall a woman with no means of support.

Widows who were “permanent widows” were probably older women (Bremmer 1995:31). If they did not have children to support them, and/or had little of their own material wealth, they had few options. Women could honourably labour as wool workers, occasional harvesters and nurses for young children in wealthier families (or wet-nurses for younger women; Bremmer 1987:196-97, 200). Older women may be midwives or sell products in public since they had more freedom of movement in the public realm (1987:197). Otherwise, an old widow with no children to care for her would have a difficult time supplying her basic needs.\footnote{\textsuperscript{363} Bremmer notes that in the ancient Near East, women could generally inherit, but not in Hebrew Law where women, especially widows, were not highly regarded (1995:32). He argues that when the HB advocates for widows, it “strongly suggests that human care was rather deficient,” which was probably similar in the time of Jesus (1995:31-32).}

In sum, an older widow’s best option was the support of a child, who was obligated through a sense of pietas or εὐσεβεία to reciprocate the care they received growing up.\footnote{\textsuperscript{364} The term εὐσεβεία (and its cognates), the Greek equivalent of pietas, relates to proper behaviour. In 1 Timothy it is frequently translated as “godliness” (e.g., NRSV), but this does not capture well the idea of fulfilling one’s obligations, especially the duty one has toward God (or the gods, if one was a polytheist), to country, to parents, to children and to kin (see below).}
4. Motivations for filial duty

Harlow and Laurence summarize: “Old age had never brought guaranteed respect or right to position, but the Roman virtue of pietas enshrined the idea of respect for one’s parents and an obligation to look after them in their old age in return for the care they had shown already” (2002:119). The obligation of filial duty was effective because it was a cultural norm, but there were several factors that solidified this norm.

4.1. Patria potestas and inheritance as security in old age

In ancient Greece, there were laws to regulate filial support. For the Romans, there was no such law. Filial duty was considered natural and moral, but Saller argues that, among the elite, it was probably also driven by the power of the paterfamilias and the lure of inheritance.

The father of an elite household held patria potestas, or paternal power, over his dependents, including children. This was a legal, social and financial power. In theory, a father could threaten his child (and other members of the household under his authority) with violence or death for doing him a disservice. Reinhold describes the traditional scholarly view of patria potestas:

Above all loomed the total control over the younger generation inherent in the patria potestas. This unlimited power of the head of the family over the sons, which embodied the legal power of life and death and left the sons without economic and juridical personality, and which was not extinguished with adulthood, as it was in the Greek city-states when young men came of age (in Athens at eighteen), represented the most extreme form of parental control in the ancient world. (1970:363)

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365 In the Greek city-states, a law prescribed children’s obligations to provide food, lodging and burial to their parents. Solon introduced legislation in the early sixth century BCE specifying that new officials had to prove they fulfilled their filial duty, and those who did not were subject to penalty (Diogenes Laertius 1.55; Parkin 1997:126-27). Also a law at Delphi reads: “If anyone does not feed his father and mother, when this is reported to the council (bouλα [sic]), if the council shall find the person guilty, they shall bind him and conduct him to civic jail…” (Lerat 1943; translated by Reinhold 1970:352).

366 Philo states: “parents have also received authority (ἀρχὴ) over their offspring,” inferring the authority comes from God. “And therefore fathers have the right to upbraid (διὰ τούτ ἐξεστὶ τοῖς πατράσι καὶ κακηγορεῖν) their children and admonish them severely and if they do not submit to threats conveyed in words to beat and degrade them (τύπτειν καὶ ποτηλακίζειν) and put them in bonds. And further if in the face of this they continue to rebel, and carried away by their incorrigible depravity refuse the yoke, the law permits the parents to extend the punishment to death…” if both parents agree (Special Laws 2.231-32).
Saller successfully demonstrates that *patria potestas* was not the extremely oppressive power that it appears to be from the standpoint of legal rights. Social sanction, or “peer pressure,” kept tabs on a father’s right to chastise his son (1994:122-23). \(^{367}\) *Patria potestas* was limited by demographical realities since many children no longer had a living father by the time they were in their 20s and 30s.

The ancient economy was land-based, \(^{368}\) such that inheritance usually meant property handed down from generation to generation. \(^{369}\) For the propertied classes, land was a basic element of adult-child relationships because of inheritance. It may not have been a factor in everyday interaction, but it was important at transitional times in a person’s life, such as the dowry for a woman’s marriage, and inheritance when a parent died (if they were married *sine manu* mothers could bequeath property just as fathers could). For those sons who still had a living father, the inheritance could be a source of tension (Saller 1994:131), and a source of control for a father who could threaten to disinherit his son (Harlow and Laurence 2002:119). Parents may have encouraged their children to care for them with the power they had to disinherit them (Parkin 2003:210-11).

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\(^{367}\) Saller cites Pliny in a letter entitled “To Junior” as an example of social sanction. Pliny gives his friend strong moral advice not to be too hard on his son for misusing money, but consider his own moral weaknesses before passing harsh judgement (*Epistles* 9.12).

\(^{368}\) “Agriculture attended by its characteristic social stability ruled the economy” (MacMullen 1974:100).

\(^{369}\) Occasionally, a non-elite person might inherit significant wealth (*Hermas Visions* 20.2). In Lucian’s satire *Timon* (20-23), the god of commerce and the god of wealth converse on the topic of inheritance, sudden wealth when someone dies. Hermes states:

> I myself could name you plenty of men (*πολλοὺς*) who yesterday had not a copper to buy a rope with, but to-day are suddenly rich and wealthy (*πλουσίους καὶ πολυτελεῖσι*) , riding out behind a span of white horses when they never before owned so much as a donkey. In spite of that, they go about dressed in purple, with rings on their finger, themselves unable to believe, I fancy, that their wealth is not a dream. (20)

Though exaggerated, the conversation suggests that that sudden wealth bestowed on a relative or slave upon a wealthy person’s death was not unheard of (however rare it may have been). See MacMullen (1974:101-2; 190, n.38) for further references on sudden wealth through inheritance, marriage and legacy hunters. A propertied person with no heir might expect legacy hunters to abound; apparently freedmen were especially notorious for seeking inheritances through exploitation since they had no family honour or ancestral customs to abide by (MacMullen 1974:103).
Saller argues that the non-elite had very little leverage with their children to ensure care in their old age. He states: “ageing, propertyless parents were highly vulnerable and dependent in their children’s goodwill and their success in inculcating the virtue of pietas. Such parents are unlikely to have been in a position to insist on parental authority” (1994:126-27). Relatively few non-elite owned land. A poor old father with a small family farm had some leverage, since he could bequeath the farm to someone other than his son. On the other hand, he relied on his son’s labour, and “it is also possible that local custom in peasant communities granted fathers less discretion in testation than allowed by law, and correspondingly less social power” (Saller 1994:126). Saller suggests that a father did not have rights over his son’s income, giving non-elite young men “a certain independence by virtue of their income-earning capacity.”

Poorer fathers may have had even less leverage with their children if sons were forced to migrate to find work. For Saller, no family inheritance and no legal obligation to care for parents meant that parents had no real authority and were rather vulnerable (1994:126).

Saller’s paradigm is primarily economic, reflecting the nature of his sources, where the elite’s ability to bequeath wealth to their children was of crucial social and political significance. However, some non-elite fathers would have had economic leverage. In the cities, some non-elite fathers owned a house or shop. Sons probably apprenticed with their fathers in a trade or craft, or eventually took over an urban shop (MacMullen 1974:97-98; see Chapter 4).

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370 This is based on a legal ruling which states that in order to receive support from his father, a young tradesman must prove he is ill and thereby unable to support himself by his own labour (Digest 25.3.7).

371 Saller cites comparative evidence from Chinese peasant culture to suggest that poor old men would have little or no power over their adult sons (1994:126, n.103). While Mediterranean and Chinese cultures (broadly conceived) share some similarities with regard to filial piety, modern Mediterranean cultures serve as a better comparison.

372 “A man is obliged to teach his son a trade, and whoever does not teach his son a trade teaches him to become a robber” (Tosefta Kiddushin I, II [Z. p.336, line 7]; translated by Monefiore and Loewe 1938:444; cf. MacMullen 1974:97). This rabbinical statement is likely to reflect a similar sentiment among the other non-elite of the Roman world. MacMullen admits that “scholars can only be left to their general impression, based on no proper documentation, that a man usually took up whatever work his family handed down to him” (1974:98). MacMullen uses the common trade of carpentry practiced by Joseph and Jesus as an illustration of a father passing on a trade to a son (Mat 14:55, Mark 6:3; 1974:188, n.21).
cases, the father would still have power over his son if he wanted to bequeath the family trade or business. There would almost always be something tangible to pass on to children—furniture, clothes, a shop, tools of a trade, or even what is known in modern business as “goodwill.” Saller admits, “clearly many modest Romans—soldiers, smallholders, artisans—also had assets that they wished to transmit to their children under the protection of a guardian” (1994:192). In a trade or business, a father’s knowledge would also be a valuable asset to pass on to his sons.

If a non-elite person could bequeath his belongings, he could also disinherit. In 138 CE, a seventy-five year old widower named Kronion divided his property between two sons and a granddaughter—the offspring of his son (Kronion, junior) and daughter. He specifies his belongings as “furniture, implements, household goods, etc. and all debts owing to him and anything else of whatever kind.” His two daughters (including Kronion junior’s ex-wife) were to retain the gold, silver and clothes already in their possession (probably their dowries). To Kronion junior, the father bequeathed only forty drachmas of silver because he “has suffered many wrongs at his hands in the course of his life.” In essence, he publicly declares that he has disinherited his son for improper behaviour toward his father. Kronion senior specified that until he died, he would “have complete control of his affairs, to manage as he chooses” (P.Mil.Vgl. 84 = P. Kronion 50; translation in Lewis 1983:72). Unlike the couple in P. Mich. 322 (Chapter 4), Kronion had little trust in his children’s ability to care for him and his affairs.

373 For example, the tools of a trade might be included in a legacy: “When the question of the instrumentum of a butcher is raised, we set aside the meat and leave as instrumentum tables, weights, and tools prepared for cutting up meat, that is scales, knives and cleavers” (Digest 33.7.18). In a legacy of “stores,” “The instrumentum of a bakery and likewise all cooking vessels are not included in stores,” which suggests that a regular legacy would include the bakery and its tools (Digest 33.9.6). Other items commonly bequeathed include furniture (33.10), gold, silver, toilet equipment, jewellery, perfume, clothing, and statues (34.2), wool (32.70, 88), wheat, wine or oil (33.6), other food and drink in the form of “stores” (33.9), animals (32.65), birds (33.66), a shop, or two (33.3.1). The non-elite would be able to bequeath such items to their children or others as they wished.

374 Brother-sister marriage was common in Roman Egypt; see Hopkins 1980 and Bagnall and Frier 1994:127. Kronion’s granddaughter, who is a minor, might receive the large portion of inheritance as a dowry.
Even if a non-elite father could pass on little or no property, there were other forms of power and influence that were at his disposal to ensure care in old age. Though a mother might have some property to bequeath, she probably had even less economic leverage than a father. Although Saller mentions social sanction and *pietas*, he underestimates the power of honour and family obligation, social pressure and social sanction as leverage for elderly parents, as well as filial affection children felt toward their parents in Mediterranean culture.\(^{375}\) In other words, in addition to a sense of duty, affection and social sanction were elements of the parent-child relationship that ensured care for aging parents (as they are in the modern Mediterranean).

### 4.2. Affection for parents

The notion of *pietas* included “reciprocal affectionate duty” (Saller 1994:227).

Aristotle’s sentiments about affection for parents reflect the hierarchical nature of the parent-child relationship:

> The affection of children for their parents, like that of men for the gods, is the affection for what is good, and superior to oneself (ἀγαθόν καὶ ὑπερέχον); for their parents have bestowed on them the greatest benefits in being the cause of their existence and rearing, and later of their education. (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12.5)

Aristotle also notes the positive emotional and social relationship that can exist between parent and child:

> Also the friendship between parents and children affords a greater degree both of pleasure and of utility than that between persons unrelated to each other, inasmuch as they have more in common in their lives. (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12.5)

These ideas are echoed in the second century by Hierocles, who considers children friends, comrades, helpers and allies in all situations; they participate in their parents’ joy and offer

\(^{375}\) Saller does note that parents had significant affection for their children. He argues that while children are underrepresented in epitaphs, parents’ inscriptions for their children who died in their teens and early twenties are “overrepresented.” He suggests that “most of these parents must have been motivated by affection and duty, since the Roman legal system did not give children in their father’s *potestas* the capacity to own or bequeath property” (1994:99). Parents losing their children who were on the verge of adulthood would have been particularly devastating.

Natural affection of a child for her or his parent may take priority over obedience to authority (Saller 1994:110). In the first of his Controversies, Seneca the Elder details arguments for and against a man who was caught between his father and his uncle, brothers who did not get along. When the young man supported his uncle against his father’s wishes, his father disinherited him. He was adopted by the uncle, who became rich through an inheritance. Later, when the father was in need, the youth helped him against his uncle’s wishes, only to be disinherited by his uncle. One participant in the discussion names nature and duty as motivators in the young man’s actions: “Nature moved me, piety (pietas) moved me, and the mutability of human fortune, so clearly exemplified. Fortune seemed to stand before my eyes and say: ‘Those who do not support (alo) their own go hungry’” (1.1.16). This reveals the reciprocal nature of pietas, the notion that it is “natural,” and also the idea that whether or not a person fulfills his filial duty will affect his fate.376

The affectionate element of εὐσέβεια is also illustrated in a story told by Valerius Maximus. A woman was imprisoned for a capital crime. The jailor had pity on her and allowed her daughter to visit, but made sure she gave the old woman no food as he intended to starve her to death. After several days he wondered why she was not dying. He looked into the cell and saw the daughter nourishing her mother from her own breasts. When the jailor told the authorities, the sentence was dropped on account of the daughter’s extreme act of pietas. Valerius Maximus concludes: “This might be thought to be against Nature, if to love parents were not Nature’s first law” (Memorable Doings and Sayings 5.4.7; translation in Parkin and

376 In another of the Controversies regarding children’s obligation to care for their parents, a man who refuses to kill his mother when his father orders him to is said to have been weakened by natural pity (misericors natura, 1.7).
Pomeroy 2007:126-27). Pliny the Elder also recounts this story, noting that a temple dedicated to Pietas was built on the site where this act of pietas occurred (Natural History 7.121).  

In a first century letter from a soldier to his mother, the emotional connection between mother and son is evident:

If the gods wish it, whenever I find an opportune time to do it, I am coming to you with letters…Everybody who comes will testify to you how I am trying to come every day. If you want to see me a little, I want it a lot, and I pray to the gods every day that they soon give me an easy passage for coming. (P.Mich.III 203; translation in Rowlandson 1998:93-94)

Similarly, in a series of letters to his mother (in the late second century), a man named Sempronius becomes increasingly anxious to hear from his mother, wanting to know about her well-being. He addresses her as “mother and lady (kuria),” and consistently mentions he prays for her good health (P.Mich. XV 751-52). In a letter to his brother, Maximus, he lauds her “for we ought to honour as divine the lady who gave us birth, especially since she is so very good” (Sel. Pap. I 121.27-28). A similar bond between mother and son, as well as grandmother and grandson, may be implied in 2 Tim 1:5 where Timothy’s “sincere faith” mirrors the faith of his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice.

Affection would motivate children to provide support to their parents as they aged, perhaps especially for mothers, since for most children, their mother would outlive their father.  

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377 It also suggests that in Roman cities a married daughter (a lactating woman would have given birth, implying she was married) might normally have regular contact with her mother.

378 For example, about half of the male population had a living mother when they reached age 30 (46%), but only about a quarter (28%) had a living father (Saller 1994:52). In the modern Mediterranean, Campbell reports that an old Sarakatsan mother receives unconditional devotion and care from her children because of her love and sacrifice for them. “One cannot abandon an old mother because ‘she brought me into the world’ (me ephere sto kosmo)” (1964:164-65). Because of their ability to provide economically, sons supported their aging parents. Of course, in practice it was the daughter-in-law who probably did most of the physical care, like food preparation, clothes washing, personal care, and so on (Brandes 1995:17; cf. Campbell 1964:166; Lisón-Tolosana 1976:309). We might keep in mind that while son (and his wife) ideally cared for his parents, not all families had sons, and a daughter might be the only option. In an Iraqi village, Fernea observed that in a family with no sons, some daughters would marry, but there might not be enough wealth to provide dowries to all of the daughters. One might go to school to
4.3. Social sanction

Another motivation for filial piety was social sanction (Foner 1984:149-53). In a society where one’s honour is paramount, social sanctions are powerful. Looking after elderly parents was considered a moral duty and part of honourable behaviour that maintained family prestige. Certainly family wealth was part of status and honour maintenance (Saller 1994:155), but even among the relatively poor, an honourable son would treat his father (and mother) with respect, particularly in public. Not caring for elderly parents would compromise one’s honour (cf. Brandes 1995:14). Treggiari notes: “how a person behaves with his nearest and dearest spills over into the public sphere, where he is observed by outsiders” (2005:10-11).

Saller notes that “some fathers partially forfeited their power by transferring their property before their death,” an arrangement that assumed the child could refuse to provide for his aged parents (Saller 1994:131). On the other hand, it suggests that a father had reason to trust in his children’s care without having to dangle their inheritance in front of them to force them to comply. Or perhaps he had reason to trust in his children’s sense of honour. In P. Mich. 322 (Chapter 4), the parents legally ensured their care by outlining the provisions they expected from their children. Such expectations for provision as outlined in a legal document would likely be public knowledge, such that if the children did not fulfill their duties, they would be subject to social sanction. They would bring dishonour to their family if their peers perceived that they were acting immorally toward their aged parents. Of course older parents

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become a teacher in a girls’ school, but one daughter was chosen to remain in her parents home, unmarried, in order to look after her aging parents. In Fernea’s example, the father chose the daughter who could earn money as a seamstress to remain unmarried and care for him and her mother as they aged (1965).

379 *Digest* 31.87.4, Paulus (a father gave one son his inheritance before his death, specifying that the son give half to his sister, which he did not); 32.37.3, Scaevola (a father gave his son his entire property except two slaves stipulating that it should be returned if he later wished it to be returned); 34.4.23, Papinian (a man divided his goods among his sons, and money for his daughter, which he used to purchase property); 41.10.4.1, Pomponius (a general scenario of a father dividing his estate before his death).

380 Saller admits something like this when he summarizes the Roman family virtue of *pietas* as “devotion among all family members” (1994:131).
who were not receiving proper care from their families could also complain—a strategy to ensure care through the mechanism of social sanction (cf. Foner 1984:112; Brandes 1995:20). Voicing a concern would reinforce the cultural norm, as well as threaten social sanction that would result from what was perceived as neglectful or minimal duties. Social sanction could compromise honour—both of an individual and of the family—which people would take pains to avoid.

What we might call “religious sanction” was also a factor: “Parents were often equated with gods, so that disrespect, violence, or neglect of obligations to them was equated with impiety” (Reinhold 1970:352; cf. Carter 2001:46-50). Cicero declares: “it is wicked not to support one’s parents (parentes non alere nefarium sit)” (Cicero Atticus 9.9). Philo states:

> For parents are midway between the natures of God and man [sic], and partake of both; the human obviously because they were born and will perish, the divine because they have brought others to the birth and have raised not-being into being. Parents, in my opinion, are to their children what God is the world, since just as He achieved existence for the non-existent, so they in imitation of His power, as far as they are capable, immortalize the race. (Special Laws II.224-25)

On a social level, religious sanction functions as social sanction. Accusing a person of impiety or irreverence might shame them into proper behaviour.

5. Motivations for filial piety in 1 Timothy 5

5.1. Social and religious sanction

Pursuing the virtues associated with pietas and striving for honour among one’s peers may very well have kept social sanctions effective.\(^{381}\) This takes us back to the generational

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\(^{381}\) Noy’s study of Judean funerary inscriptions (Chapter 8, §3.3) may be pertinent to age in the early Jesus movement and Paul’s era since they were more closely tied to their Judean roots than later cohorts. It suggests to me that this cultural value of offering the elderly special status, either in old age or in death or both, would not be abandoned easily, and may hardly have been questioned at all in practice. Those who took Jesus’ comments to let the dead bury their own dead, and hate your father and mother, to be literal would have been subject to social sanction. This may be the basis of “different teaching” in 1 Timothy that manifested in children not caring for their widowed mothers, and hence the author’s directives in 1 Tim 5:4, 8.
cycle: conflict within the family is normal, especially in context of social change, but conflict that shows up publicly is subject to social sanction and lowering a family’s perceived honour. In the list of qualities for overseer and deacons, the author requires them to manage their own households well and have submissive children who treat them with respect (3:4, 12). As in modern Mediterranean cultures, the behaviour of each member of the Christian household reflected the honour of the whole family. If a man’s children were not respectful and did not order themselves properly under the authority of their father, they brought shame on their family, which in turn would have brought shame on the Christian community. In other words, the honour of an individual household that belonged to the Christian community would also reflect the honour of the Christian community as a whole. Likewise, if adult children were not adequately caring for their widowed mothers and grandmothers, this would be perceived as dishonourable behaviour, reflecting on both “families,” and thus causing concern for the author of 1 Timothy.382

Religious sanction seems also to be the tactic of the author of 1 Timothy. Those who care for their elderly family members are pleasing to God (5:4), but to neglect them is to deny the faith (τὴν πίστιν ἡρνηται) and to be worse than an unbeliever (καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων; 5:8). If one has πίστις, she or he should be morally superior to those who do not. Perhaps they should be especially morally superior to the opposing teachers, who have evidently turned away from the faith (τῆς πίστες) according to the author (e.g., 1:19, 6:21).

The notion of caring for one’s own family as proper duty is restated in 5:8.

Εἰ δὲ τις τῶν ἵδιων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, τὴν πίστιν ἡρνηται καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων.

And if someone does not provide for his or her own, and especially members of a household, s/he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

382 Osiek and Balch note that personal identity is tied up with one’s family and social tradition, and that life cycle expectations are dictated by one’s family obligations and need for belonging and approval (1997:41).
The author does not specify parents or widowed mothers here, but the context suggests that these are at least some of the family members in view.

The meaning of μάλιστα in 5:8 is a matter of some debate (cf. 5:17; Chapter 12, §2.2). It can mean either “especially” (which delimits a select group within “one’s own,” namely the members of one’s household) or “in other words” (thus equating “one’s own” with “members of the household”). Employing the second meaning, Campbell suggests that 5:8 does not refer to one’s literal household, but to fellow believers in the metaphorical “household of God” (3:15; 1995:157-60). While I am unconvinced by Campbell’s argument, his study does highlight the fact that it is not clear whether the widowed mothers and grandmothers were believers (i.e., part of the Christian community). Osiek and Balch suggest that individuals involved in the Christian community may have had unbelieving family members who needed care (1997:166-67). Either way, the author is clearly distinguishing between the filial responsibility of family members (5:4) and the responsibility of the ἐκκλησία (5:16). The phrase μάλιστα οἰκείων,

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383 His argument is unconvincing for two main reasons. First, Campbell wants to equate the use of οἰκείος in other letters associated with Paul (Gal 6:10, Eph 2:19) to 1 Tim 5:8 as “an established piece of jargon among Pauline Christians” (1995:158). However, two instances, both of which qualify the word οἰκείος with a genitive phrase (οἰκείος τῆς πίστεως; Gal 6:10; οἰκείος τοῦ θεοῦ; Eph 2:19), hardly constitutes “established... jargon.” Second, Campbell translates μάλιστα as “in other words” rather than “especially.” He translates μάλιστα οἰκείων as “in other words, members of God’s household” or fellow believers. Campbell follows Hanson (1982:92, 101, 175, based on T.C. Skeat 1979:173-77) in translating μάλιστα this way “wherever it occurs in the Pastorals” (1994:200). However, Hong Bom Kim convincingly demonstrates that each instance of the word must be carefully evaluated in the letters to Timothy and Titus (2004:360-68). As Kim points out (2004:364), Skeat himself does not consider the use of μάλιστα in 1 Tim 5:8 in his argument, and probably considered it an example of its traditional meaning, “especially” (1979:174, n.1).

384 Campbell argues that rendering “the members of the household” as the community of believers would not disqualify unbelieving family members, because Paul’s injunction in 1 Cor 7:14 makes all of one’s relatives “somehow included among the people of God” (1995:160). However, Campbell does not adequately justify using Paul’s idea that an unbelieving wife or husband is made “holy” by the believing spouse, thereby making the children “holy.” Campbell would apply this to all relatives, but the husband-wife bond is different from other familial relationships. It is based on reproduction (Cicero On Moral Duties 1.17.53) and represents a bond between families that compete for honour. Paul’s concern is primarily for the children in 1 Cor 4:17, whereas in 1 Tim 5:8, the author is concerned for widowed mothers and grandmothers. As we have seen, duty to parents ranks above duty to children and other kin (Cicero On Moral Duties 1.45.160).
especially the members of a person’s household, serves to emphasize the importance of responsibility to close kin associated with the household.

The author emphasizes duty and obligation toward one’s parents to fulfill moral duty but also to avoid social sanction from outsiders. An outsider, here referred to as an “unbeliever” (ἀπίστος), is mentioned in contrast to the person who neglects proper duties to one’s own family. The author’s language is meant to shame certain community members into proper behaviour.

Rather than think of the treatment of parents as either dutiful or neglectful, a continuum of more or less pious behaviour would be more reflective of reality. Seneca commended Marcia on the filial devotion she displayed toward her aging father, contrasting the lowered standard of filial duty in his day, “in an age when the supremely filial was simply not to be unfilial!” (Consolation to Marcia 1.2). Seneca does not lament the neglect of parents, which would have been quite concerning, but the minimal efforts of children toward their parents.

5.2. Εὐσεβεία in 1 Timothy as proper behaviour

Mary Rose D’Angelo offers a sophisticated account of the notion of εὐσεβεία in early Christianity in the context of “Roman family values.” She posits that in the early second century, the early Christians (in the letters to Timothy and Titus) and Judeans (in 4 Maccabees) reflected an ideology of “true piety” that reflected Roman moral standards (2003:157, 164-65).

“The version of εὐσεβεία [the letters to Timothy and Titus] proposed likewise reflects the imperial virtue of pietas, a combination of devotion to the deity with the proper respect for one’s

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385 Osiek and Balch argue that because the ancient texts suggests elderly were constantly concerned about having children care for them and provide a proper burial, there must have been lots of neglect of elderly parents (1997:165-66). Demographic realities warranted some concerns, for some parents did outlive their children. Some children did neglect their parents (e.g., Kronion, cited above; P. Mil.Vgl. 84 = P. Kronion 50). However, this evidence does not suggest significant overall neglect. Parents might have voiced their concerns so frequently about old age not because their children were negligent, but because parents wanted to be sure they would not be, or wanted to ensure more than minimum efforts.
superiors and responsibility toward one’s dependents, especially as familial duty” (2003:158). Piety especially entails proper respect for those who control one’s life (Malina and Neyrey 1996:45).

The term ἐὐσέβεια is a pivotal value for the author of 1 Timothy. In 1 Timothy, the author connects proper behaviour in the “household of God” with the mystery of ἐὐσέβεια (3:15-16), which he defines in a formulaic christological statement: “He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory” (NRSV). In this sense, ἐὐσέβεια (piety) has a basis in how the author and his readers understand the nature of Christ—the focus of their religious devotion. The manifestation of ἐὐσέβεια in proper behaviour is important to the author, in prayer for the state rulers (2:2), in women’s modest behaviour and appearance (2:11), and in filial duty of adult children (5:4). It is a virtue to pursue, along with righteousness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness (6:11).

Deference for elders was an expression of ἐὐσέβεια. Filial duty was also part of ἐὐσέβεια, but in 1 Tim 5:4 and 5:8, instead of paranaesis that encouraged ideal behaviour, the author suggests that community members needed to live up to conventional behaviour in providing for their own relatives, lest their behaviour appear to be worse than that of unbelievers (5:8).

386 The verb ἐὐσέβεω is used twice, for women who should dress modestly and with good works “as is proper for women who profess reverence for God (ἐὐσέβεω)” (2:10), and for children and grandchildren who should support their widowed mothers and grandmothers, which is their “religious duty” (ἐὐσέβεω) to their parents and grandparents (5:4). The verb ἐὐσέβεων is the cognate to ἐὐσέβεια, which means a sense of reverence, loyalty and duty to the divine, the state, parents and kin, which was detailed above. BDAG defines it as a “sense of awesome obligation arising within a system of reciprocity in which special respect is showed to those who have the greater investment in one’s well-being, such as deities and parental figures.”

387 For example, Cicero elevates one’s sense of duty to parents above duty to children and other kin (On Moral Duties 1.17, 1.45).
Near the beginning of the letter, the author lists actions contrary to the law for those who are ἄσεβεσι (godless, or without a sense of piety or duty), lawless, sinful, unholy, profane and disobedient (1:9-10). These disdainful people commit heinous crimes against the law, including killing one’s father and mother (πατρολῶσαι καὶ μητρολῶσαι; 1:9). The list is an exaggerated version of a vice list, some of which mention disobedience to parents. Patricide and matricide represent extreme disobedience to parents in Greek and Roman culture, as well as Judean culture.

Quinn and Wacker emphasize the “dramatic” nature of the list, citing Greek drama such as Aeschylus’ fifth century Greek play Libation Bearers, in which Orestes kills his mother as revenge for her murder of his father (2000:96; cf. 2000:87). In popular ancient literature, the quintessential story of parricide is of Oedipus’ unintentionally killing his father and marrying his mother. According to Lucian of Samosata’s satirical version of the story of Peregrinus, he...

388 It is one of a list of “vicious persons” as opposed to vices (Quinn and Wacker 2000:96).

389 Quinn and Wacker (2000:87) note that word πατρολῶσας is derived from πατήρ and ἀλοίω (ἀλοιώ), meaning “father” and “to thrash,” respectively, and thus “to thrash one’s father.” Aristophanes employed this term in his play Clouds the context of the son striking (τύπτειν) his father (lines 1327, 1331; cf. 911; see also comments in Chapter 7 on 1 Tim 5:1). It is ironic that in Seneca’s Controversiae, the Latin verb used for supporting, or literally “feeding,” parents is alo—an opposite meaning of the Greek word ἀλοίω (to thrash)—both of which are related to the treatment of parents. The phrase πατρολόιας ἡ μητρολόιας is also found in Lysias Against Theomnemetus 1.8 (“For I presume, Theomnemestus, you would not go so far, while expecting to get satisfaction from a man who called you a father-beater or mother-beater (πατρολόιας ἡ μητρολόιας) as to consider that he should go unpunished for saying that you struck (ἔτυπες) your male or female parent, because he had spoken no forbidden word!”). Cf. Plato Phaedo 114A. Josephus uses the term πατρολόιας for parricide in Antiquities (16.356).

389 E.g., Rom 1:29-32, 2 Tim 3:2-5 and perhaps Tit 3:3, which just mentions disobedience.

390 Some commentators consider this list an inversion of the decalogue of the HB (Exodus 20:2-17; 2000:98-99; cf. Spicq 1947:27). The terms for patricide and matricide represent extreme disobedience to the fifth commandment—to honour one’s father and mother (Exodus 20:12, Leviticus 19:3; Marshall 1999:380). On the other hand, Dibelius and Conzelmann consider the list “a Hellenistic transformation of Jewish ethics” rather than a reference to the Decalogue (1972:23). It is possible that the opposing teachers might have advocated Jesus’ teachings regarding “hating your father and mother” (e.g., Luke 14:26) above his teachings to “honour your father and mother” (e.g., Mark 7:10-11).

392 Apparently based on a true story, several Greek authors created tragedies about Oedipus, including Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Roman authors also created Oedipus plays, including Caesar and Seneca (Brown 2003:1062). Quinn and Wacker mention that Alexandrian Judean authors were very familiar with Greek plays, a familiarity they find reflected in 1 Timothy as the author sorts out his notions of universal salvation and the Israelite law (2000:97).
joined the Christians just after he killed his father. Peregrinus strangled his father because he could not endure his father living past sixty. He left his hometown, wandering around until he met up with Christians in Palestine who revered him as a leader and teacher, and even a god (The Passing of Peregrinus, 10-11). Lucian’s mockery of Christians includes their ignorance of the fact that Peregrinus had committed the most heinous crime of patricide. Actual parricide was probably rare,\(^{393}\) representing a potential but unlikely outcome to intergenerational tension.\(^{394}\) While Lucian associates lack of piety with the gullibility of the Christians, the author of 1 Timothy opposes this type of criticism with a call for piety as a key characteristic of those in the Jesus movement. Both are probably guilty of exaggeration.

The author associates the concept of εὐσεβεία with combating the opposing teachers. This reflects another way that he portrays the opponents as promoting behaviour that is negatively affecting the reputation of the group (see Chapter 8). He touts the usefulness of training in εὐσεβεία instead of listening to old wives’ tales (4:7-8), presumably associated with the opponents. He suggests that the law (which the opponents seek to teach) is for those who are lawless, rebellious, sinful and ἄσεβεστι (1:9)—the antithesis of εὐσεβεία. The teaching that “is in accordance with εὐσεβεία” is set in contrast to the opposing teachers who disagree with “healthy teaching” (6:3). The opposing teachers are associated with vices, including “imagining that εὐσεβεία is a means of gain” νομιζόντων πορισμὸν ἐνυσα τὴν εὐσεβείαν (6:5).\(^{395}\)

\(^{393}\) Cicero defended a case of a man accused of patricide, stating the horror but also the rarity of such a crime: “In the case of a crime so grave, so atrocious, so unusual, an done which has been so rarely committed that, whenever it is heard of it is regarded as a portent and monstrosity (The Oration of Sextus Roscius of Amerino, 13). Saller points out that while Cicero is biased, favouring his client, “it must have appealed to the sense of social truth held by some of his listeners in court” (1994:132). Horace alludes to patricide as a capital offence (Epode 3).

\(^{394}\) Foner suggests that in extreme situations when sons desire to marry, acquire property, or obtain social positions from fathers who refuse to cooperate, they may threaten or even resort to patricide in desperation. This might be particularly true of young men who had socially become full adults, but felt their fathers were restricting their rightful privileges (1984:126, 229).

\(^{395}\) The author states that while εὐσεβεία does provide πορισμὸς μέγας (great gain) when it is combined with contentment (6:6), desiring to be rich (πλουτεῖν) is a trap that ends in destruction (6:9). From his description of the excesses in the city of Rome in the first century CE, Sallust would seem to agree.
The verb μαθάνω (to learn) may reflect the influence of the opposing teachers. If these adult children have been “learning” behaviour that leads them to neglect their mothers and grandmothers, the author wants them to “learn” proper behaviour toward their older family members. Such neglect was considered highly improper behaviour in the ancient Mediterranean context.

Filial duty (5:4) is associated with proper behaviour that leads to a quiet and peaceable life (2:2)—the kind of life that would reflect a good reputation. Almost the same phrase in 5:4 “for this is pleasing before God” (τούτο γάρ ἐστιν ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ) is used in 2:3 “this is good and pleasing before God our Saviour” (τοῦτο καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ). The repetition of key words and ideas in 5:4 suggests that filial duty is proper behaviour for peaceable living. The author uses the terms εὐσεβεία (2:2) and εὐσεβείν (5:4) in these sections, highlighting the importance of one’s duty to parents as part of overall εὐσεβεία (duty) that reflects exemplary morals. In addition, in 2:1 the author uses the word “first” (πρῶτον), encouraging his hearers “first of all” to pray for everyone, for kings and

To such men their riches seem to me to have been but a plaything; for while they might have enjoyed them honourably, they made haste to squander them shamefully. Nay more, the passion which arose for lewdness, gluttony, and the other attendants of luxury was equally strong: men played the woman, women offered their chastity for sale; to gratify their palates they scoured land and sea; they slept before they needed sleep; they did not await the coming of hunger or thirst, of cold or of weariness, but all these things their self-indulgence anticipated. Such were the vices that incited the young men (iuventutem) to crime, as soon as they had run through their property. Their minds, habituated to evil practices, could not easily refrain from self-indulgence, and so they abandoned themselves the more recklessly to every means of gain as well as of extravagance. (Sallust Catalines 13:2-5)

For the author of 1 Timothy, εὐσεβεία is the opposite of seeking financial gain, which is attached to vices such as excess and self-indulgence—the vices evident in certain women in the group, including some widows (2:9, 5:6). Hierocles states: “For what gain is so great to a child as piety and gratitude to his parents?” (On Duties 4.25.53; Malherbe 1986:91)

396 The verb μαθάνω is also used in 5:13 (the younger widows “learn to be idle,” μαθάνουσιν ἄργαί) and in 2:11 (“let a woman learn in silence with full submission” (NRSV), γυνὴ ἐν ἴμαχες μαθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ). In both contexts the author highlights problematic behaviour and desires proper behaviour. The author seems to imply that the opposing teachings produce improper behaviour among women when they should be learning proper behaviour.

397 Malherbe makes a similar argument for 2:1-2 and 2:9-15. He posits that the repetition of particular words in the exhortation for women to be modest and submissive demonstrates what the author thinks is proper to live a quiet and peaceable life (2006).
those in high positions—the latter refers to the state. In 5:4, he also uses the word πρώτον, in this case specifically to adult children with widowed mothers or grandmothers: “let them learn first to perform their duty to their own household, and to make a return to their parents.” Cicero dictates a similar order: “Now, if a contrast and comparison were to be made to find out where most of our moral obligation is due, country would come first, and parents, for their services have laid us under the heaviest obligation” (On Moral Duties 1.17.58). “Proper behaviour” as manifested in prayers for state leaders and duty toward parents would project honourable behaviour in the perception of society.

6. Conclusion

The age range of the widows with family, probably 35 and older, is based on the end of childbearing and when their children might be old enough to support them. The widows with family who were young-old were likely to be active women, not in need of physical care, but perhaps in need of financial support. Filial duty was a social expectation in the society at large. Growing old was vulnerable in the ancient world, especially if a person did not have children or grandchildren to care for her or him. While in theory patria potestas and inheritances might appear to give a father leverage in ensuring filial support in his old age, it was probably a sense of duty, affection and social sanction, along with the desire to appear honourable, that promoted filial care among the non-elite, especially for mothers. Most importantly, the concept of ἐυσέβεια or pietas compelled filial support.

Within the family, the most important intergenerational relationship was between adult children and their parents. Mediterranean cultures place a high priority on supporting parents, especially as they age. Despite the prominence of nuclear households among the ancient
Romans, the demographic realities suggest that non-elite adult children probably had aging parents living with them.

In 1 Timothy, the author appeals to his listeners’ sense of ἐυσέβεια as the basis for proper behaviour, behaviour that would allow the Christian community to be perceived by the outside world as honourable. Caring for parents was a primary part of ἐυσέβεια. The neglect of this duty was dishonourable. The directives in 1 Tim 5:4 and 5:8 are intended for adult children, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling this duty as an act of reciprocity and obligation, and part of proper behaviour. The phrasing also suggests that the problem was more than a financial burden for the church. Neglecting proper behaviour by avoiding filial duty was compromising the honour of the group. The author implies that some adult children were not fulfilling this obligation, which would have appeared to be dishonourable, opening them to social sanction and ridicule.
Chapter 10: Why Sixty?

1. Introduction

The last chapter explored the intergenerational dynamics between widows and their adult children and grandchildren. For the author of 1 Timothy, filial duty was an important part of proper behaviour; children were expected to provide for their parents in ancient Mediterranean culture. His admonishment of the family members who were shirking their duties is an example of religious and social sanction.

While the author was appalled at the behaviour of certain people who did not adequately care for their aging mothers, he was delighted by a group of elderly widows whom he presents as the model of virtue. These old women are distinctly described as “not less than sixty years old” (5:9). Why sixty? In 1 Tim 5:1-2 (cf. Tit 2:2-6), the categories of “old” and “young” appear to adequately describe age categories (cf. Barclay 2007), but here, the author of 1 Timothy specifies the age of sixty. There are surprisingly few references to chronological ages in the early Christian literature, and no other early references that I am aware of that distinguish a particular age group in this way. Furthermore, specifying the age of sixty for women in the ancient Mediterranean world strikes me as rather odd, given that a woman’s social age was normally based on life stages such as when she reached menopause and/or became a grandmother, not when she reached a certain age.

In this chapter I focus on this group of 60+ widows and the significance of their age and attributes (5:9-10). Though commentators have attempted to account for this age in various ways related to financial aid, marriage, sexuality, and/or power, none has adequately addressed the specificity of the age of sixty. I propose that these women were highlighted for their idealized virtue as models for the middle-aged women in the community who were acting improperly in the opinion of the author.
Let a widow who is not less than sixty years old, the wife of one husband and bearing witness in noble works be chosen if she has raised children, if she has shown hospitality, if she has washed the feet of the saints, if she has assisted those who are afflicted, if she has pursued every good work. (1 Tim 5:9-10)

2. Stereotypes of old women in the ancient world

Stereotypes, of course, are not reflections of real women’s lives, but they do correlate with the male perceptions of women in 1 Timothy. Specifically, the widow in 1 Tim 5:9-10 reflects the positive stereotype of the ideal old woman. The author utilizes this characterization when he bestows honour on the 60+ widow.

As discussed earlier, a Mediterranean woman’s reputation in old age is a reflection of her reputation throughout her life course. In her younger years, a woman’s sexuality threatens family honour and must be protected. Women also have an active role in protecting, and perhaps redeeming, their sexuality. When a woman reaches menopause and is beyond her childbearing years she is no longer considered sexual, has more freedom, exercises more power

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398 In Julian Pitt-Rivers’ conception of honour and shame, he described men as defenders of honour and protectors of women’s shame, and women as passively embodying shame (1977:20-24). But women are far from passive in defending their modesty in Mediterranean cultures. For example, according to Fernea, a good Iraqi woman is hardworking, devoted to family, domestically competent, quiet and obedient to her husband, has a stainless reputation, and yields significant influence over her husband and sons, helping to make decisions involving such important matters as marriage and the schooling of her children (1965:56). Dubisch asserts that, operating within certain cultural restrictions, women try to accomplish their goals and sometimes even succeed in altering the social system. In some ways they support the system, in other ways they attempt to “get around” it, and at some level often find contentment within it (1986:29, 35).

399 Greek women are associated with Eve, who, according to Christian tradition, was the primeval woman who brought sin into the world. A woman may work to overcome this “moral disability” through a “redeeming archetype”—namely by exemplifying the Orthodox Christian concept of the Mother of God (Panagia; Hirschon 1983:117). According to the Sarakatsani, a woman is cunning (poniros), an attribute which is a constant threat to men’s honour, but she can redeem the family honour through her sexuality by bearing sons who will protect the honour of community (Campbell 1964:277).
and submits to fewer people (Abu-Lughod 1986:163). Campbell states that an old Sarakatsan woman, “past the period of sexual activity”\(^{400}\) whose son is reputable, has “almost overcome the moral disabilities of her sex” (1964:277-78)—almost, but not quite. In fact, women continue to pose a potential threat to the honour of their family throughout their lives, but, as we have seen, the way in which they pose a threat changes over the life course (Chapter 4, §5).

An old woman’s reputation is directly linked to her sexual chastity as a young woman. A woman’s life-long reputation is an important factor in her role in family honour. Her reputation is inherited by her children, for, as noted above, an individual’s honour is shared with all family members (Pitt-Rivers 1977:29, 78). It can affect whether her daughters can secure an honourable marriage, for example. An older woman can help preserve the reputation of female members of her family, both in upholding her own reputation and helping to protect theirs against potential gossip of other women. As with all other family members, old women can threaten or strengthen family honour. Or, more accurately, the perceived virtue or malice of old women, based on a life-time of honourable or disreputable behaviour, can effect her own and her family’s honour. Julian Pitt-Rivers notes that since honour is based on reputation, “it is gossip rather than the truth which is relevant” (1977:39; cf. Kartzow 2009).

A life-long reputation is reflected in the description of what the 60+ widow has accomplished in her life (5:10). This life-long reputation of virtuous behaviour is at least part of the reason the author highlights a widow advanced in age. However, it does not explain the specificity of “not less than sixty years old.”

\(^{400}\) According to Campbell, a woman is beyond sexual activity when she is over sixty or when her husband dies. At this time she is said to have a “clean soul” (\textit{kathari psychi}); thus “the prestige of some old women is considerable” (1964:290). According to Beyene, women are sexually active after menopause (1989:124), and may certainly continue to be into their sixties. The perception that they are no longer sexual is likely to be a male notion, or the ethnographer’s assumption.
3. **Chronological age**

It is rare that chronological ages are specified in early Christian texts.\(^{401}\) Even when ages are specified, they often correspond to life stage rather than chronological age. For example, Jesus was “about thirty” according to Luke (3:23) when he began his teaching and healing. Thirty was the age of maturity and sound judgement for a man.\(^{402}\) In John 8:57, the Judeans say Jesus is “not yet fifty,” probably meaning he was not yet old enough to have the authority or wisdom he displayed (\textit{m. Aboth} 5.21, age 50 is when one is able to “counsel”). Jesus healed a girl who was twelve years old (Mark 5:42), the legal minimum age for marriage (Harlow 2007:197). These examples show that chronological ages in early Christian texts typically refer to specific individuals rather than a group, which is implied in 1 Tim 5:9.\(^{403}\) For groups of people, the designation “old(er)/young(er)” is more common (e.g., Luke 1:7, 18; Phlm 9; 1 Peter 5:5; cf. Barclay 2007). Indeed, the author of 1 Timothy chose comparative age designations (older/younger) to set up the section related to age groups (1 Tim 5:1-2), and to describe the “younger” widows (5:11, 14; cf. Tit 2:2-8). But in 1 Tim 5:9, he specifies “not less than sixty years old.”

\(^{401}\) Within the NT there are several references to Jesus’ age: Matt 2:16 (Herod had boys under two years old killed because the thought Jesus was this age); Luke 2:42 (twelve years old), 3:23 (about thirty years old); John 8:57 (not yet fifty years old; see Chapter 1, §3.4). Some people who were healed by Jesus or the apostles were associated with specific ages or number of years they were ill: Mark 5:42 (a girl who was twelve years old); Mark 5:25, Matt 9:12, Luke 8:43 (a woman bleeding for twelve years), Luke 13:11,16 (a woman crippled for eighteen years); Acts 3:2, 4:22 (a man over forty years old was lame from birth); John 5:5 (a man ill for thirty-eight years). According to Luke, the prophetess Anna was eighty-four (2:36). There are two references to the ages of patriarchs: Acts 7:23 (Moses was forty years old); Romans 4:19 (Abraham’s body was “as good as dead” when he was one hundred years old).

\(^{402}\) Dio Cassius reports a speech by Agrippa specifying that a man could not become praetor until the age of thirty because before this age, a man was not considered trustworthy to manage private or public affairs (\textit{History of Rome} 74.20.1). Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, a man could participate in lawsuits and judgements at the age of thirty (\textit{The Messianic Rule}, 1QSa=1Q28a 1.13-14)

\(^{403}\) The author uses a third person singular imperative, “let a widow be chosen,” but the lack of a definite article suggests there will be more than one “chosen.”
4. Why sixty?

While some commentators merely mention the phrase in 5:9 without elaboration (Collins 2002:139), others pass over the reference entirely (Dibelius and Conzelman 1972:75; Houlden 1876:93). Those who have discussed the age of sixty usually suggest that it is an age at which women were less likely to remarry or have sexual passion, and/or it was the threshold of old age. In addition, some commentators suggest that the consequences of setting this minimum age requirement restricted the number of widows who qualified for aid or restricted women’s power. An evaluation of each of these positions reveals problematic assumptions.

4.1. Restricting financial aid

Some scholars argue that this directive is pragmatic: it limited the community’s liability for supporting widows. The qualifications listed in 1 Tim 5:9-10 reduce the number of widows receiving aid from the church, so that the church is not so burdened (5:16). The community would only be financially responsible for a small number of widows, and for only a short time, since life expectancy at sixty was short (Johnson 2001:264, 274). Knight (1992:230) and Towner (2006:346) suggest that these widows could no longer support themselves because of their advanced age. Age restrictions were accompanied by other restrictions; widows who receive aid must also have been married only once (5:9) and possess proven domestic virtue (5:10; Johnson 2001:264, 274).

This hypothesis is based on two major assumptions. The first is that the 60+ widow is the same as the “real” widow (who was to receive aid, 5:16). The second is that the word

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404While Collins has no comment about the widows of 1 Tim 5:9 being at least sixty, he does utilizes Philo’s age divisions (On the Creation 35[104]) to envision younger men/women as being in their 20s and older men/women as in their 50s and 1 Tim 5:1-2 (2002:134; cf. Tit 2:3-5 2002:343). Of course the community involved people of other ages as well, which Collins does not account for. Cf. Marshall, who suggests that the age of 40 as the “rough division” between young and old (1999:239, 593).

καταλέγω refers to a list of that restricts the number of widows. Both assumptions are problematic.

4.2. Not “real” widows

Interpreters who suggest that this directive limited support of widows assume that the old widows are the “real” widows specified in 5:3, 5, 16. For example, Winter states:

The “real” Christian widow had an age qualification and was known for her faithfulness in marriage. She distinguished herself in her service as a Christian; she was “well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way.” She had no immediate family or relatives to support her financially. This was how the “real” Christian widows were defined in the Pauline community in Ephesus (1 Timothy 5:4, 9, 10, 16). (2003:123)

Towner recognizes that “the reference to widow is here generic, χήρα (without the art[icle])” but posits that “the argument developed to this point in the passage makes it clear that the ‘real widow’… is meant” (2006:345 n.70). This is circular reasoning. In order to make his argument clear, he must begin with an assumption that the 60+ widow is equated with the “real” widow.

The real widows and 60+ widows are not the same group of widows. The text does not explicitly equate the two. The author is careful to specify “real” widows (τὰς ὀντῶς χήρας) three times in the text, but does not use the phrase in 5:9. In the first instance, the author

406 Along with Spicq (1947:532), Verner considers 5:9 the beginning of a new section introducing an order of widows that is not equated with real widows. He suggests the author only wants elderly women to qualify for office (1983:165). Verner posits that some of the younger widows in 5:11-12 were formerly enrolled in the office of widows, but because of their problematic behaviour, he is limiting the office to elderly women. One problem with such an interpretation is that the term παρατητοῦ (usually rendered “deny”) does not have a sense of “un-enrolling” widows (see §4.3 and Chapter 11, §2.1 for further discussion). However, Bassler rightly posits that the textual unit must be 5:3-16 because the author begins and ends with the “real” widows (5:3 and 5:16). For Bassler, the two sections are “an unambiguous but uneasy whole” forming a “hybrid” of two distinct ideas (2003:136).

407 On 5:9-10, Collins states: “The Pastor’s use of the technical term ‘enrolled’ suggests that there was a well-defined group of real widows in the community” (2002:139, my emphasis). Quinn and Wacker “presume” these widows are alone and without support (2000:437). Dibelius and Conzelmann state the real widow “is probably the same as” the widow in 5:9 (1972:74, my emphasis). Furthermore, “The regulations concerning widows include a regulation about those widows who are to be regarded as ‘true widows’…, who serve the congregation (v 10) and who are supported by it (v 16)” (1972:73). Marshall acknowledges that the terminology is different, but still equates the two: “In the light of vv.4-6 it can be assumed that the generic χήρα here [in 5:9] by implication excludes those who have a family to look after them or are morally unworthy and is now tantamount to ‘genuine widow’” (1999:591, my emphasis). In fact, the only scholar I encountered who questioned the equation of the “real” widow with the “enrolled widow” was Kidd (1990:104; see below).
has Paul exhort Timothy to “honour widows who are real widows,” χήρας τίμα τὰς ὑπνώσ χήρας (5:3). In the second instance, the author indicates that the “real widows” were solitary and left alone (μονόω; 5:5). In the third instance of “real” widows, the author has Paul state that the church was to provide financial support (ἵπαρκέω) to them (5:16). The author explicitly contrasts the “real widows” with two other types of widows: (1) widows who have children and/or grandchildren (5:4), and (2) the widows a believing woman “has” (5:16).

The author emphasizes different characteristics for the two groups. The real widows were needy and devoted to prayer (5:5); the “enrolled” widows were distinguished by their age and exemplary past behaviour (5:9-10; Kidd 1990:104).

If the text in 5:9 serves to limit the numbers of those who receive charity, perhaps as remuneration for ministry (e.g., Hanson 1966:57), no widows under the age of sixty would be eligible. As Bassler notes, a destitute widow could be any age (1996:97). Young widows typically remarried in Roman society, but an older widow was at risk of utter poverty, especially if she had no children (see Chapter 5, §4.2). An old woman who was no longer anyone’s wife, mother or sister was marginalized and alone (Cokayne 2003:152; cf. 1 Tim 5:5). It is unlikely that the community would reject the destitute widows who could not remarry but who were not yet 60 based solely on age. The majority of widows who were alone and needed support were probably under 60. There is no solid evidence in the text to demonstrate that aid was restricted to women who would have taken over 40 years to prove their domestic virtue in order to be worthy of receiving aid. Much later, in the third century, the application of their later

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408 Honouring real widows appears to mean that the church (ἐκκλησία) will assist them, supporting or caring for their needs because no one else is available to care for them (5:5, 16; Verner 1983:163). Although he points out that the notion of “honour” (τιμᾶω/τιμή) is used in three distinct sections in this part of 1 Timothy, Towner is right to emphasize the “range of meanings” (2008:337; cf. Fee 1984:115). In 5:3 “honour” is a verbal command; the other two instances are noun phrases: διπλής τιμής (“double honour” for elders) in 5:17 and πάσης τιμής (“all honour” for slaves’ own masters) in 6:1. Honour for elders appears to be associated with an honorarium (5:17; Malherbe 2008). The honour due to masters is specifically directed at slaves, and is comprised of respect and service (6:1-2).
interpretation of this text in the *Apostolic Constitutions* is clear that the church should provide aid to all who were need, especially the poor, the sick and those with many children (3.1.4). In a small community in the late first century, it is unlikely the author is attempting to restrict aid to the poor based on age. In addition, the word καταλέγω (discussed in §4.3) does not correspond to a received action (like receiving charity). This is not to say that such a context is impossible, but it is not a strong possibility given the other contexts in which we find this term.

Therefore, if the 60+ widows are not equated with the “real” widows, there is no reason to posit that 5:9-10 has to do with giving charity to these old widows. Some of the 60+ widows undoubtedly were also “real” widows (5:5), just as some had family (5:4), and some may have been wealthy and independent. The point of 5:9-10 is not to define who should receive financial support.

Finally, if the younger widows remarried, and were subsequently widowed a second time, they would never qualify for support because an enlisted widow as to be the wife of one husband (Kidd 1990:104).  

Reggie M. Kidd proposes that the real widows and “enrolled” widows are two different groups, and that the latter represent “an office being opened up precisely to patronesses of the church in consideration of their beneficence to the church… verses 9-15 indicate the official recognition the widowed woman of means is to be afforded for her service” (1990:105). Unfortunately, Kidd ignores the content of 5:11-15 regarding the troublesome younger widows.

More importantly, however, he does not address the question of what motivated the author of this letter to write this extended section on widows.

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409 It is possible, however, to take this phrase to mean marital fidelity rather than literally the wife of one husband for her entire lifetime.
4.3. The meaning of καταλέγω

Common translations of the phrase χήρα καταλεγέσθω include “let a widow be put on the list” (NRSV) or “a widow should be enrolled” (Johnson 2001:264). There are three standard suggestions for why widows should be put on a list: to receive financial support (based on 5:3, 5, 16), to delineate qualification for an office, namely the “order of widows,” or to define women who are to receive payment for services to the community (a combination of the first two). I evaluate each of these below, but I begin with the notion that the author wants to “enlist” widows who qualify for financial support (e.g., Johnson 2001:261; Quinn and Wacker 2000:345; Marshall 1999:592; Knight 1992:222, 230). For Johnson, “it is obvious that Paul wants the Ephesian church to register certain persons as widows” (2001:264). Dibelius and Conzelmann suggest the word means “registered,” especially for “levied troops” (1972:75).

That the author of 1 Timothy wants particular widows chosen and highlighted is certain, but the meaning of καταλέγω is not. The widow was not on a list to receive to aid. Rather than restricting numbers of widows, the list is meant to bestow honour on exemplary widows. They were chosen based on their character and reputation.

The exegetical question still remains: what was an old widow of virtuous character being chosen for (Johnson 2001:264)? Philo uses the word καταλέγω to denote virtuous character:

But the ruler of the whole nation, infusing into the ears of his people doctrines of piety, and charming the souls of his subjects with them, selected (καταλέγει) and picked out a thousand men of each tribe, choosing them with regard to their excellence. (Philo, On the Virtues, 42)

Philo’s use of the word καταλέγω to “select” people of excellent character reflects a similar context to that found in 1 Timothy. If this nuance is correct, it suggests that the author wanted to select specific elderly widows for their virtuous character; he was highlighting them as models of virtue, and as ideal matrons—a stereotype of old women in ancient Mediterranean culture (Chapter 4, §4.2.4).
In first century literature, καταλέγω commonly refers to conscripting young men to fight in an army (e.g., Plutarch Antonius 5.4, Sertorius 4.2, Pompeius 59.1-2, Galba 18.2, Cicero 12.3). Commentators often adopt this meaning when they translate the word “enlist” (e.g., Collins 2002:139; Houlden 1976:93; Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:75). The following citation demonstrates that for soldiers, enlistment was an act of obedience.

But when Pompey began to levy (καταλέγειν) recruits, some refused to obey the summons, and a few came together reluctantly and without zest, but the greater part cried out for a settlement of the controversy. (Plutarch Pompeius 59.2)

The enrolment of men for the army, which entails obedience to military hierarchy, provides an awkward analogy for virtuous old widows.

A better analogy can be found amongst inscriptions for voluntary associations. In an inscription from Pergamon, the passive form of καταλέγω is clearly used to put a member on a list, since the stipulation about fees is based on whether or not a man’s father has been enrolled for a certain amount of time:

\[ \varepsilon\alpha\nu\ \delta\epsilon\ \iota\ \sigmaυνεισή\ παΐς\ πατρί\ \tauω\ \piατρι\ \tauου\ \kappaα- \]

Dibelius and Conzelmann also suggest the meaning “to regard as” (1972:75, n.14), apparently based on Plato Laws 6.763A. However, this meaning is not at all clear. Plato writes: “For whenever the Twelve have been chosen, being assembled together with the Five (ἐπειδήν γάρ δῆ καταλεγόσαιν οἱ δώδεκα, συνελθοντες μετὰ τῶν πεντε), they shall resolve that acting like servants (οἰκέται), they will keep not servants or slaves to wait on themselves.” The verb in Plato is the active voice rather than passive, as it is in 5:9. For 5:9, Guthrie suggests the meaning “reckon” (1990:114). Both of these translations try to force the equation of the “real” widow with the 60+ widow, but they are weak suggestions with little ancient evidence.

Towner summarizes that in the passive voice, καταλέγω means “to be enlisted, enrolled” but in the active voice it means “to pick out, choose” (2006:345, n.71; cf. LSJ). BDAG suggests that the passive can be translated either generally as “be selected” or specifically as “be enrolled.” Similarly, Marshall suggests the difference is slight, especially for such a small intimate group as the one in 1 Timothy (1999:591-92). Plutarch was content to use the active voice in the context of military enrolment. The active form of the verb καταλέγω can refer to selecting specific people because of their proven character. Plutarch employs the word in this sense as well: “And in his selection (καταλέγων) of the men in authority that were to accompany him on his expedition he included also Lucius, the brother of Vitellius, without either increasing or diminishing his honours” (Plutarch Otho 5.1). In this example, the selected men were already in responsible positions, chosen for a special task. Similarly, “This incident strengthened the party of Brutus and Cassius; and when they were taking count (καταλέγοντες) of the friends whom they could trust for their enterprise, they raised a question about Antony” (Plutarch Antonius 13.1). In this second example, the selected friends were considered trustworthy to accomplish their goals. In 1 Tim 5:9, the verb is used in the passive voice, but may carry a sense of selection of special people. However, this does not exclude the possibility of a list.
But if the son should enter [the association] at the same time as his father, or before five years has elapsed from the father’s enrolment, he shall enter and pay the same entrance fee as if his father had not been a member.\textsuperscript{412}

The following inscription suggests a similar list of members among the Areopageioi in Attica:

\begin{quote}
... ἐάν τινες ἐν τοῖς Ἀρεωπαγειτῶν ἐν τοῖς Πανέλ-

λησιν οὖν τήμερον καταλημφθῶσιν τὴν τριγονίαν παρασχεῖν μὴ δυνάμενοι, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο ἀπε-[

σθήσονται τοῦ συνεδρίου, πρὸς δὲ τὸ μέλλον οὐδὲις ἀλλος ἐξ Ἀρεωπαγειτῶν τοῖς Πανέλλησιν ἐνγρά[φή]-

σεται ἡ ὁσοὶ πρὸς τὰς χειροτονίας ἀφικνεῖθαι δύνανται τὴν τριγονίαν ἔχουσι.

τῶν Πεντακοσίων φέρον ἀποχρώσιως ἔχει ταύτη τετάχθαι ὡςτε αὐτοῦς τοὺς καταλεγομένους ε[ὑ] γε]-

γονέναι. ... 
\end{quote}

If some of the Areopageioi who are today among the Panhellenes are found to be unable to demonstrate three generations [from slavery], they are not to be for this reason ousted from the council; but in the future, no one else from the Areopageioi is to be registered in the Panhellenes except whoever is able to enter the elections having three generations [from slavery]. As to what concerns the council of the Five Hundred, it is sufficient that it has been arranged that those on each occasion \textbf{enrolled} be themselves of good birth. (\textit{SEG} 29:127.ii.76-81; Attica, 174-75 CE)\textsuperscript{413}

Marcus Aurelius commissioned this inscription to address the problem of freedmen gaining the vote in the Athenian assembly. A person became a member of the Aeropageioi if he had been an archon (or similar role), or if he received an honorific membership based on the performance of a liturgy or benefaction. The inscription suggests a new policy whereby a person was required to

\textsuperscript{412} AM 32.1907.293, 18 (\textit{Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung}); translation by Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011 (see \textit{IG II\textsuperscript{2}} 1368: The Rule of the Iobacchoi, note II.39-40).

\textsuperscript{413} I am grateful for John Kloppenborg’s assistance in translating and providing context for this as well as the next two inscriptions.
show that he was three generations away from slavery (line 70). In this inscription, enrolment required a set of particular qualifications and meant that one obtained a seat on the council of the assembly.

In an inscription from Attica, a woman named Timothea is described as “enrolled” in her duties of carrying a holy basket in sacred rites for the Great Dionysia in Athens. The main focus of this section of the inscription is on her father, who is appointed for certain tasks, but he is identified by his daughter’s position and name rather than his own. The woman is presumably fairly young because her father is young enough to be taking on active duties.

Zenon son of Asklepiades, a man of Phylē, made the following motion: Whereas Zopyros the archon appointed Zopyros the father of the canephore [basket carrier] who had been enrolled, to send his own daughter Timothea, who will carry the sacred basket for the gods, in accordance with ancestral custom, and that he would bring a sacrifice that was as beautiful as possible, and would also honourably and zealously take responsibility of all the other things that were appropriate for the procession, at his own expense. (IG II² 896; cf. IG XII, 8 666)

Here, καταλέγω suggests the woman has an official and special duty to perform. The basket carrier was central to the rituals of the Great Dionysia. The fact that the father’s identity is based on his daughter’s enrolled status suggests that the honour of being a basket carrier is more important than the duty itself.
Finally, an Egyptian inscription (238 BCE) specifies enrolment restrictions in a new tribe (φυλή) of priests serving Ptolemy Adelphos. Those who already had been priests were not to transfer to the new tribe.

\[\ldots \varepsilon \iota \varsigma \delta \varepsilon [\tau \iota \nuphi \lambda \eta \nu] \]

\[\tau \acute{\alpha} \acute{\upsilon} \tau\nu \kappa \acute{\alpha} \tau \lambda \varepsilon \chi \theta \acute{\eta} \nu \iota \iota \varsigma \tau o\varsigma \, \alpha \pi \omega \, \tau \acute{o} \upsilon \prime \varsigma \tau o\varsigma \, \gamma \gamma \epsilon \nu \iota \iota \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \, \kappa \iota \rho \omicron \kappa \alpha \theta \varsigma \tau o\varsigma \, \tau \nu \varsigma \varsigm
person’s honour or right is automatically connected to his or her parent’s or offspring’s honour or right.  

Enlistment suggests a literal “list” of people. Lists are common in inscriptions for voluntary associations. They can be used to demonstrate publicly who is a member of the association, sometimes including men and women. For example, in a third century inscription from Athens, a list of 58 names lists 37 men and 21 women (the women are listed without any male associations). The inscription declares that these members intend to honour their benefactor publicly “on account of his excellence and piety he has shown to the god (ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν καὶ εὐσεβείας τῆς εἰς τὴν θεόν)” (IG II2 1297, lines 16-17; translation by Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011). Such honour is meant to challenge and encourage others to act as generous benefactors as well (lines 6-7). By including their names in the public declaration of honour, the members are accountable to follow through with their honouring of the benefactor (they are liable to pay a fine if they do not; lines 17-18). There is some sense that the members share in the honour of such a generous patron; the list implicitly honours their membership in the group as well.

In a related inscription of the same association, the names of some members are explicitly listed in order to be publicly honoured for their proper administration of matters related to the gods, if they have paid their dues. The inscription lists six men and five women (probably one more woman’s name appeared originally; IG II2 1298). Similarly, on a third century inscription in Salamis a list of members is displayed in order to honour them:

τούσδε ἐστεφάνωσεν τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θιασωτῶν ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα
καὶ δικαιοσύνης τῆς εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θιασωτῶν:

414 Some association lists include fathers and sons. For example, IG II2 1335 includes at least one father and son, and IG II2 2358 includes at least three father-son pairs).

415 Other inscriptions list both men and women (e.g., IG II2 2354), sometimes with a mix of various social rank and status (e.g., IG II2 2358, SEG 36:228).
On account of their excellence and honesty that they have shown to the association of thiasōtai, the association of thiasōtai (voted) crowns for (the following): [a list follows] (IG II² 2347).

Kloppenborg and Ascough point out that some members listed in IG II² 1325 possessed some wealth and rank, since they are called “those who contribute to the revenue of the god” (οἱ τὴν σύνοδον φέρουτες τῷ θεῷ; translation in Kloppenborg and Ascough). The list may serve to honour their rank and benefaction. These examples demonstrate that the listing of names on inscriptions were used for honorary purposes.

While καταλέγω might refer to a literal list in 1 Timothy, the author might also be using it metaphorically to indicate the kind of public honour one would receive if her name was included on a public list. Either way, the result would be the same: public recognition of the 60+ widow’s contribution to the group’s honour through her exemplary reputation.

Such a public honour is for a woman is found in IG II² 1328B. A woman named Metrodora is honoured publicly for her past work as a priestess and an attendant to other priestesses in the orgeōnes of the Mother of the Gods.

In the year that Sonikos was archon, in the month of Mounichion, at the regular assembly, the orgeōnes approved the motion that Kleippos of Aixoneus proposed: Whereas Metrodora, having been deemed worthy by the priestess Archedikē (who became priestess during the archonship of Hippakos), to serve as an attendant and to co-administer with her for a year, devoted herself (to this role) and co-administered the matters pertaining to the goddess honourably (κολαζως), appropriately (ευσχημονως), and piously (ευσεβως) and fulfilled her obligations both to the priestesses and to the orgeōnes without reproach (αυγυγκλητου); and (whereas) accordingly, when Simalē became priestess in the year that Sonikos was archon, and when she requested that the orgeōnes agree to appoint (κατασταθήναι) for her Metrodora as an attendant; and after

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416 I am not aware of any direct evidence of inscriptions by Christians as early as the late first or early second century, but a list could have been recorded in some other medium, such as parchment or vellum. The early Christians used such materials for letter writing and other documents. For example, the author of 2 Timothy has Paul ask Timothy to bring his “books and especially the parchments” (τὰ βιβλία μαλιστὰ τὰς μεμβράνας; 2 Tim 4:13). Hermas writes his visions in a little books (βιβλαριδιον) which are read to the churches (Visions 8.3).

417 On κολαζως see Chapter 12, §2.2.

418 On ευσεβως and its cognates in 1 Timothy, see Chapter 9.

419 Cf. 1 Tim 3:10 (of deacons); Tit 1:6-7 (of elders).
(the orgeōnes) agreed with her, she co-administered the priesthood honourably and appropriately and in a pious manner — what pertained to the goddess, to the priestesses, and to the orgeōnes — on account of which the priestesses also are eager to appoint her as attendant to the goddess for life. Therefore in order that they might be seen to be taking the best care of the goddess and that they might act honorably and piously in relation to the matters of the goddess; for good fortune it has been resolved by the orgeōnes, on the one hand to act in all matters that pertain to the decree that was proposed by Simon of Poros, and on the other, that the orgeōnes appoint Metrodora as an attendant to the goddess for life and that she serve indefinitely those who happen to be priestesses, and that she meets their needs honorably and appropriately; and that they takes [sic] care that all things pertaining to the goddess occur piously, just as her mother, Euaxis, continued to do these things. And let the secretary inscribe this decree on the stele of the orgeōnes.

In the first part of the inscription (not reproduced here), written eight years earlier, the association declared that a woman could not hold the position of priestess or attendant for more than a year. Metrodora’s appointment to the position for life indicates she “must have distinguished herself in some extraordinary way to merit this honor” (Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011). Metrodora was given this position for “good fortune” (ἀγαθῆς προσφορῆς) and to ensure the best and most pious care for the goddess and matters related to the goddess (lines 35-37). Her role appears to be one of guiding and mentoring priestesses who are newly appointed each year so that they function in their duties with proper piety (lines 40-42). The tangible activities associated with pious behaviour are not specified, but piety (εὐσεβείας) toward the goddess is a crucial element of Metrodora’s past activity and responsibility in teaching new priestesses.

The inscription also mentions the mother of Metrodora, Euaxis, who apparently had similar responsibilities (lines 42-43). The intergenerational aspect of this inscription suggests that her mother’s honourable behaviour was an important element in appointing Metrodora. Her mother’s pious behaviour reflects on hers, and she continues in her mother’s footsteps.420

420 Since there is no other indication of fictive kin language in the inscription, Euaxis is probably the true (biological?) mother of Metrodora rather than a fictive mother. If so, celibacy would not have been a stipulation for the position of priestess.
There are no direct indications of Metrodora’s age when she is appointed as attendant to the goddess for life. If she is a mentor, the cultural norm of age hierarchy would suggest she is older than the newer priestesses. It is difficult to imagine that an appointment for life would be made unless Metrodora had established her reputation over a good part of her lifetime.

The honour bestowed upon Metrodora resembles the enlisted widow in 1 Tim 5:9 in several ways. First, the focus on exemplary pious behaviour is of utmost importance. For Metrodora, she is appointed because of her past pious service to the goddess as well as her apparent ability to mentor new priestesses in similar pious service. For the 60+ widow, the list of her past activities demonstrates the kind of behaviour that sets an example, specifically for other women. This might be the kind of behaviour the author has in mind when he equates “proper behaviour” in the household of God with εὐσεβεία (3:14-16), especially since it contrasts starkly with the female behaviour he condemns in 2:9-15. Second, both of these positions are suggestive of mentoring rather than front-line activity. Metrodora would not be performing the activities of the priestesses herself; she would be teaching such activities to new priestesses. Similarly, the author of 1 Timothy was not establishing an “order of widows” in which new widows were ordained to begin a ministry. Instead, he highlighted particularly pious, old women to be role models for other women; the honour bestowed upon them by suggesting they be put on a list was based on their lifetime of good works and earned reputation.

Furthermore, in both cases, previous pious activity is rewarded publicly by encouraging a role and position that would last for life. This is made clear for Metrodora. In the case of the 60+ widow, who could not expect to live much longer, her honour would presumably last for the rest of her life. Finally, the sense of intergenerational continuity for Metrodora is suggestive for the context of 1 Tim 5:9 since the author frames this section with a definition of how intergenerational relationships within the community should function like they do in a
household context (5:1-2). If older women were like mothers (5:1), this would include her modelling proper behaviour to the younger members of the group like mother for a daughter.

The inscription is a public declaration of Metrodora’s reputation and honourable behaviour. Kloppenborg and Ascough argue that the threat to withhold honours (indicated in an earlier part of the inscription) would be as powerful an incentive to follow the rules as a fine would be. The idea of “enlisting” exemplary widows in 1 Tim 5:9 might reflect a similar sense of awarding public honour for those who behave properly and piously, or by implication, withholding public honours for problematic behaviour.

4.4. Heteronymous factors

The heteronymous dynamics of the statement are important to consider. For the author of 1 Timothy, women were grouped into specific types (e.g., real widows, younger widows, etc.), but remained otherwise anonymous. This works to his advantage: on the one hand, he can portray his main character’s (Paul’s) authoritative recommendations in a way that was general enough to appear to apply to a community several decades earlier. This rhetoric is reminiscent of Paul’s directives in 1 Cor 7 for how he thinks women and men should approach marriage and remarriage, but the author of 1 Timothy writes with a stronger authoritative tone. On the other hand, he was able to address what he perceived as pressing issues for the real audience through his fictional story. The author does not name any specific women, here or elsewhere in 1 Timothy, while Paul does name specific women at times (e.g., Phoebe commended as patroness in Rom 16:1-2). While the author of 1 Timothy may have specific women in mind when he

421 In 1 Corinthians, Paul makes suggestions using third person imperatives (e.g., 7:2, 3, 12, 18, 20), comparisons to his own unmarried state (7:7, 8), and differentiation between his own advice and that directives of “the Lord” (7:10, 12, 25), and occasionally second person imperatives (7:5, 27). The author of 1 Timothy uses second person imperatives more frequently as “Paul” directs “Timothy (e.g., 5:1, 3, 7, 11, 19, 20, 22), and third person imperatives with some frequency (e.g., 5:4, 9, 16, 17). See Appendix 4.

422 Comparatively, the author of 2 Timothy mentions Timothy’s mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (1:5), highlighting the passing down of “sincere faith” through the generations. Unlike the closing of 1 Timothy, 2
addresses issues related to women (especially 2:9-15, 3:11, 5:3-16), his fiction does not allow him to directly address specific women.

5. Not likely to remarry

Another suggestion for “why sixty” is that widows over sixty were unlikely to remarry (Easton 1947:153; Spicq 1947:533; Knight 1992:223; Bassler 1996:97; Johnson 2001:264). Spicq cites the *Apostolic Constitutions* (3.1.1; see §4.2) to support this notion, contrasting the younger women of 5:11 who wanted to remarry. This third century text was an interpretation of 1 Tim 5:9-10, and applies to a later, evolved Christian community. However, by comparing first century, pre-Christian attitudes and practices regarding menopause, marriage and widowhood, it seems that the author has more interest in the community’s reputation than remarriage per se.

5.1. Menopause

Marriage was a union formed primarily for procreation. Therefore, widows who were beyond childbearing age were not likely to remarry (Cokayne 2003:121-25). In his defense of his marriage to Pudentilla, a wealthy widow, Apuleius denied that he used sorcery to gain her affections and that he was a legacy hunter, trying to rob her sons of their inheritance.

Pudentilla’s age made a difference for whether or not it was suitable for her to remarry. Apuleius’ opponents suggested Pudentilla was sixty, but Apuleius proved she was just over forty (*Defense* 3.67, 4.89). Pudentilla was a wealthy widow with grown children. She was an unlikely candidate to remarry, in part because remarriage might compromise her children’s inheritance. Apuleius was adamant that her surviving son’s inheritance would not be jeopardized by his marriage to their middle-aged mother.

Timothy more closely approximates Paul’s letters by including greetings to Prisca and Claudia in his closing remarks (4:19, 21).
The Augustan laws made *fifty* the upper age limit of remarriage for widows or divorcées, which was likely based on the age of when women were no longer fertile (Cokayne 2003:122; Parkin 2003:194-98). A woman’s decline in fertility as she ages is associated with the process of menopause, although a woman’s fertility declines before her menstrual cycle ceases. Pliny the Elder observed that, “A woman does not bear children after the age of fifty, and with the majority menstruation ceases at forty” (*Natural History* 7.14.61). The ancient sources differ as to when a woman reached menopause. A few ancient (male) authors stated that some women menstruate up to their sixtieth year (e.g., Soranus *Gynaecology* 1.20, first or second century). It is unlikely that author of 1 Timothy was aware of referring to an obscure medical tradition subscribing sixty as the upper limit of women’s menstruating years. As Soranus pointed out, menopause varied from woman to woman. Nevertheless, the age of fifty seems to have been when the ancient male authors typically thought a woman reached menopause.\(^{423}\)

A significant problem with the “unlikely to remarry” theory is the gap between the age when men thought menopause normally occurred (around 50 years of age), and the chronological age of 60. Marshall does note the “gap” between supporting widows sixty and older and the younger widows of childbearing age, but disregards its implications by stating, “these instructions are probably more in the nature of ideals than in precise regulations” (1999:593). Yet the author is very precise about the age of “not less than sixty”; Marshall’s comment does not address the deliberate specificity of the phrase.

Men understood the implications of menopause.\(^{424}\) Bremmer argues that “the Greeks saw women primarily as producers of heirs and objects of love or lust. Menopause and (approaching) old age therefore constituted a fundamental change in the man-woman relationship.”

\(^{423}\) Lesley Dean-Jones notes that Greek medical writers were not concerned about the mechanics or symptoms of menopause, though they are aware of it and considered older women “dry” (1994:106-7). For a range of ancient sources see Amundsen and Diers 1970.

\(^{424}\) In the Mishnah, an old woman was defined in terms of menopause (cessation of menstruation) (*Niddah* 1:5).
relationship in antiquity” (Bremmer 1987:191). However, male authors did not normally use menopause as a measure of old age. Harlow points out that menopause itself is not visible or public, so it is a poor marker for determining women’s age (2007:199-200). Other indicators of age that are visible and thus more obvious markers of age, such as physical appearance (hence the negative stereotype of old women) and familial roles (hence the potential positive stereotype). The changes in women’s roles as their sons become adults and they have grandchildren are particularly important (2007:199-200). In modern Greek culture, mothers may continue to be fertile after their children are adults, but are embarrassed to be pregnant at this stage of their lives, when they are supposed to be grandmothers. Also, an adolescent son would be embarrassed if his mother was pregnant because this reveals her sexuality. Appearing to act in ways appropriate to one’s life stage is an important cultural value (Beyene 1989:114).

Menopause and becoming a mother-in-law and grandmother generally occur at around the same time for many women, but their stage of life rather than their biological cycle that is socially visible (cf. Brown 1995:18). At this stage, though they were no longer valued for their fecundity, older women did have influence in their families (cf. de Luce 1993a:42).

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425 Similarly, Harlow argues that men became less interested in women as they aged (except if they had wealth), especially as they became less associated with fertility. Male authors were most interested in females in terms of betrothal and marriage, producing children and the end of marriages due to death or divorce (2007:196-97). This is what the evidence suggests at least, since much of the evidence is based on inheritance issues.

426 Brown agrees that, “Menopause is typically unmarked by ritual and therefore remains unreported by ethnographers. Also the perimenopausal period in a woman’s life tends to be briefer than middle age.” She suggests that the term “middle-age” is more accurate for the stage of life at which women are typically most powerful, attaining relative leisure and authority. The cross-cultural evidence suggests this is a typical stage of life for many women (1995:18). In her ethnography of her own family in modern Athens, Panourgíá recalls that she told her mother her concerns about baking the Eucharist bread for the Orthodox church while she was menstruating. (Even though she is not personally religious herself, she found the ritual important, particularly since it related to her dying grandfather). Officially a woman is not allowed to touch the bread if she is menstruating. Her mother scoffed at the idea that menstruation affected the bread and told her to take it in proudly (1995:100-1). Of course, no one but Panourgíá and her mother would know the difference.
5.2. Sexual passion

Kelly (1963:115) and Thurston (1989:47) suggest that the author of 1 Timothy specified the age of sixty because there was less chance of sexual passion being a problem for widows of this age, in contrast to the behaviour of younger widows in 5:11-13.

In the ancient Mediterranean, woman’s behaviour was directly correlated with male honour, and was strongly associated with her chastity, specifically with her reputation for chastity (MacDonald 1996:253). A woman was “normally” married, and a marital relationship was the only relationship in which a woman could be legitimately sexually active. Both widowhood and old age were therefore liminal states for women. Since widows were both sexually experienced (unlike virgins) and no longer had male control over their sexuality, they were anomalous, and automatically considered suspicious (Buitelaar 1995:8). An old woman, in the male perspective, was beyond childbearing years and should no longer be in a sexual relationship. Negative stereotypes and marginalization of old women were tied to the abhorrence Romans had for old women who were still sexually active. Female sexuality was supposed to be tied to reproduction (Cokayne 2003:135). The sex-crazed old woman was a common character in comedy (Aristophanes Assemblywomen 877-1111; see Chapter 11, §4). An ideal old widow was not sexually active.

It is probably true that women over sixty were unlikely to remarry, and they may have been perceived as having less sexual passion, but this was just as true of women over fifty. A gap of a full decade (between 50, the average age of menopause, and 60, the age specified in 1 Timothy)

427 Rosavich comments that “if men are not interested in having sex with older women, then from the male perspective older women should not be interested in having sex; and if they are interested—again from the male perspective—they deserve to be ridiculed” (1994:111). Bremmer (1987:206) and Parkin (2003:246-47) go further to say that old women were past their usefulness, and this is why they were portrayed so negatively. Among the modern Egyptian Bedouin, old women and remarriage are the object of joking because marriage is associated with sex, and old women are not supposed to be sexually active (Abu-Lughod 1993:82-84). Cf. Panourgia 1995:203.

428 This may be what Hanson is implying when he states that “sixty” creates “an obvious solution” where the experiment of enlisting young widows was tried and failed, though he does not elaborate (1982:98).
should hardly be ignored. Therefore, suggesting that widows would not remarry or be sexual after sixty is not an adequate explanation for the specificity of sixty.

5.3. Univira

1 Tim 5:9 indicates that a 60+ widow must also be “a one husband woman” (υιός ἄνδρος γυνή). A woman married only once was known in Latin literature as a univira—at term associated with public image (see Chapter 5, §3.2). The term came to be associated with virtuous widows in early Christianity, but Marjorie Lightman and William Zeisel argue that this was an adaptation of the original term. For the Romans, the virtue of a univira was related to consistently being under male authority in her life, first her father’s and then her husband’s authority (1977:20). In late antiquity, the Christian church provided a kind of “surrogate for male authority” that allowed widows to appear virtuous and chaste (1977:28-30). But Romans did not normally associate widowhood with virtue or esteem; they considered it a regrettable and unlucky circumstance (1977:26).

Ideally, a woman was married only once. Lifelong marriage to one husband was morally superior to multiple marriages, but remarriage was “strongly encouraged by kin, society and state” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:95). Being married to only one man reflected ideal chastity, but it was also considered good fortune, for many husbands died before their wives at relatively young ages. If a woman was married to only one man in her lifetime, this usually meant that either he outlived her or she was an older woman when he died (and therefore unlikely to remarry if she was no longer able to bear children). She was considered fortunate because of the longevity of her husband (Treggiari 1991:235).

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429 In his comments about the sixty year old women involved in funerals (above) Bremmer equates the age of 60 and the evident freedom for women this age in this context with menopause (1987:192). However, as with the specific mention of 60 in 1 Tim 5:9, menopause typically occurred by age 50, leaving a gap of at least a decade.

430 Cornelia (see below) states: “Therefore when a maiden’s toga gave way to the nuptial torch, and a different headband caught up to bound my hair, I was wedded to your couch, Paullus, destined so to leave it that on this stone I shall be recorded as married to one man alone” (Propertius Elegies 4.11.36).
A univira had certain ritual rights because of her chastity and good fortune. A woman who joined a bride to her new husband (pronuba) had to be married only once with a living husband, presumably to confer the same kind of fortune on the bride (Isidore Etymologies 9.7.8; Treggiari 1991:233). Only a univira could sacrifice to the goddess Pudicita (“Chastity”; Livy History of Rome 10.23).

Lightman and Zeisel posit that in the late Republic divorce was more common than it was in the early Republic (Laudatio Turiae 1.27). Univira took on a new meaning of a woman who was exceptional in her female virtue and fortune in contrast to a matrona who might be married several times over her lifetime (1977:24-25). Funerary inscriptions from this time demonstrate that the term was used by the non-elite as well as the elite, especially men who wished to increase their social status, and display respect for traditional virtues (mos maiorum; 1977:26). Their wives, whom they describe as univira, were often quite young (Treggiari 1991:235).\(^\text{431}\)

For a woman whose husband died, she may have felt some tension between the status given to univira versus the social and legal expectations to remarry (Harlow 2007:206, n.72). One marriage meant one sexual relationship, and this kind of loyalty signified other virtues as well. In an idealization of the days of old, Valerius Maximus describes women married once in laudable terms:

Women who had been content with a single marriage used to be honoured with a crown of chastity. For they thought that the mind of a married woman was particularly loyal and uncorrupted if it knew not how to leave the bed on which she had surrendered her virginity, believing that trial of many marriages was as it were the sign of a legalized incontinence. (2.1.3)

\(^{431}\) For example, in one inscription, Fabia who died leaving three children, was only 23 years old (CIL 6.31711), and Aurelia, a freedwoman of Augustus, was 36 years old (CIL 6.13303). On the other hand, someone like Negelia, at 42 years old, having been married for 24 years, was fortunate to be called a univira since her husband outlived her (CIL 5.7763).
Plutarch portrays Cornelia, the mother of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, as an exemplary widow who was devoted to her sons (Harlow and Laurence 2002:68, 89). She refused to marry again after her husband died, leaving her with twelve children, even when Ptolemy the king requested her hand. Although only three children survived to adulthood (one daughter and two sons), her sons became famous for their public activity in Rome. Plutarch attributes their exemplary virtue to their mother’s conscientious care (The Life of Tiberius Gracchus 1.3-5). Cornelia was from an elite family, and revered by the people for her role as mother. They erected a statue in her honour, as mother of the Gracci (The Life of Caius Gracchus 4; Pliny Natural History 34.31). After her sons were killed, Plutarch recounts that she retained her virtuous behaviour, without grief when she recalled their deeds because of her strength of character. Plutarch describes her entertaining and interacting with noble men, with hospitality and honour (The Life of Caius Gracchus 19.1-3). Plutarch focused on her reputation rather than her sexuality of marital status.

6. Restricting power

Deborah Krause suggests that by restricting the number of widows to be “enrolled,” the author was putting limits on the power that women had in the community (2004:100). Disqualifying widows who were under sixty from a position of power would certainly curtail the power of women, especially if women over sixty were often frail. C.K. Barrett considers most 60+ widows “too infirm” to actively serve the church (1963:75); Marshall suggests that they were not able to care for their own needs any longer (1999:593); and Thurston tentatively posits they were less mobile, so less prone to gadding about. The most common ailments of old age in antiquity were blindness (cf. Oedipus at Colonus), paralysis as a result of strokes,

432 Valerius Maximus recounts a story of a guest staying at Cornelia’s home. She showed Cornelia her fine jewellery. “Cornelia kept her in talk until her children came home from school, and then said, 'These are my jewels’” (4.4.1).

433 However, since she argues for an order of widows, Thurston notes their “duties” may include visitation. She acknowledges the weakness of such reasoning (1989:47).
degenerative arthritis, and deafness. Infectious diseases, which could affect people at any age (Scheidel 2001a), were a major cause of disability in old age (Haj 1970:148-75).⁴³⁴

Indeed, in the second century Acts of John, the old women of Ephesus were gathered together to receive care (30). Of those who were over sixty, only four were healthy; the others were sick and debilitated. John attributes their poor health to the devil, and seeks to heal them so they can be useful. It is curious that John is surprised at the number of ill women who are over the age of sixty, for illness and physical weakness could hardly have been uncommon for aging women in the ancient world. The author of the Acts of John may have known the specific reference to sixty in 1 Tim 5:9, which was also associated with Ephesus, and assumed women over sixty had an important role to play in the community.

While the author is concerned for women’s behaviour, it is not clear that “enlisting” widows means to restrict the number of widows in 5:9-10, either from receiving aid or for gaining power.

6.1. A so-called “order of widows”

Some commentators suggest that the widows in 5:9 were “enrolled” as a “special class” of widows (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:75), especially a kind of ecclesiastical office,⁴³⁵ which was, or developed into, the later “order of widows” (ordo viduarum; Spicq 1947:532; Thurston 1989:44-53; MacDonald 1988:185).⁴³⁶ In this interpretation, the author listed the 60+ widows separately because of the special nature of the group (Thurston 1989:44), and in order to

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⁴³⁴ Fareed Haj suggests that evidence for disability from the ancient Near East would probably be similar for the Roman Empire in antiquity (1970:22).

⁴³⁵ Gustav Stählin posits the real widow chooses to be “alone” in order to function in a ministry that includes prayer (1979:456).

⁴³⁶ The argument for an office of widows is based on several details in the text. Thurston interprets “honour” (5:1) as payment for service, κατάληγον (5:9) as an introduction to regulations for the “order,” and the so-called “vow” (πιστίς) associated with the younger widows (5:14) as a vow of celibacy (also Verner 1983:164; Thurston 1989:44-45). Thurston recognizes that separately each of these points is refutable, but argues that together “they make a good case” (1989:46).
put limits on which women could be part of the order (1989:53). In particular, it excluded the widows who were younger (5:11) and who had married more than once (5:9). In this interpretation, the real widows who need assistance cannot be equated with the official “circle” of widows.

Although an “order of widows” is evident in later literature,\(^{437}\) it is difficult to justify such a role in this text. First, if the author were setting up qualifications for an ongoing “order of widows,” his directives to younger widows would be at odds with his long-term goal. If the younger widows remarried, as they were encouraged to do in 5:14, they would never qualify to become part of the “order,” since they must be the wife of one husband (5:9).\(^{438}\)

Second, though the list of qualifications and attributes bears some resemblance to the lists found in 1 Tim 3:1-13 for bishop, deacon and deaconess (or deacon’s wife),\(^{439}\) the lists are not convincingly parallel (Table 6). There are a number of qualifications that do not overlap. Of those that do, the parallel found in all three referring to having one wife/husband (3:2, 12; 5:9) might mean only married once, but in a culture of frequent young adult death and divorce, this would disqualify many otherwise apt people. It is more likely to be a reference to marital fidelity (Collins 2002:139-40), which is important in the overall argument of the author who is advocating for proper behaviour in all aspects of moral life. The man who aspires to be an

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\(^{437}\) By the time of the *Apostolic Constitutions* in the late fourth century, a formal order of widows is in place (3.1.1, 2), but we have earlier evidence in Tertullian (160-220 CE). He clearly names an order of widows alongside the offices of bishop, presbyters and deacons (*On Monogamy* 11.1), and mentions an age preference for older women in the order: “I know plainly, that in a certain place a virgin of less than twenty years of age has been placed in the order of widows!” (*On the Veiling of Virgins* 9.2). He refers to the statement of a one-husband woman from 1 Tim 5:9 (*To His Wife* 1.7.4), and possibly refers to an widow’s office in the following list: “But what if a bishop, if a deacon, if a widow, if a virgin, if a doctor, if even a martyr, have fallen from the rule (of faith)…” (*Prescription Against Heretics* 3.5; Rankin 1995:176).

\(^{438}\) This is recognized by some scholars (e.g., Bassler 1984:33-34), but never adequately accounted for. See, for example, Guthrie 1990:114, discussed briefly below.

\(^{439}\) Kelly suggests that these “duties” are similar to the responsibilities of the overseer (1963:117), but as Gordon Fee points out, giving primacy to the duties themselves does not accurately reflect the meaning of the text. Fee also emphasizes that “this list reflects a reputation *already gained* through these kinds of good deeds” rather than a list of current duties (1988:125, emphasis added).
overseer desires a “noble work” (a reference to his potential future appointment; 3:1) whereas the old widow’s “noble works” refers to her current reputation (5:10). The overseer candidate and widow are both associated with hospitality, but the author uses different terms (3:2; 5:10). All three are assumed to have children, but the overseer and deacon as fathers are required to exercise authority over their children in the present (3:2, 4, 12), whereas, the widow raised children in the past (5:10). The parallels demonstrate the author’s concern for proper familial behaviour, but do not suggest that the author is outlining an office for the 60+ widows.440

Table 6: Comparison of overseer, deacon and 60+ widow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Someone who aspires to be an overseer</th>
<th>Deacon</th>
<th>1 Tim reference</th>
<th>60+ widow</th>
<th>1 Tim reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the husband of one wife (μιᾶς γυναίκος ἄνδρα)</td>
<td>the husband of one wife (μιᾶς γυναίκος ἄνδρας)</td>
<td>3:2, 12</td>
<td>the wife of one husband (ἐνὸς ἄνδρος γυνῆ)</td>
<td>5:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desires a noble work (καλοῦ ἔργου)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>currently bears witness in noble works (ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς)</td>
<td>5:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hospitable (φιλόξενον)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:2</td>
<td>has shown hospitality (ἐξενοδόχησεν)</td>
<td>5:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manage his household well, and keep his children submissive with all respect (τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ, μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος)</td>
<td>deacons must manage their children and their households well (τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καί τῶν ἱδίων οίκοι)</td>
<td>3:4, 12</td>
<td>has raised children (ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν)</td>
<td>5:10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the context of the overseer and deacons comprises a new section of the text (following the phrase πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, 3:1), designated for listing qualifications of these leaders. In contrast, the widow’s description is listed amid directives to various groups in the community who are acting improperly.441

440 Old women are also certainly not like men in this context (cf. Chapter 4, §5). They are exemplary old women, meant to be models to younger women (namely, middle-aged women; see Chapter 11).

441 Namely, young people needed to respect their elders (5:1), adult children needed to care for their aging mothers and grandmothers (5:4), young widows needed to remarry (5:14), elders needed to have compensation (5:17-18),
Third, the grammatical structure suggests different purposes for the lists. The list of attributes for overseer and deacons follows the phrase “must be” ( diá ... ἐίναι; 3:2; 3:8 borrows the phrase in 3:2 to make sense of the sentence), followed by adjectives and attributive participles. The purpose of this list is to outline current qualities found in those who will be reliable, faithful, active leaders in the community. The widow’s list follows the passive imperative: καταλεγέσθω; let her be selected (if she qualifies). The widow’s current qualities are listed as attributive participles (5:9), and her past deeds are listed in the durative imperfect (actions started in the past and continuing to some undefined point, with an emphasis on long-lasting actions; Brooks and Winbury 1979:91-92). The purpose of this list is to select particular women based on their age, marital status, reputation and past female accomplishments (cf. Johnson 2001:264, 274). While the author of 1 Timothy specifies the aspiration of someone to be overseer (ἐπισκοπής ὑπέρεται; 3:1) and the action of serving as deacons (διακόνεω; 3:10, 13), neither aspiration nor action on the part of the widows is implied in the directive to “select” them (5:9). Thus, beyond the fact of its later development, there is little evidence that the author intends to establish an “order of widows” as an active office.

Finally, those who posit an “order” or “circle” of widows consider the list in 5:9-10 as prescriptive of a distinctly renewable role in the community. They suppose that list outlines which current and future women are qualified to belong. That these verses are used this way later in the church is quite certain (e.g., Tertullian On the Veiling of Virgins 9.2). Whether of not this was the original intention at the time of writing is not clear. The authority of the “office” itself is not clear in 1 Timothy (cf. 3:1-13). This is in contrast with Ignatius’ description of the

young men needed to refrain from accusing elders (5:19-20; see Chapter 12), and slaves needed to respect their masters (6:1-2). Neither do I consider the description of “elders” (5:17-18) to be parallel or related to the qualifications in 3:1-13.
overseer and deacon, for example, which betray signs of institutionalization such that the role itself, rather than the person in the position, held authority (Mag 6.1).

However, we find in 1 Tim 5:9 a present situation as part of the present solution to the problems in the community. The author was not considering future widows over sixty years old, but thinking about present ones in his community. The author is using Paul’s authority and reputation within the community to address a new and difficult situation, namely the “opposing teachers” (1:1). These opposing teachers were instigating problematic behaviour that compromised family solidarity, women’s modesty and the reputation of the entire Christian community (see Chapter 7, §2.2).

6.2. Women’s power

Returning to Krause’s idea of women’s power, Mediterranean women, modern and ancient, tend to gain more power as they progress through the life course (Chapter 4; §4.2). After menopause or becoming a grandmother, a woman was freer to function outside of her household, perhaps employed as a mourner, midwife or messenger (Bremmer 1987:197-98); she usually earned respect from her children, especially if she owned some wealth. Parkin interprets this freedom not so much as a privilege, but as a sign of her lack of status, that is, her unimportance in society (2003:246, 259). His description of old women in the Roman world is

Osiek and Balch posit that the author “lays down procedures for the acceptance of widows into something that must have looked like a women’s service organization that accepted women of proven virtue who qualified by also being in need” (1997:166). Knight suggests that the church was committed to provide support for these widows, but that they in turn provided special tasks from time to time (1992:223). Guthrie rightly reasons that the age of sixty was too old to enter into an order of widows, and it would be “inconceivable” for the church to limit aid for needy widows based on an “arbitrary age.” He suggests that a small group of widows who received aid were privileged with special duties, and 5:9-10 is an official recognition of these women (1990:114). As argued above, whether or not the 60+ widows received aid was not the author’s concern in this section, nor is the author outlining special duties or qualifications for an office.

Contra Dibelius and Conzelmann who assert this section “intersperses a general teaching about duties with instructions for specific classes within the congregation” (1972:73). The details in the text refer to a specific situation, and a particular solution. Though some sections are based on traditional lists or formulae (e.g., 1:8-11; 2:1-7), they serve a particular purpose in the context of the letter. For example, the author specified the expected behaviour of adult children toward their parents (5:4, 8). He describes and repudiates specific behaviour of women (2:9-15) and younger widows (5:11-15). These hardly seem like standard exhortations in a general situation. Rather, they address concrete present problems, even if we possess few details about the nature of these problems.
rather negative, focusing on their lack of “usefulness” in their post-reproductive stage of life. But if old women were wholly without power, there would probably not be such strong emotions and stereotypes portrayed in the public domain, such as comedy and art.

Bremmer describes an old woman as “an object of fear and loathing” (1987:206). As in the modern Mediterranean, old women were associated with magic and witchcraft (Bremmer 1987:204-6). “On the one hand, this is an obvious case of stigmatising due to the marginal position of old women, but on the other hand, old women of all times have made use of magic to strengthen their feeble position within society” (1987:205-6). This sort of power or threat might be behind the negative connotation of “old wives’ tales” in 1 Tim 4:7 (cf. MacDonald 1983:14). If 1 Tim 4:7 alludes to a negative portrayal of old women (old wives’ tales), and their potential power over younger women, then 1 Tim 5:9-10 describes the positive stereotype of old women—the epitome of domestic duty and self-control. The contrast with the exemplary old widows of 1 Tim 5:9-10 parallels ambivalence toward old women in the ancient Roman sources.

Men may have been threatened by the power of middle-aged women, who were at the height of such power, especially with their influence over their grown children. If the only women granted power were those who had reached the advanced age of sixty, as Krause

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444 Timothy is told, “Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives’ tales (βεβήλους καὶ γραφῶδεις μύθους). Train yourself in εὐσεβεία, for while physical training is of some value, εὐσεβεία is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (4:7-8, NRSV). The phrase βεβήλους καὶ γραφῶδεις μύθους means myths that are unholy and associated with old women. “Old wives’ tales” were synonymous with “nonsense,” reflecting the idea that old women were susceptible to superstition. The phrase could also be used literally, since old women were “story-tellers par excellence” (Bremmer 1987:200-1; cf. Kartzow 2009:138). For a modern example of old women as story-tellers, see Abu-Lughod 1993. In 1 Timothy, the author contrasts the proper behaviour of εὐσεβεία with the improper implications of stories that promote unhealthy teaching, some of which are associated with older women. MacDonald argues that these old wives’ tales were oral stories that were eventually written down in what we now know as The Acts of Paul and Thecla (1986), which promote asceticism and women in prominent teaching positions. Old women could be seen as a bad influence on their younger counterparts: “avoid corruption by not encouraging old women to call” (second century poet Naumachios, quoted by Stobaeus 4.23.7; Treggiari 1991:197).

445 Women working together may threaten men’s power. Gilmore describes men’s experience of women in Andalusia: wives working with their mothers can form a formidable team, so mothers-in-law are threatening figures (1990:960-61).
suggests, it would indeed restrict the power of middle-aged women under sixty. However, the intent of 1 Tim 5:9-10 is not to restrict women’s power, but to highlight certain women as ideal matrons. The attributes found in 5:9-10 suggest that the author wanted to “select” women of lifelong virtue to be *models* for the middle-aged women of the community (see Chapter 11).

### 6.3. Past activity and present reputation

The translation of 5:9-10 at the beginning of this chapter is diagrammed to show the Greek structure of the sentence. The widow’s *current* qualities are listed as attributive participles, namely being not less than sixty, the wife of one husband and bearing witness in noble works (5:9). The conditions that qualify her to be enlisted are all past deeds. The imperfect emphasizes the long duration of the actions (Brooks and Winbury 1979:91-92).

The 60+ widows are labelled as currently “bearing witness in noble works” εν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη (5:9). This may imply some level of activity, but probably has more to do with reputation, based on *past* activity (5:10). Plutarch uses the phrase ἔργα καλὰ to denote the carefully cultivated fruit of a virtuous man who should remain in office in his old age (*Moralia* 786D). In *1 Clement*, emissaries sent to Corinth from Rome were “faithful and temperate men (ἀνδρὰς πιστοὺς καὶ σωφρόνας) who have lived blamelessly among us from youth to old age (γήρους)” (63.3). Their lifelong commitment and virtue were seen as essential characteristics to help in the problematic situation in Corinth, and offers a parallel to the virtuous old women in 5:9-10.

This ideal widow has demonstrated her virtue in several past activities. First, she should have raised children (ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν). It was not uncommon for widows to keep and raise

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446 MacDonald, equating the 60+ widows with the real widows (who have no children to care for them; 5:5), suggests that she may not have raised her own children, but foundlings (1996:226). In ancient Greece, Bremmer suggest that old women were typically nurses of children (1987:192, 193, 200), and would find foundlings because young women were not free to move around (1987:192). While old women may have raised others’ children at times, this would not preclude her own children for several reasons. First, lots of children died before they reached adulthood (Cornelia only had three survive out of twelve; Plutarch *The Life of Tiberius Gracchus* 1.5). Second, if
their underage children, even if they legally belonged to their father’s family. She may also have had grandchildren whom she helped to raise. Along with childbearing, childrearing was an important female task. Plutarch’s description of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, demonstrates that a mother’s exemplary virtue was instrumental in her children’s virtue (The Life of Tiberius Gracchus 1.4-5).

Second, she should provide hospitality (ἐξουσίακεφαλή). This may have been in her own home (if she inherited or was granted the right of habitation of a house; e.g., Digest 7.8.2.1, 7.8.4-9), or could apply to helping with tasks related to hospitality in households that belonged to other community members. Food preparation would comprise an important part of hospitality. This is women’s work (cf. Danforth 1982; Kenyon 1991). Similarly, she was to have assisted those in distress (ἡμελομενοίς ἐπιρρέομαι). This might mean tending the sick, injured or grieving. This sort of task was also connected to women’s work, especially tied to networks of women who would band together for such purposes. In female networks in modern Mediterranean societies where many women come together to make proper preparations, older women have positions of authority, usually women in their 40s and 50s, past caring for young children with more freedom and resources to organize rites of passage and assist with various life crises (cf. Tit 2:3-5; Sacks 1992:1-6).

In addition, the old widow was to have washed the feet of saints (ἀγίων ποδας ἐνίψευν). This is a unique and enigmatic phrase. It is found in a fourth century inscription honouring a female deacon with phrases found in 1 Tim 5:10 (Eisen 2000:164-67). Ute Eisen notes that washing feet was a way to honour guests and an act of love. Rather than menial work, it may have been an honourable task, perhaps hearkening back to the woman who washed Jesus’ feet in

we do not equate the two sets of widows, there is no problem in positing that the 60+ widows raised their own children.
Luke 7:36-50 (2000:166).\footnote{We cannot know for certain the extent to which different communities knew or utilized the symbolic act of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet in John’s gospel.} The word ἁγιών is found nowhere else in the letters to Timothy and Titus, but occurs frequently in Paul’s undisputed letters, where it refers to all believers (e.g., Rom 1:7, Phil 1:1, 2 Cor 13:12, Phm 5, 7). Much later usage designated “saints” as particular individuals who had lived pious lives. As a matter of speculation, I wonder if here it could have referred to traveling apostles of Paul’s era and later,\footnote{It is difficult to assess what the meaning of “saint” was at the end of the first century. In the mid-second century, Polycarp refers to saints (sanctos) in a sense that may not refer to all believers: “and may [God] grant you the lot and portion to be among his saints (inter sanctos)—and to us as well with you” (Letter to the Philippians 12.2). I recognize that this is not conclusive evidence.} for surely it would have been someone’s duty to wash their feet. Washing feet could refer to a tangible, or symbolic, connection these women had with important members of the community whom they knew when they were younger. Thus, these women would have been known for the good deeds they had practiced for decades, but perhaps also for the people they knew when they were younger.

Finally, the chosen widow had been devoted to every good work (ἔργῳ ἁγαθῷ ἐπηκολούθησεν), making a subtle distinction between the virtuous noble deeds (ἔργα καλὰ) of an established old woman and the everyday good works performed willingly over a life time of service.

Tertullian, though writing in the late second century when a developed order of widows was in place, suggests older widows were role models based on a lifetime of experiences (On the Veiling of Virgins 9). He was irate that a woman who was less than twenty years old was included in the order of widows. He argues that she does not belong because of her age, but also her lack of experience. He implies that the order of widows, as dictated by 1 Tim 5:9-10, is comprised of women who are at least sixty, have been married, are mothers and have educated children; these experiences are required so they can legitimately advise and comfort others. Experience is necessary so that a worthy woman is tested through her life course; the young
virgin could not receive public honour because she had not been tested through experience that only comes with age.

In a culture where old women were perceived in the public eye as either ideal matrons or old crones unable to control themselves, the 60+ widows exemplified all that the author hoped for in women’s behaviour. The special widow may also have provided a way to remind younger generations of the inheritance they received from their forebears, the founders of their Christian community. They were not likely to be alive for very much longer (especially those well over sixty), so the special distinction and recognition was important for the community. On the other hand, to call too much attention to these women would not be prudent. They exemplified virtue and embodied the community’s memory of the first generation, but pointed to the truth in a way befitting a woman, not in words (5:13; cf. 2:12), but in deeds, past and enduring. That they did not command too much public attention was, ironically, the point of highlighting them as models of virtue.

Women who were sixty and older would be too old to begin a set of duties. Rather, the author highlights a widow who is not less than sixty, faithful in her marriage, and a model of virtue demonstrated by her good deeds. Her past deeds demonstrate her virtue. Her life experience over the various stages demonstrate consistent virtue that remains for her in old age. She is an example of an ideal matron, highlighted to exemplify the traits the older women should be striving for and modelling to the younger women. Whereas some old women in ancient Mediterranean society were despised, these old widows were revered.

7. Threshold of old age

Finally, Spicq (1947:532-33) and others have pointed out that sixty was the threshold of old age in antiquity (Barrett 1963:75; Thurston 1989:47; Kelly 1993:115; Bassler 1996:97; Marshall 1999:593). The age of sixty in the ancient world was considered old, but Roman
textual sources were not consistent about 60 as the commencement of old age. Sources indicate that “old age” could start as early as 46 (Cicero On Old Age 17.60) or as late as 69. Parkin argues that it is convenient for scholars to consider the age of 60 as the start of old age, but 60 was not an age at which someone was suddenly old (2003:16). Some ancient sources did specify the chronological age of 60, which I examine below.

7.1. “Sixty years old” in ancient literature

Chronological age was often used in the extant literature for rhetorical effect. “Age terms as labels might be used as a means of imposing authority, of showing respect, or of causing calculated affront” (Parkin 2003:23). For example, Apuleius’ detractors said that Pudentilla should not remarry because of her advanced age of sixty (Defense 3.67, 4.89), but Apuleius demonstrates that she was just over forty, based on documents recording her birth as a matter of public record and the number of consuls since she was born (4.89). The detractors chose the age of sixty as a polemical strategy to show that Pudentilla should not have remarried.

In his comments on the 60+ widows of 1 Tim 5:9, Spicq states that sixty was the typical age of retirement (1969:532), but this is only true for elite men. The ancient Romans perceived men’s and women’s life stages differently (see Chapter 4, §4), as seen in the Augustan marriage laws. Men were required to remarry between the ages of 25 and 60, and women between 20 and 50.

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449 Dionyssius of Halicarnassus states: “New we assume [Dinarchus] returned from exile at the age of seventy, as he himself says when he calls himself an old man (γήροντα); since it is from this age onwards that we most commonly call men at this time of life old” (On Dinarcus 4; Parkin 2003:16; cf. Harlow and Laurence 2002:118). De Luce posits that women were considered old at age 40, and men at age 50 (1993a: 230-31; cf. 1993b:41). She chooses age 40 for women as “old” based on ancient physician reports of when a woman would reach menopause, but she does not consider the range of ages that ancient sources report (see Amundsen and Diers 1970).

450 For various scholars’ interpretations of when old age begins, see Parkin 2003:312, nn.3, 4. Parkin uses 60 as the “minimum age to qualify as old” as a matter of convenience (2003:36).

451 Spicq does cite several important instances of women specified as 60, which I explore below.
For men the age of sixty was associated with entering old age, a time when adult male responsibilities diminished. An elite man could retire from military and public office at the age of sixty, although sources differ on the exact age (see Parkin 2003:290-91). Roman senators were no longer required to attend the senate after the age of 60. Based on a study of papyrological evidence from Roman Egypt, Parkin argues that men were exempt from the poll tax at the age of 60 (raised to 62 in the second half of the first century; 2003:157-62), and from public services (2003:152-53), although Parkin notes that exemption from the latter was usually based on a combination of age and infirmity (2003:153-54). Release from civic duties may be why a man was no longer required to remarry after the age of sixty if he was widowed or divorced, according to Augustan marriage laws (2003:198-99).

In the Mishnah, a man who is sixty is an elder (m. Aboth 5.21). The Damascus Document specifies that a man over sixty is no longer eligible to be “Judge of the Congregation” (10.7). In sum, the male life course and old age was generally correlated with public life and civic duties (Harlow 2007:197).

The age of sixty is also portrayed as a time with full personhood was diminished, as in the case of senicide in Roman comedy. In Lucian’s Downward Journey those over sixty who had died are described as old and wrinkled like raisins (5-6). Lucian’s Peregrinus strangled his old father who was sixty (Passing of Peregrinus 10), and Gryllus is told to die and become ashes at age sixty (Herondas, Stobaeus 50.2.56). There are more serious references to senicide. According to Diodorus Siculus, the old man among the Trogodytes who could no longer tend flocks or who was disabled killed himself, or was killed, so that no one among them was over the age of sixty (3.33.6). The phrase “sixty year olds over the bridge” (see Chapter 4, §4.1.4) probably related to military voting, but some ancient writers did use the phrase allude to

\[452\] Seneca On the Brevity of Life 3.5. The age was evidently lowered from 65 (The Elder Seneca Controversies 1.8.4), but the evidence is unclear as to when or why (Parkin 2003:126-27).

\[453\] This explanation makes more sense than applying reproductive limitations to men (mentioned by Cokayne 2003:122).
senicide in the far Roman past (e.g., Ovid *Fasti* 5.623-24; see discussion in Parkin 2003:264-72).

References of women who were sixty demonstrate that sixty is considered an advanced age. A young boy says of his great aunt that she is “extremely old (γῆρος μακρόν): apparently she’s lived more than sixty years” (P.Sakaon 40.12-13; Parkin 2003:20).

Sixty is also an age at which a woman might engage in particular public activities. In Plato’s *Laws*, he specifies that priests and priestesses in his ideal city should be “not less than sixty” (ἐτη μη ἐλαττον ἕξικοντο; 6.759D; Spicq 1947:532). The age specified for men and women is the same. It suggests that 60 was old, but not too old to hold a sacred religious position. The priests and priestesses would only hold the sacred office for one year. Though the age of sixty mirrors 1 Tim 5:9, there is no time limit or specific function listed for the 60+ widow of 1 Timothy. Plato’s priestesses are mentioned in the context of public religious roles in a male context. The context of 1 Tim 5:9 does not indicate a public activity, although it does allude to a widow’s reputation in public. The 60+ widow is also mentioned in the context of other women, not men.

According to funeral regulations in ancient Greece, Solon specified that women who were sixty and over were the only women, besides close female kin, allowed in the room where the deceased was laid:

> The deceased shall be laid out in the house in any way one chooses, and they shall carry out the deceased on the day after that on which they lay him out, before the sun rises.

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454 Plato specifies that the interpreters also should be the same age (not less than sixty), but their position is for life (Laws 6.759E). Earlier he specifies that the guardian of the law must be at least fifty years old when elected, and can remain in the position for 20 years. If a person is elected at sixty, he would only hold the post for ten years, if he lives that long (Laws 6:755A). Thus, sixty denotes the last stage of life for Plato.

455 Also, Philo mentions the age of 60 as it relates to Leviticus 27:7 and the monetary worth of male and female slaves at different ages. He points out that there is no distinction made between “beauty or stature or of anything of the kind,” just distinctions in sex and age. Women and men are worth differed amounts beyond age 60, but the age at which they are “old” (πρεσβύτος/πρεσβύτας) is the same (*Special Laws* 2.32-33 [VIII]).

And the men shall walk in front, when they carry him out, and the women behind. And no woman less that sixty years of age shall be permitted to enter the chamber of the deceased (γυναῖκα δὲ μὴ ἔξειναι ἐδοείναι εἰς τὰ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος), or to follow the deceased when he is carried to the tomb, except those who are within the degree of children of cousins; nor shall any women be permitted to enter the chamber of the deceased when the body is carried out, except those who are within the degree of children of cousins. (Demosthenes Private Orations 43.62)

As noted in Chapter 4, §4.2.4, old women in the modern Mediterranean are often associated with laments and tending graves, especially in Greece (Danforth 1982). One explanation for why old women, especially old widows, fulfill this role is that they are on the “threshold” between life and death, both as old women and as women whose husbands have died. In many cultures, old women provide important ritual functions because their liminal status affords them a mediating role in rites of passage, like funerals (Buitelaar 1995:10). Interestingly, laments and grave tending are not alluded to in the list of past deeds for the 60+ widows in 1 Tim 5:9-10. This text does not provide direct insight as to why sixty was the age specified, though it may also relate to the public nature of their involvement (since they are outsiders to the family).

The Apostolic Constitutions specifies that widows must be at least sixty (quoting 1 Tim 5:9) so that they are beyond the time of life when they would want to marry a second time. “Choose your ‘widows not under sixty years of age,’ that in some measure the suspicion of the second marriage may be prevented by their age.” Remaining unmarried is a “gift” (3.1.1; translation by Coxe 1994[1886]:426). They are called “true widows” (αἱ ὀληθιναὶ χήραι; 3.1.3), but the phrase is different from the one found in 1 Tim 5 (ἡ ὄντως χήρας). They receive

457 A Roman festival for the dead involved an old woman surrounded by maidens offering a sacrifice (Ovid Fasti 2.571; Bremmer 1987:199).

458 I have several suggestions for why, but all are purely speculative. First, since laments contain elements of protest to the status quo (Abu-Lughod 1990:46-47), the author might not have considered them proper behaviour. Second, rituals for the dead were probably enmeshed with pagan elements, which may have been problematic for the Christian community. This may have been especially true of women’s laments. Third, it is possible that washing the feet of the saints (1 Tim 5:10) might allude to a death ritual. Women probably washed a dead body before burial. Women went to anoint Jesus’ body after his death (Mark 16:1). Luke tells the story of a sinful woman washing Jesus’ feet with her tears and anointing him with expensive ointment (Luke 7:38, 44-46), but does not allude to his death as Matthew (26:6-13) and Mark (14:3-9) do.
financial assistance from the church (3.1.7). They are expected to pray and to refrain from
teaching or baptizing, and their status as the “altar of God” means they are not mobile (3.1.6).459
This third century text is clearly an interpretation of 1 Tim 5:3-16, applied to a developed “order
of widows.” The numbers of people who belonged to the church in the third century was much
greater than at the end of the first century, so there would be proportionately more women who
would fit the parameters of the “order of widows” as presented by the Apostolic Constitutions.
The membership in Ephesus at the end of the first century would have had relatively few
widows over the age of sixty.

These references suggest that the age of sixty for women might be considered the
threshold of old age, an age at which a woman is prone to illness and physical weakness (Acts of
John 30), and an age at which a woman should not remarry (e.g., Apuleius’ detractors regarding
Pudentilla). It also relates to the male age of sixty when it pertains to the public sphere and or
public ritual, as with Plato’s priestesses and old women attending funerals. The age of sixty in 1
Tim 5:9, as I suggested above, might have some public element with regard to a widow’s
exemplary reputation.

8. **The implications of the life course at sixty years old**

The author’s description of the 60+ widow suggests her virtue has been practiced over a
lifetime, representing the ways of the ancestors (mos maiorum). The author portrays “Paul” as
passing on to “Timothy” the sound teaching that produces proper behaviour; in a similar way,
the old women pass on the exemplary female virtues expected of women for an honourable
“household.” The emphasis is on behaviour rather than teaching (2:12), or words (gadding
about; 5:14).

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459 See Osiek 1983 for the evolution of the notion of the widow as “altar of God.”
Given the heteronymous nature of the letter, we cannot peel back the layers to know if the author had actual widows in mind, or a general notion of old widows. I would like to consider the possibility that the specificity of “not less than sixty years old” might be literal, similar to the way Elliott understands “resident aliens and visiting strangers” to be literal categories in the heteronymous letter of 1 Peter (1981). What transpired in the lifetime of a widow who was over sixty might make the age of sixty (and over) a factor in being enlisted (καταλεγέθσω).

At the age of 60, a woman who had been part of the community her whole adult life would have had connections to the past members of the community. For argument’s sake, if a woman was 60 years old in 95 CE, she would have been born in 35 CE. During the 50s, the time when traveling apostles like Paul were founding churches like the one in this community, she would have been 15 to 25 years old, the age at which she would marry and give birth to her first children. If a woman was 60 years old in 80 CE, she was born in 20 CE, and was in her 30s when the church was in its infancy. In both scenarios, if she had converted as a young woman, she would have been in contact with the founders of the church community. She would be one of the few people in the author’s recipient community who knew the founders of their community first-hand—she would have a living memory of the ancestors. We know that a connection to the community’s foundations were important to the author because he wrote using Paul’s authority, still (assumedly) effective decades later.

In Cicero’s treatise On Old Age, he has Cato recall his own past (10.32), but also frequently recall memories of people he knew in youth who had died, particularly men who were role models (4.10, 9.29, 13.44, 14.50). For instance, he recounts the deeds and character of Quintus Fabius Maximus with whom he got along with as if he was a peer even though Maximus was old and he was young. Cato admired Maximus for his knowledge of history, law
and commendable military and political career (4.10). Remembering people who had died was important to Cicero. He has Cato state: “I know the people who are living but I recall their fathers and grandfathers, too,” refreshing his memory by reading their epitaphs (7.21). The memory of notable people related to Cato and the two young men with him were especially important. Cato says to the young man Scipio, “I pray the immortal gods to reserve for you, Scipio, the glory of completing the work which your grandfather left unfinished. Thirty-three years have passed since that hero’s death, but each succeeding year will receive his memory and pass it on” (6.19). The value of a living memory is evident as well: “I heard from my elders (maioribus)—who, in turn, said they when boys (pueros), had heard it from old men (senibus)…” (13.43). Cicero is cognizant of the future as well, but frames it as “blessings from my ancestors” that he should “hand… on to posterity” (7.25; cf. 8.25). As an elite man, Cicero has Cato recall men with distinction in public life. Recollecting relationships to important people who had passed away might be applicable to the non-elite as well, especially in a face-to-face community like the one in 1 Timothy.

Such memories preserve elements of past culture, and may help ease tensions in times of social change. In a village in modern Sicily, Chapman reports that, “in times past there was a certain amount of ritual observance [for weddings], which now survives only in the memories of older women…” (1971:101). She also mentions that older people remember when the village church was built in 1880, along with details of the cooperation and donations that involved the ancestors of present villagers (1971:145).

The 60+ widows were models of ideal proper behaviour for women. By placing widows who are sixty and over in real historical time in the first century Christian church, I suggest they

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460 Cicero gives no chronological ages, but states that Maximus was consul when Cato was born and four times consul when Cato was a young man (adulescentulus; 4.10), which gives us a sense of the age gap.
may have had a living connection to former members of the community, perhaps even some of
the founders.461

9. Conclusion

First Timothy 5:9-10 was not intended to be prescriptive, nor was it a solution for a long-
term future of Christian communities. It dealt with the particular present situation in the
community. The 60+ widow is highlighted as an ideal example of proper behaviour for younger
women in the community. The phrase “not less than sixty” describes women who were quite
old, unlikely to remarry, and not sexually threatening in the same way as younger women of
childbearing age. As old women they possessed a kind of social power earned with age.
However, the author could have accomplished most of these sentiments by saying these women
were old (γήπασις) or beyond marriageable age, beyond childbearing years, or post-menopausal.
Yet he used the specific phrase “not less than sixty.”

While sixty was considered by some ancient authors to be the threshold of old age, this
age mostly applied to men and public life. The specificity of sixty suggests that the author
wished to highlight her exemplary life-time of virtuous behaviour and good deeds. Her virtue
would be evident as a matter of public reputation, but because it was based on modest
behaviour, she would not be noticeable in the public realm—they would be “socially invisible”
as was proper for women (Osiek and MacDonald 2006:3). In addition, if we could take the age
literally, these old widows would remember previous members of the community, and might
have constituted one of the last living connections to the founding generation of the church.

461 Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek offer helpful distinctions between office, role and special status (2005:18),
the last of which fits this context rather well. Because our expectations (and hopes?) for women in leadership can
sometimes obscure how we understand the positions described in the text, these categories offer some well needed
clarity. In the case of these chosen widows, perhaps “special status” is a suitable label.
Since advocating proper behaviour and order was a main goal for the author of 1 Timothy, these specific older widows were selected because of their proper behaviour, proven over many years. If women embodied the honour of the group, the 60+ widows were exemplary. In the next chapter I explore the question of why the author highlighted the 60+ widows as models of female virtue.
Chapter 11: Age Hierarchy and Widows

1. Introduction

Proper behaviour was a guiding principle for the author of 1 Timothy. As we have seen, he advocates for proper behaviour toward the older generation and one’s own generation (5:1-2; Chapter 7) and proper behaviour of children toward their widowed mothers and grandmothers (5:4; Chapter 8). The virtuous reputation of the 60+ widows was based on a lifetime of exemplary behaviour (5:9-10; Chapter 10). The author is concerned with proper behaviour of widows themselves (5:6, 11-15) and of a believing woman who “has widows” (5:16). The younger widows are of particular concern because their improper behaviour is directly connected to the reputation of the community. The author has Paul say that the solution is that these young women should adopt proper roles in the context of the household of God: marry, bear children and manage their own households (5:14).

In this chapter, I explore the age structure implicit in the various categories of widows in 1 Timothy 5:3-16. By focusing on women’s age and stage of life in cultural context, I hypothesize that the author is actually targeting a group of middle-aged women (approximately in their 40s and 50s) who are at the most powerful stage of their lives. I call them “middle-aged women” in contrast with the “old women” in 5:9-10. In 5:11-15 the young widows are acting without modesty, but the author curiously does not portray Paul as directing Timothy to reprimand them. According to cultural norms of age hierarchy among women, the young women’s behaviour would be the responsibility of middle-aged women, who were obligated to guide younger women in the group in proper behaviour (cf. Tit 2:3-5) and to model proper behaviour themselves. If they displayed modesty and self-control rather than arrogance and self-indulgence (2:9-15; 5:6), they would be proper models and guides for the younger women. In
this way, the author looked to middle-aged women within the female hierarchy as the solution to the problem of younger widows behaving badly and reflecting poorly on the community (5:11-15). His appeal is made clear at the end of the section on widows when he addresses the believing woman with widows (5:16)—a middle-aged woman.

2. **Contrasting widows**

   (11) *νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραίτου·*
   (12) ὅταν γὰρ καταστροφισσασσοιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, γαμεῖν θέλουσιν ἔχουσαι κρίμα ὧτι τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἐθέτησαν·
   (13) ἀμα δὲ καὶ ἄργαι μανθάνουσιν περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἄργαι ἀλλὰ καὶ φλιάροι καὶ περίεργοι, λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα.
   (14) Βουλομαι οὖν νεωτέρας γαμεῖν, τεκνογονοῦντι, οἴκοδομοῦντες, μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ λοιπορίας χάριν·
   (15) ἢδη γὰρ τινες ἐξετάσαν ὁπίσω τοῦ Σατάνα.
   (16) εἰ τις πιστῇ ἔχει χήρας εἰ τις πιστῇ ἔχει χήρας, ἐπαρκεῖτο αὐτῶς καὶ μὴ βαρείσθω ἡ ἐκλήσια, ἵνα ταῖς ὁντος χήρᾳς ἐπαρκέσῃ.

   (11) But intercede for the younger widows;
   (12) for when they live sensually against Christ, they want to marry, having incurred judgment because they rejected their first faith;
   (13) but also at the same time, they are learning to go around households, and (they are) not only idle but also foolish and meddlesome, saying things that are not necessary.
   (14) Therefore, I wish young women to marry, to bear children, to manage a household, to give to the opponent no occasion for reproach;
   (15) for already some have turned away after Satan.
   (16) If any believing woman has widows, let her aid them and do not let the church be burdened, in order that it might aid the real widows. (1 Tim 5:11-16)

Most interpretations of this text contrast the widows over sixty in 5:9 with the younger widows in 5:11 (e.g., Marshall 1999:598; Spicq 1947:170-71). The phrase *νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραίτου* (5:11) is usually translated in direct opposition to 5:9, borrowing “enlist” from 5:9 as an infinitive: “But refuse to put younger widows on the list” (NRSV).\(^{462}\) In other words, the

\(^{462}\) So also BDAG: “refuse (to enroll) widows who are younger (than 60 years of age), when they apply for help.”
\( \nu \varepsilon \omega \tau \varepsilon \rho \sigma \varsigma \), the “younger” widows in 5:11, are compared to the widows in 5:9 who are explicitly at least sixty years old (Marshall 1999:598). This translation implies that the age of sixty is the boundary line for who can be on the list and who can not. It has been suggested that the list pertains to receiving aid (Johnson 2001:274) or in some estimations enrolment in an office—the “order of widows” (e.g., Thurston 1989:44; 2003:159-74; see Chapter 10; §6.1). Younger widows are to be denied (\( \pi \sigma \rho \alpha \iota \tau \omicron \omicron \)\) the privilege of being put on the list for aid or ministry because of their behaviour, their age and/or because the church is financially overburdened.

Serious problems arise from the standard comparison of 60+ widows (5:9) and younger widows (5:11). First, a woman must be married only once in order to be on the list. The younger widows who are supposed to remarry (5:14) could never qualify for enrolment in their old age, thus cutting them off from either aid or an apparent ministry opportunity.

Second, if the only two categories of age in the author’s mind are over and under 60, this poorly reflects the range of ages and life stages of widows who are likely to be part of the community (cf. Krause 1994:73).\(^{463}\) The comparative \( \nu \varepsilon \omega \tau \varepsilon \rho \alpha \) (younger) cannot simply refer to widows under sixty (5:9). These “younger” widows were clearly a specific group of women still able to bear children (5:14). There is a significant gap between the average age of menopause (somewhere between forty and fifty years of age; see Chapter 10, §5.1), and the age of sixty that cannot be accounted for if \( \nu \varepsilon \omega \tau \varepsilon \rho \alpha \) means under sixty. Rather, the comparative \( \nu \varepsilon \omega \tau \varepsilon \rho \alpha \) functions as a general description of the rebellious widows, who are young enough to remarry and have children.

Third, the grammatical structure does not make such a contrast clear.

\(^{463}\) It is important to point out that we do not have exact ages here except for the widows in 5:9. Yet, we can deduce approximate ages when we consider life stages. See Appendix 5.
Both verbs are imperatives, but 5:9 is a third person imperative (let a widow be chosen; χήρα καταλεγέσθω), whereas 5:11 is a second person imperative ostensibly directed at Timothy to deny or avoid or (in my interpretation) intercede for the younger widows (νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραιτοῦ). In addition, χήρα in 5:9 is singular, whereas χήρας in 5:11 is plural.

As is a comparative adjective, νεωτέρας (younger) demands an antecedent, which can only be τὰς ὀντῶς χήρας, the “real” widows in 5:3. This phrase offers a direct grammatical parallel to 5:11, with widows as a plural object and the verb as a second person imperative (χήρας τίμα τὰς ὀντῶς χήρας).

The author has Paul tell the fictive Timothy to honour real widows, but παραιτοῦ the younger widows. The real widow is defined as a widow who is alone (μεμονωμένη), that is, she has no offspring to care for her; the real widow hopes only in God and prays constantly (5:5). As argued in Chapter 10 (§4.2), the 60+ widow of 5:9 is not the same as the “real widow,” so the attributes of 5:9-10 do not apply to the real widow. I have argued that the widow with family must be both old enough to have adult children and beyond childbearing years, so she is likely at least 40 years old (Chapter 9; §2.3). The real widows probably belong to a similar age group and life stage; otherwise they would be expected to remarry (5:14). The present participle implies an ongoing state of being alone (μεμονωμένη; 5:5). A permanent widow is usually past menopause

464 The term νεωτέρας is used as a noun in 5:1 and 5:14 so that an object of comparison is not necessary.
The “real” widows, who are without family to care for them, should be “honoured.” τιμόω can refer to respect and filial duty, to “honour” one’s parents. Aristotle’s sentiments would probably be applicable to the Roman era as well:

Honour (τιμή) is also due to parents, as it is to the gods, though not indiscriminate honour: one does not owe to one’s father the same honour as to one’s mother, nor yet the honour due to a great philosopher or general, but one owes to one’s father the honour appropriate to a father, and to one’s mother that appropriate to her. (Nicomachean Ethics 9.2.8-9)

The context of 5:3 suggests this meaning. Older women are to be treated as mothers (5:1). Widows with family should receive proper filial care from their children (5:4). Thus, real widows should be “honoured” with the kind of care and respect that is due to mothers. This includes material support, which is stated explicitly in 5:16. The author contrasts the real widows with the younger widows who were still in their childbearing years and expected to remarry instead of receiving aid from the church (5:14). Remarriage for young widows was the social norm in Roman culture, and the author reflects this expectation (5:14; see Chapter 5, §2).

This contrast between real widows and younger widows would seem to justify the typical translation of παραιτοῦ: deny the younger widows the honour given to the real widows. In other words, if the real widows are to be honoured with material support, the young widows were to be denied such support (Johnson 2001:206; Marshall 1999:582). However, if honour denoted an attitude of responsibility and respect toward one’s mother (cf. 5:1, 4), it would be obvious that a younger widow who was not yet at the life stage in which she had adult children (5:11, 14) was not worthy of this kind of honour. More importantly, the real problem was not with supplies, but with the community’s reputation (Chapter 9, §5.2).

On the one hand, in the fictive story of 1 Timothy, the author has Paul seeking to limit an existing activity (cf. Bassler 2003:136). The text suggests that the fictive community (ἐκκλησία) was overburdened with supporting widows, so “Paul” directs anyone with a widowed mother or
grandmother to support them (5:4), and a believing woman who has widows to support to them (5:16), leaving the community to aid “real” widows only (5:16). Also, this section on widows begins and ends with the real widow (5:3, 5:16). However, the most pressing problems addressed in 5:3-16—and the real situation of the letter—is the church’s reputation. This theme occurs elsewhere (e.g., 3:7, 14). Outsiders’ perceptions of certain women’s activity (5:14) features largely in this problem.\(^4\) Thus, how the author chooses to portray Paul’s directive to Timothy in 5:11 reflects his proposed solution to the community’s tainted reputation.

2.1. Meaning of παραιτοῦ

The word παραιτέομαι has two main connotations: to appeal to, make a request or intercede with, and to deny, refuse or avoid (BDAG 2000:764). In 1 Tim 4:7, παραιτοῦ means to refuse (to hear) the myths that are profane and associated with old women. The meaning in the other letter to Timothy and the one to Titus are similar in two instances. In 2 Tim 2:23, “Timothy” is told to refuse to hear stupid and senseless controversies. In Tit 3:9, a similar sentiment is expressed about controversies, but with the verb περιστημι (go around so as to avoid). Directly following this admonition, the author of Titus uses παραιτοῦ for a person in the accusative: avoid or reject, or perhaps even drive out (BDAG), a divisive person after one or two warnings (αἱρετικὸν ἰδιωματικὸν μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ). The grammatical structure in 1 Tim 5:11 is similar in that παραιτοῦ is followed by an accusative of

\(^4\) MacDonald argues that the perception of women’s behaviour as modest or immodest affects the reputation of their family or community (1996:149-65, especially pp.157-59). She bases her arguments on the observations of Carol Delaney:

Because of the practice of endogamy for generations, villagers see the village as an interrelated and integrated group, as one body in relation to all others and symbolically female. Access to it is limited and under surveillance. The village, like a woman, is perceived as kapai (closed, covered) and temiz (clean and pure)... Those who protect and represent the honor and integrity of the village are men. In other words, the notions of honor and shame, grounded in the sexual nature of male and female, also apply to the way the house, village, and even the nation, are perceived. (1987:44)

In the case of early Christianity, the concepts of honour and shame apply to way the community (ἐκκλησία) is perceived by those outside of the community. Women’s behaviour as modest (“covered” and “pure”) contributes to the perception and thus reputation of the community.
person, but the meaning cannot be the same. Even though some of the young widows in 1 Tim 5 displayed problematic behaviour, and some had already “turned away after Satan” (5:15), they themselves do not appear to be the kind of instigators that are mentioned in Tit 3:9. Even the divisive person in Tit 3:9 had one or two warnings before being rejected.

The young widows were not to be avoided or rejected. Indeed, the author takes several lines to describe the problem with their behaviour and how such behaviour should be corrected. Another viable translation of the word is “to intercede for.” The LSJ entry (III) lists παραίτεομαι with accusative of person as “intercede for, beg off, especially from punishment.”

The following examples attest to this use of παραίτεομαι. First, according to Herodotus (3.119), King Darius had imprisoned a woman’s brother, husband and sons. The woman rationalized why she would choose her brother when forced to choose only one (she could have another husband and children, but not another brother). Darius decided to release her brother and her oldest son (both accusative), “the one for whom (τοῦτὸν) she had.interceded and her oldest son” (τοῦτὸν τε τὸν παραίτεστο καὶ τῶν παιδῶν τὸν πρεσβύτατον). Second, Polybius records that an embassy was sent to Ptolemy to intercede for Andromachus (Acheus’ father) who was being held prisoner by Ptolemy: ἐπεβάλοντο πρεσβεύειν πρὸς τὸν Πτολεμαίον καὶ παραίτεισθαι τὸν Ἀνδρόμαχον (Histories 4.51.1). Similarly, in Mark 15:6 Pilate vows to release a prisoner for the Judeans: “and at [the] feast he used to release to them one prisoner for whom they interceded” (κατὰ δὲ ἐορτὴν ὀπελευν αὐτοῖς ἕνα δεσμίον ὃν παρητούντο).

In this interpretation, the fictive Paul directs Timothy to intercede for the younger widows. In this verse, it is not explicit who Timothy is to address on behalf of the young widows, but I suggest that those responsible for younger women were the middle-aged women in the group.
Middle-aged women were probably in their 40s and 50s, mothers of adult children, women who were at the most powerful stage of their lives (Sacks 1995:1-6). They would have been expected to guide and have authority over younger women in a way that reflected proper order in the “household of God.” Their neglect of these duties was the real problem that prompted the lengthy section on widows in 1 Tim 5:3-16. The middle-aged women were not fulfilling their proper role in making sure the younger widows were behaving appropriately.

2.2. Perceived behaviour of young widows

The author has Paul describe, in some detail, the young widows involved in what he deems shameful behaviour that is causing problems for the community’s reputation. Their behaviour apparently could or did give the “adversary” (ὁ ἀντικειμένος), an opportunity to reproach (λοιδορίας) them (5:14). His perception of their behaviour involves several aspects: sexual promiscuity, rejecting the “first faith” (5:12), gadding about from household to household, and saying things they should not be saying (5:13). I emphasize that these are the author’s perceptions of young widows’ behaviour, depicted in 1 Timothy as Paul’s observations relayed to Timothy. The emphasis on community reputation throughout the letter suggests that the author himself had such perceptions about a troublesome group of young widows, but there is no way to apprehend the actual behaviour of the young widows (neither in the author’s real community nor in the author’s fictive narrative of Paul’s directives).

Winter is convinced that the young widows were in fact engaged in sexually immoral behaviour. “It is not a case of one-off sexual indiscretion but rather a promiscuous lifestyle that is under discussion” (2003:133). He cites the portrayal of young widows by elite Roman men as

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466 The “adversary” is unlikely to be one of those who teaches different things (1:3). These opposing teachers are depicted as insiders over whom “Paul” has authority (e.g., “Paul” hands two of them over the Satan so they will learn not to blaspheme; 1:20), whereas the adversary has the power to reproach them, presumably as a community.

467 Kartzow agrees that the problem with the young widows has to do with the reputation of the community (2009:160). She suggests that the author uses the rhetoric of gossip to contrast the ideal woman who is only concerned with domestic duties (2009:157-58).
evidence that widows were really promiscuous. For example, Petronius (first century CE) recounts a story about a young especially chaste widow who sat in her dead husband’s tomb for five days refusing to eat because of her grief. On the fifth evening a soldier posted near the grave persuaded her to eat, and they became lovers that very evening. The story was meant to illustrate the “sexual fickleness” (Winter 2003:130) of even the chaste test of women (*The Ship of Lichas*, 110-111). Winter argues that such women might be following the patterns of the elite “new” woman in the first century CE, who imitated the culturally tolerated sexual exploits of young men (Winter 2003:129-31). Winter does not adequately account for men’s cultural need to protect the honour of their family by protecting women’s chastity. Promulgating a stereotype of women as easily seduced, especially the anomalous figure of the widow, provides a strong cultural reminder that honour is at stake if he fails to protect his female kin. Although we cannot know whether the author of 1 Timothy really observed this kind of behaviour among the young widows (or imagined that Paul did), his description suggests he is emphasizing the problematic perception of their actions.

A woman’s activity may be perceived as sexually immoral even if she has been chaste. Du Boulay describes why this is so, basing her observation on the Mediterranean concept of women’s shame (modesty):

There are two factors in village society which bring it about that a woman’s reputation, essentially located in her sense of shame, extends into fields of activity which are not concerned with sexual relations. One is the practical fact that absence from the home or irregularities in customary activities which cannot be minutely and indisputably accounted for in society, will almost inevitably be taken as evidence of surreptitious liaisons. The other is the fact that since, according to the conception of feminine nature, a woman’s shame is the seat of her virtue, lack of virtue in aspects of life completely unrelated to sexuality may, if occasion arises, be referred back to a woman’s basic moral nature. Thus evidence of infidelity is direct proof of a woman’s worthlessness in all other fields, and, conversely, careless behaviour about the house and neglect of household duties are referred back to the basis of a woman’s honour and cause aspersions to be cast on her chastity. It is because of this that to be thought to be “good” (*kalē*) in the sense in which this word is used to denote “chaste,” a woman must not only be literally chaste, but must be loyal, hard-working, obedient to her husband, and
diligent in household duties such as cooking, washing, and cleaning. A woman’s place, in fact, is in the home, and any prolonged absence from it except for matters directly related to the welfare of the family is disliked by the husband and adversely noted by the community. (1974:130-31)

MacDonald convincingly argues that early Christian women could be accused of sexual promiscuity simply because of their ambiguous role straddling the private and public realms (1996:67-73). Widows are in an even more precarious situation since they are anomalous figures (women who have been sexual, but are no longer in a socially sanctioned sexual relationship), especially if they are young enough to still be able to bear children, since this is when their sexuality is most threatening.

The description of the young widows’ behaviour in 5:13 culminates not with a condemnation of sexual impropriety but with the young widows’ public image. They are going from household to household, an activity that is equated with being lazy and unproductive (ἀργαί), and they publicly display foolish and gossipy talk, perhaps even associated with magic (Pietersen 2007; Kartzow 2009:149-51). In the ancient world, idleness for women was equated with immorality, for women were properly always engaged in tasks, keeping themselves busy with chores or duties, or at the very least with weaving (Winter 2003:133-34).

The author says the young widows are learning (μανθάνοντες) to gad about, implying that someone was teaching them that this was acceptable behaviour. The verb μανθάνω is also used in two other contexts of improper behaviour, implying that someone was teaching unacceptable behaviour. The third person imperative plural is used for children and grandchildren who are shirking their responsibilities for supporting their widowed mothers and grandmothers. The author states, “let them learn (μανθάνετες) to first to perform their duty
to their own household” (5:4). The third person imperative singular (μανθανέτω) is also used for a woman to learn in quietness and all submission (2:11).468

The verb καταστρηνιάω (a hapax legomenon) is problematic. BDAG translates it as “when they feel sensual impulses that alienate them from Christ,” based on the word being defined as “be governed by strong physical desire.” Winter rightly argues that “there is no basis for this rendering of the verb in terms of feelings rather than actions” (2003:132-33), since the related verb στρηνιάω is clearly an action of lascivious activity in Rev 18:7, 9 (Spicq 1947:171). Spicq points out that the author’s use of καταστρηνιάω emphasizes his indignation toward immoral activity that is self-focused; he considers the young widows to have rebelled against their obligation to Christ and his service (1972:171), and against the community’s best interests.469 Marshall suggests καταστρηνιάω means “their sexual impulses form a temptation that lead them away from devotion to Christ,” and in so doing they turn to follow Satan (5:15; 1999:599). The opposing teachers are associated with Satan (1:20).470 Bassler argues that the opposing teachers who reportedly forbade marriage (4:3) had special success among women (cf. 2 Tim 3:6-7), since the author of 1 Timothy is so adamant about women being married (1 Tim 2:15, 5:14; cf. Tit 2:4-5; 2003:132). The term καταστρηνιάω introduces the young widows as behaving in a problematic manner, but as the argument builds, the author reveals the major concern is with gadding about and saying things they should not. In short, he is concerned about the public appearance of these young women.

468 Kartzow comments that the concept of “idleness” does not suggest the young women ceased all activity, but that they “fill[ed] their time with the wrong kind of work,” the kind of work of which the author disapproved (2009:147).

469 A similar condemnation of self-focused, sensual behaviour occurs in 5:6 (ἡ σπαταλώσα, “the one who lives luxuriously”) and is alluded to in 2:9 (“women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes”). If these texts refer to the behaviour of middle-aged women, it would be little surprise that their example of wanton behaviour was reflected in the behaviour of their youthful protégés.

470 Verner argues that these young women are “dangerous and unpredictable beings,” sexually motivated and vulnerable to opposing teachers (1983:165-66; cf. MacDonald 1996:160-61).
2.3. Why the author uses βουλομαι

After describing the young widows’ behaviour, the author offers a solution. He “desires” (βουλομαι) that young women marry, bear and raise children and run a household (5:14), that is, to assume the domestic responsibilities of a wife and mother. The author does not specify young widows here, but young women (νεωτέρας), perhaps because all young women were expected to be married (though he seems to have the young widows in mind here). Not only does he emphasize marriage, but also having children and a household—similar to the directives that the author of Titus suggests for older women to teach younger women (τὰς νέας; 2:4-5). These were typical expectations for young women in the ancient Mediterranean.471

If the author thought that Paul could have direct authority over the young women, he would have used much more forceful language. The use of the term βουλομαι is rather weak compared to his forceful tone earlier in other sections of the letter.

The author uses the first person indicative 18 times in 1 Timothy: 6 times to indicate an attribute of “Paul’s” identity (e.g., “I myself am among the foremost of sinners”; 1:15), 5 times to denote his own actions, 4 times to direct Timothy (twice in a neutral sense, and twice with strong directives), and 3 times to make a request of community members (see Appendix 3).472 The first request of community members occurs in 2:1, where the fictive Paul urges (παρακαλῶ) that prayers be made on behalf of all humanity. The other two requests to community members employ the less forceful verb βουλομαι. In 2:8 he wants (βουλομαι) men to pray without division and women to adorn themselves modestly, and in 5:11 he wants (βουλομαι) young women to marry, bear children and run households. Marshall compares the use of βουλομαι in 5:11 to that in 2:8, suggesting this is “a strong directive” (1999:604), but the

471 Philo discusses women as household managers (The Special Laws 3.69-75), and Callistus suggests that children were an important goal of marriage: “Play as you like, and within a short time, produce children” (61).
472 Note that requests of community members are unique to 1 Timothy, when compared to 2 Timothy and Titus (see Appendix 4).
only substantiation for this claim is the context of the author’s urgency. Dibelius and Conzelmann state that the strength of the verb \( \beta \omicron \upsilon \lambda \omicron \omicron \omicron \alpha \tau i \) comes from its use elsewhere in “legislative regulations” (1972:75). Neither explains why the author of 1 Timothy uses much more directive language elsewhere, but refrains from using it in 5:11 (and in 2:8, for that matter).\(^{473}\) In fact, in 1:20 and 2:12, the author uses the first person indicative to denote Paul’s action related to problematic teachings and behaviour. In 1:20 he has Paul say he has turned over (\( \pi \alpha \rho \acute{\epsilon} \delta \omicron \omega \kappa \alpha \)) two men to Satan. In 2:12 he uses the first person indicative in a forceful directive for women in the public setting: “I do not permit (\( \epsilon \pi \tau \epsilon \pi \omicron \alpha \)) a woman (wife) to teach or have authority over a man.” The author does not use such forceful language for the young widows.

Neither does he have the fictive Paul instruct “Timothy” to correct them directly as he does elsewhere (see Appendix 4). For example, in 5:20, the author has Paul direct Timothy to “rebuke (\( \epsilon \lambda \gamma \chi \epsilon \)) those who continue to sin in front of everyone so that the others might also have fear” (cf. Tit 1:13, 2:15). Just before his description of the young widows, the author uses a strong imperative “command these things” (\( \tau \alpha \acute{\upsilon} \tau \alpha \ \pi \alpha \rho \acute{\alpha} \gamma \gamma \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \); 5:7), probably referring to children and grandchildren to take care of their widowed mothers and grandmothers (5:4; Marshall 1999:589), as well as the woman who was living luxuriously, and thus behaving badly (5:6). The author does have Paul use a second person imperative to introduce the problematic younger widows: \( \pi \alpha \rho \acute{\alpha} \tau \tau \omicron \omicron \), which I prefer to translate as “intercede for.” In fact the translation “deny” or “avoid” makes little sense next to the use of \( \beta \omicron \upsilon \lambda \omicron \omicron \omicron \alpha \tau i \), which seems to have a much weaker sense than other directives in the letter, as noted above. In sum, the use of \( \beta \omicron \upsilon \lambda \omicron \omicron \omicron \alpha \tau i \) in a

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\(^{473}\) One could argue that the comparative use of \( \beta \omicron \upsilon \lambda \omicron \omicron \omicron \alpha \tau i \) in Tit 3:8 is a “strong directive.” The author uses it for Paul’s directive to Titus, “I want you to speak confidently.” In the absence of stronger directives, such as those used in 1 Tim 5:21 and 6:13, this may serve as a forceful directive for Titus. However, the two letters differ substantially in their tone, as evidenced by their divergent use of first person indicative and second person imperative. The fictive Paul addresses concerns for Titus himself rather than for others in 1 Tim 2:8 and 5:11. A direct comparison of this word alone makes a weak argument.
context where the author clearly portrays Paul as troubled by the behaviour of the young widows is curious, unless the cultural context is taken into account.

The author wanted the traditional female hierarchy to make things right because it was their responsibility to do so. In the sphere of the women’s world, he would not directly interfere, so he highlights the ideal old widows and the problematic young widows to indicate that the middle-aged women needed to step up to fulfill their proper responsibilities (cf. Tit 2:3-5). In other words, it would be culturally inappropriate for the author to have “Paul” direct young women himself since the responsibility for correcting younger widows’ behaviour did not lie with men, but with older women. In Mediterranean culture, older women control, guide and teach younger women in the household, apart from men.

3. Middle-aged women in traditional Mediterranean cultures

3.1. Women’s worlds

Some anthropologists have observed that the women’s realm in modern traditional Mediterranean cultures is largely separate from the men’s realm. For example, Stirling notes: “Men and women live in different social worlds. Only within the household do the two worlds touch closely, and even here the separateness of the sexes in the society at large affects individual relations between them” (1965:112; cf. 1965:98, 101). Chapman also comments with regard to rural Sicilians, “On the whole the fields of activity of men and women are complementary and only rarely overlap” (1971:33). This guarantees women a certain amount of independence “to manage their own affairs without interference” from men (Stirling 1965:118; Campbell 1964:151).474

474 Fallers and Fallers go so far to suggest that the women of Turkey are more independent than Western women because they function within their own sphere, outside of the sphere of men.
Women network with one another in order to share certain domestic duties and socialize on a daily basis, provide support to one another in times of crisis and for rites of passage (Kennedy 1986:130). In Edremit, Turkey, for example, the “world of women” is a “private world of the houses and courtyards” according to Fallers and Fallers (1976:246), where women cooperate in their responsibilities. For instance, for a boy’s rite of passage (circumcision at age six), his mother and “a squad of neighbours and kinswomen prepared food in the courtyard kitchen for [two hundred] guests” (1976:256).475 A woman learns specific social behaviour: “to make oneself a welcome member of women’s society… all learn ways of contributing to the social gatherings of women,” which is often in the context of work for poorer women, or formal visiting for wealthier women (Fallers and Fallers 1976:252).476

On the other hand, from her observations of a Greek village, Juliet du Boulay argues that the strength of family loyalty overrides female solidarity, observing no female “subculture” in rural Greece. Family ties are primary. A mother aligns herself with her son in opposition to her daughter-in-law, who threatens the mother’s position of affection with her son and her role as

Likewise, Fernea describes the women’s world in rural Iraq in the 1960s as separate from men. She spent time either at home with her husband, or with other women in their homes or participating in religious celebrations and activities. In order to visit friends’ homes across town they would navigate back alleys to avoid public places where men gathered (1965).

475 In the Iraqi village, kin and neighbours worked side by side (the women wondered why Fernea never did her laundry with them at the river). They supported one another emotionally (in the illness of a child, or in the grief of a loved one’s death), socially (storytelling and visiting is important; cf. Abu-Lughod 1993), and ritually (such as preparing for and participating in marriage ceremonies) (Fernea 1965). In a Turkish village, women within the household are in constant daily contact, sharing tasks and child-minding, as well as gossip (Stirling 1965:174).

476 Though not part of the Mediterranean, Susan M. Kenyon’s study of modern Sudanese women in poor urban areas is instructive. The rural pattern of patrilocal marriage developed into neo-local marriage within an urban setting of change. The bilateral nuclear family is becoming the primary unit in these areas, but the ideal of the extended family continues (1991:24). In fact daughters live in relatively close proximity to their natal families (matrivicinal), but increasingly rely on “pseudo-kin” support. Real and fictive kin networks have become extremely important to urban women. They are distinctly female networks, based on neighbourhoods (or an older woman’s children’s networks), and form the nexus for traditional obligations and duties (1991:21).
mistress of the house (1986:147). Women also tend to judge other women who are prone to argue or gossip (1986:148). According to Du Boulay “the family, or the house, is the villager’s sole unequivocal refuge, accommodating different generations and sexes impartially and demanding and receiving the total loyalty of each.” If women and men operated separately, she argues, this would be a betrayal of the family (1986:146; cf. Campbell 1964:275; Dimen 1986).

While Du Boulay’s observations in part point out cultural differences between specific communities, they also identify some important consideration for women’s networks among ancient Mediterranean women. First, loyalty to one’s family places limitations on “female solidarity,” if we take this to mean women defending other women against men. Family loyalty is a strong feature of Mediterranean cultures (see Chapter 6). Since a woman often lacks the life-long continuity of kin relationships that men have in patriarchal families (Stirling 1965:107; cf. Brown 1995:25), her loyalty is primarily to her own marital family as mistress of her own home and informal guardian of her children’s inheritance (Campbell 1964:71). Dimen observes that Greek women: “begin as daughters, attain adulthood only as daughters-in-law, get no satisfaction until they are mothers of sons, and become powerful only when they are mothers-in-law. Thus, their lives communicate the inevitability and personal necessity of social connection. The most important connection is to family” (1986:64).

However, loyalty to one’s family need not preclude the reality and functions of women’s networks. In the Greek village of Vasilika, Friedl observed that “women have their own conversational groups of working neighbors which men do not join” (1962:90; cf. Benedict 1976:237). In Milocca (Sicily), kin and marriage relationships take precedence over friendship (Chapman 1971:124), but during the day, women’s main contacts are their immediate female

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477 Since marriage is arranged, a woman is not as invested in a romantic and emotional way with her husband in modern Western marriage; however, her daily contact with the women of the family into which a bride marries is very significant. She must “work and play, from marriage on, with a certain group of women,” her in-laws. At a Turkish wedding in Erdemit, the bride is surrounded by women for three days, she dances with the groom’s sister and a gift is presented by the mother-in-law (Fallers and Fallers 1976:253).
neighbours, who help each other, especially in heavier household tasks. Or they may sit in doorways knitting, spinning or cleaning wheat. Families reunite in the evening (Chapman 1971:21).\textsuperscript{478} In a Cretan village, women form friendships with other women even though visiting in other neighbourhoods is not socially acceptable (Dimen 1986:130). While neighbours might provide emotional support to one another, they recognize that to maintain family honour, their loyalty to family must take precedence (Kennedy 1986:130).

Second, a woman’s stage of life influences her involvement in women’s networks. The stage of life involving childbearing and childrearing allows little time for activity outside of domestic duties, especially limiting younger women’s relationships outside of the family (Kennedy 1986:130). Dimen observes that friendships usually start either after or before childbearing and early child rearing because in this stage of life, women have little extra time for visiting (1986:130). While women are lonely in their isolated work, “they look forward to their old age when will be permitted to socialize, to share gossip in the afternoon with friends while daughters or daughters-in-law interrupt their lone labors only to serve them coffee” (Dimen 1986:61-62; cf. Cool and McCabe 1983:66-67).\textsuperscript{479}

Solidarity of extra-familial groups is not typical where family is one’s central concern and focus of loyalty, but this does not preclude the presence of women’s networks in Mediterranean cultures. Women share in certain domestic tasks, support one another in preparations for rites of passage or in crises. Women’s networks include kin and neighbours. Patrilocal marriage patterns mean that women have fewer connections to kin through the life

\textsuperscript{478} Chapman describes how kin and neighbours assist one another, maintaining daily contact and cooperation, including small economic exchanges of goods and services, cooperating in activities like bread making, setting up a loom, or sharing leaven, coal or even a sewing machine, and aiding one another in emergencies. Children play together outside, and women gather informally, bringing their sewing, spinning, baking, etc. (1971:129, 131, 135).

\textsuperscript{479} Cool and McCabe note that female solidarity contributes to a positive experience of women’s aging process (1983:67). This seems overly positive about networks of women, for a certain amount of intergenerational and interfamilial conflict is inevitable.
course, but their relationships with their children might be especially important, especially since a woman gains status when she moves through the life course.

### 3.2. Age hierarchy among women

A woman’s primary (or sole) way to gain power is through the changes that occur as she progresses through the life course in the context of her family.\(^{480}\) She typically experiences menopause,\(^{481}\) becomes a mother-in-law,\(^{482}\) and has the potential to achieve her greatest privilege and status due to her domestic authority, public visibility, increased mobility, mentoring role and life-long reputation. Foner finds that cross-culturally, older women typically experience more freedom as they age, participating in the public sphere, influencing community decisions by informally advising husbands and sons, and sometimes controlling resources. (1984:67-91). Middle-aged women are considered to make up the active senior generation, and as such receive deference from younger women (deference these elder women once gave their senior female kin).\(^{483}\) They have the right to claim authority over younger female kin in terms of labour and decision-making (such as who among the younger generation will marry, and to whom; (Brown 1992:18-21).

In modern traditional Mediterranean societies, whether or not a woman achieves these privileged roles depends on marital status, reputation and whether or not she has adult sons. An older woman exerts her authority as the senior member of the domestic unit (Campbell 1964:76-

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\(^{480}\) For both men and women, age and life experience brings increased responsibility and social value in middle-age, followed by a decline in old age (Chapman 1971:49, 217).

\(^{481}\) When she first reaches this stage, she may still be rearing some of her own children, but she is no longer getting pregnant (Cool and McCabe 1983:64). In a Greek village on the island of Evia, women are embarrassed to be pregnant when they are considered “too old,” such as when their older children are teenagers, because pregnancy reveals sexuality (Beyene 1989:114).

\(^{482}\) A Sarakatsan woman is considered “old” after her eldest son marries (Campbell 1964:290).

\(^{483}\) By middle-aged women, I mean women who are at the stage of their life course when their children have become adults, but they are not yet old-old (Sacks 1995:2; Brown 1992:18). They are likely to be mothers-in-law and grandmothers according to ancient demographic data (Saller 1994:50). See also Chapter 4, §4.2.
Older women have more control over family decisions. Friedl suggests that “the economic functions of the dowry and the residual control women maintain over it gives them considerable voice in the decisions made within the family” (1962:90). Older women’s life experience gives them authority over younger women. Older women also have greater flexibility, and often more wealth, to offer support for younger women (Danforth 1982).

Older women are responsible for the behaviour of younger women. They offer advice and problem-solving skills to younger women (Chapman 1971:32). Older women also have power over younger women’s reputations because their opinions and judgment are credible in the community (Cool and McCabe 1983:65-66). In this way, old women may be the most ardent preservers of younger women’s subordination (Foner 1984:90-91). Foner notes that “old women in many societies have a strong interest in keeping young women in their place” (1984:68), which may manifest in authoritative directives or gentle guidance.

4. Ancient Mediterranean women’s networks and age hierarchy

The analogy of modern Mediterranean women is suggestive for investigating ancient women’s identity, networks and age hierarchy, especially since ancient Roman sources, written mostly by elite men, limit our view of women’s lives. Osiek suggests that Roman urban women were not confined to the household or private sphere but in the public realm, women were “socially invisible” (Osiek and Balch 1997:54; Osiek and MacDonald 2006:3).

Harlow comments that within the Roman literature, views of women outside of the family are “rare” and typically “speculative” (2007:208). The men who wrote about women tended to describe them in terms of their familial roles as daughter, wife or mother. The labels

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484 While Egyptian Bedouin women cooperate and defend other women from the criticisms of men, there is a clear age hierarchy. Women defend their female kin against male kin, but among the older women would complain about the lack of modesty in young women (Abu-Lughod 1993:50).
for women in 1 Timothy, for example, are γυνή (which can mean woman or wife; 2:9-15) and χιρή (widow, a woman who is no longer a wife; 5:3-16). This suggests that family loyalty and identity was primary in ancient Roman society, and this was particularly true for descriptions of women. For example, Luke introduces two characters who encountered the infant Jesus at the temple, Simeon and Anna. We know nothing of Simeon’s age or marital status (2:25-35), but these are important characteristics for Luke to reveal to his audience about Anna, an 84 year old widow whose husband had died only seven years after their marriage (2:36-37).

Urban, non-elite women would have needed other women to help fulfill their social obligations in a manner similar to modern Mediterranean women (e.g., food preparation for rites of passage, support in times of crisis). Treggiari comments on informal female networks in the Roman world:

> Although we hear little of women entertaining, there could normally be no objection to visits from women friends and relations. Young married women visited and received their mother, their husband’s kinswomen and their own, older matrons and widows, their own contemporaries, and unmarried girls. It was, of course, a courtesy for younger or socially inferior women to call on their elders and superiors and for friends to call on the sick or pregnant and women in childbirth. (1991:421)

This kind of socializing may be especially true of elite women (Dixon 1988:211), but is suggestive for female networks amongst the non-elite. We glimpse networks of women in early Christian texts. Tabitha devoted to good works among the widows in Acts 9:39, and the believing woman who “has widows” (5:16; Osiek and MacDonald 2006:230; see discussion below). Grapte taught spiritual lessons to widows and orphans (Hermas Visions 2.4.3). The wealthy young martyr, Perpetua, and her slave and fellow-martyr, Felicitas share a bond of camaraderie in the Martyrdom of Perpetua. In the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the crowd of women in the arena are highlighted by the narrator (§32). They cry for justice for Thecla, they shout as

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485 James LaGrand questions the assumption that Simeon is an old man, since the text is not explicit about his age (1998).
the lioness lies at Thecla’s feet in the arena, mourn when the protective lioness is killed, and throw herbs and flowers into the arena to put the beasts to sleep (§33-35). Thus, their collective voices and action affect Thecla’s victory. Afterwards, within Tryphaena’s household, many of the female servants convert (§39). These unnamed women may represent a female network of support, found both within and outside of the household.

The ancient evidence also suggests age hierarchy among women. The Pythagorean letters were ostensibly from older to young women, offering advice and instruction (Osiek and MacDonald 2006:91). Aristophanes’ play Assemblywomen illustrates women’s hierarchy and age roles, with comedic twists (877-1111). The Vestal Virgins had a strict age hierarchy, according to Plutarch. They would learn their duties for ten years, serve for ten years, then teach other younger virgins for ten years (Life of Numan Pompilius 10). A girl was chosen to be a Vestal Virgin between the ages of six and ten (Aulus Gellius Attic Nights 1.12). Therefore, she would be trained up to the age of 16 or 20, serve until she was between 26 and 30, and train others until she was between 36 and 40.

Though they had more restrictions than their later Roman counterparts, women in ancient Greek society provide further clues to age hierarchy. Women’s seclusion restricted female friendships, but old women were more free to move around and able to visit, and influence, younger women (Bremmer 1987:195). The women involved in Euripides’ Bacchae were young and old as well as maidens. Bremmer is surprised to find old women participating in

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486 An old woman done up with makeup and a party dress (which would not be suitable for a woman of her age) argues with a young woman about who will sleep with the old man they are expecting. When a young man arrives he desires to sleep with a young woman, but is told that it has been decreed that he must sleep with the old woman first (Assemblywomen 1015-20). The girl quips that the old woman is the age of the man’s mother, alluding to Oedipus (1038-42). Two other old women come to take him away. The older women clearly have authority over the younger woman.

487 Old women could fulfill roles like door keepers and midwives in ancient Greece because they had greater freedom of movement, no longer had to protect their chastity in the same way as a fertile younger woman, and since they were not considered sexually active, the pollution of childbirth did not impede men’s sex lives (Bremmer 1987:197-98).
a ritual that was unbecoming of their age. He suggests that the ritual may have entailed old
women administering marriage rites for the young virgins, similar to old women who are in
charge of initiation rites in other parts of the world (Bremmer 1987:199-200). Catullus writes
about older women who have a part in marriage rites: “You honest matrons, well wedded to
ancient husbands, set the damsel in her place [i.e., array the maiden in her marriage bed]” (61).

In addition, older women might also have fictive “mothering” roles, such as nurses,
foster-mothers and other “surrogates” (Osiek and MacDonald 2006:76; Dixon 1986:17). These
roles suggest age hierarchy as well.

Osiek and MacDonald argue that a women’s realm existed in the early Christian world.
They describe it as,

a world of women about which the texts remain silent—a world of sisterhood,
conversation, and exchange among women on issues of hospitality, childcare, service
and allegiance to Christ under the authority of a (sometimes) pagan paterfamilias as a
wife, daughter, or slave, a world where distinctions among various categories of women
possibly broke down. (2006:19)

If some categories “broke down,” the categories associated with age hierarchy probably did not.

For example, in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, Thecla (a young woman) is involved with two
relationships with older women. She rebels against her mother’s rightful authority by refusing to
marry (§8), but later returns to mother perhaps to convert her or to support her as was her filial
duty or both (§43). Later, Queen Tryphaena, who is an older woman, aids, protects and provides
for Thecla as a daughter in place of her own deceased daughter (§27-32, 39). In Tit 2:3-5 we
find a clear age hierarchy among women in the community, suggesting a cultural norm in first
century urban setting where older women mentored the younger.
5. Responsibilities for middle-aged women

Middle-aged women would be involved with younger women in three main activities. First, they would be expected to behave well themselves as models of proper behaviour. Second, they would be responsible to guide and teach young women in proper behaviour, perhaps through practical instruction for domestic chores, moral story-telling, or social sanction. Third, they may be responsible to support young widows, financially in the short term if need be, but more importantly to find them new husbands, which may involve matchmaking and providing dowries.488

5.1. Models of proper behaviour

In 1 Timothy, proper behaviour and order, especially shown in “good works,” is the perceived antithesis of the opposing teachers and their influence. In 2:9-15, the author conveys concerns for women’s behaviour when the community was gathered together. He wanted women to dress and act with modesty (shame) and moderation (σιδους και σωφροσυνης) and with good works (ἕργων ἄγαθων) which is proper (πρέπει) for a woman who professes “reverence for God” (θεοσεβεια; 5:9-10).489 She is to demonstrate her faith through behaviour that is virtuous. The phrase ἕργα ἄγαθα is also used of the past deeds of the 60+ widows in 5:10. If the women addressed in 2:9-15 are the middle-aged women responsible for the younger widows, this phrase provides a link of contrast between them and the exemplary 60+ widows.

The brief and enigmatic phrase ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζώσα τέκνηκεν (“but the woman who lives luxuriously is dead while she is living”; 5:6) is reminiscent of the description in 2:9-

488 There are some similarities here with Osiek and MacDonald’s models of “mothering” in early Christian communities based on an older woman teaching a younger woman as in Tit 2:4-5. They suggest an older woman could be an indirect role model, a role model who offered financial support for widows living in their own homes, or a woman who took women into her own home (1 Tim 5:16; 2006:77).

489 See Malherbe 2006:48-65, who defines σωφροσύνη as “moderation.” He points out that is the “primary virtue of women in antiquity” (2006:59).
15 of women who were more worried about their appearance than about their modesty.\(^{490}\) In both cases, they are not modelling the kind of behaviour that was proper for virtuous women. In the Mediterranean, one person’s reputation is reflective of others—one’s parents, one’s children, one’s family, or one’s community. If the young widows were behaving badly, it reflected on the whole community in a public sense, but particularly on the middle-aged women who were responsible for them. If a woman was “living luxuriously” (the word has a sense of sensuality, and taking liberties), she was not being responsible for her own behaviour or the behaviour of those in her care. The woman in 5:6 looks very much like the women in 2:9 because of her self-indulgent behaviour. As is the case with the younger widows, it is most important to point out is that the *perceived* behaviour was problematic—we cannot know if the women were actually behaving in promiscuous ways.

Directly following the phrase about the self-indulgent woman is the instruction in 5:7: "καὶ ταῦτα παράγγελλε, ἵνα ἀνεπίληπτοι ζῶσιν (“and command these things, in order than they might be blameless”; 5:7). The word ταῦτα (these things) probably refers back to 5:4, and the family members who are shirking their responsibility (Marshall 1999:589), but it also refers to the self-indulgent woman who is shirking her responsibility. These women were modelling behaviour for the younger women that was unacceptable to the author. The 60+ widows, discussed in Chapter 9, provide the exemplary model that these women should follow. The description of the poor behaviour of the younger widows demonstrates the problem: the “adversary” is judging their behaviour (μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ

\(^{490}\) The phrase she is dead while she is living (ζωῶσα τέθυηκεν) might partly be explained by her liminal status, being associated with death, namely the death of her husband, and her reputation would always be open to suspicion. That is, a widow would always be under some scrutiny for her behaviour without a male protector, so that any perception of improper behaviour would draw attention to her association with the power or dread of death (Buitelaar 1995:10-11).
λοιδορίας χάριν; 5:14), and some young widows have “already turned away after Satan” (ἡδὴ γάρ τινες ἐξετράπησαν ὁπίσω τοῦ Σατανᾶ; 5:15).

5.2. Guidance

Middle-aged women were responsible to guide and teach young women in proper behaviour and domestic roles. In Tit 2:3-5, older women (πρεσβύτιδας) are exhorted to teach younger women in domestic roles, providing us with a clear sense of the relationship between older and younger women in a community similar to one found in 1 Timothy. They are explicitly responsible for the younger women, since for the author of Titus the young women are fully under the jurisdiction of the older women and not addressed like older women are (2:3).

Likewise, older women [are to be] reverent in behaviour, not slanderers or slaves to much wine, teachers of what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of children, self-controlled, pure, good household managers, submitting to their own husbands in order that the word of God might not be blasphemed. (Tit 2:3-5)

The fictive Paul wants Titus to address older men, older women and younger men, but not younger women, because older women are to teach and train them (2:3).491 Older women, by virtue of their experience and freedom from the domestic responsibilities of younger women, would be in a position to support and mentor younger women.492 Christian communities valued

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491 Similarly, Horrell points out that the author of 1 Clement does not directly address the women or the young people (1.3, 21.6-8; 1996:269-70). How Titus is to address older men and women is different from how he is to address young men. The NRSV translates 2:2 as “tell [them] to be,” but the Greek does not include an imperative. Rather, it reads πρεσβύτας... ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μὴ οἶνῳ πολλῷ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδίδασκοντας τὰς νέας φιλάνδρους ἐναι, φιλοτέκνους σωφρονοντας ἁγνὰς οἰκουργοὺς ἁγαθὰς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἱδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημηταί. Rather, it reads πρεσβύτας... ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς, μὴ διαβόλους μὴ οἶνῳ πολλῷ δεδουλωμένας, καλοδίδασκοντας τὰς νέας φιλάνδρους ἐναι, φιλοτέκνους σωφρονοντας ἁγνὰς οἰκουργοὺς ἁγαθὰς, ὑποτασσομένας τοῖς ἱδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ βλασφημηταί.

492 Early Christian women may well have relied on female networks in an urban setting, but found special connection to the women in their Christian network. It was these women they would visit and call upon for help in domestic crises and women’s preparation for rites of passage. Sudanese female networks provide an image of how unrelated women in Greco-Roman cities may have survived and thrived in a subculture largely unimportant to men.
instruction from one generation of women to another (Osiek and MacDonald 2006:91), and exemplified by Grapte’s authority to instruct widows and orphans with the same teachings as the men (and presumably their wives) would receive from the elders (Visions 3.8.3).

Another text that may address age hierarchy among women is 1 Tim 2:15. Here women are told they “will continue to be saved” (σωθησεται) through (δια) raising their children (τεκνογονιας) in such a way that they (the children) remain in faith and love and purity with self-control (μεινωσιν εν πιστει και αγαπη και αγιασι μετα σωφροσυνης). The

In the urban setting, young couples increasingly reside in their own homes, or their own share of the home (Kenyon 1998:16), and the bride often lives close to her mother and other older women on whom she depends (1998:19). While female kin are still important, networks of unrelated women who all live in the same area of the city fulfill kinship roles, functioning as female kin did in traditional situations (visiting, preparing for rites of passage, aiding one another in various tasks). For older women, their age affords them more flexibility and influence: their children are grown, they have more experience and they have more access to resources. Thus, they can offer support to younger women in an informal system “which can loosely be called patronage” (1998:20).

For Verner, 1 Tim 5:1-2 is elaborated in Tit 2:1-7 to demonstrate that “the household relationships have been replaced by relationships in the Christian community” (1983:171). Thus, he assumes older women are not kin. By contrast, Quinn expects the older women are the “wives and mothers within the extended households of the Hellenistic Roman world” (1990:134; cf. 1990:130). Whether Tit 2:3-5 refer to relationships based on household ideals, or on real household (or extended kin) relationships largely depends on post-marital residence (Brown 1995:24-26). Among the urban non-elite, a married couple probably lived near or with one or both sets of parents (Dixon 1988:217; Treggiari 1991:378). In an illuminating analysis of Pompeian houses, A. Wallace-Hadrill suggests that most people, notably the poorer folk in that city, lived in “big houses.” Two patterns are notable, and a shift over time might be evident. In the older arrangement, the nuclear family and slaves formed the stable core of the household but many other temporary adherents lived in the household as well: “a fluctuating assortment of dependents, freedmen, workers, friends, and lodgers” (1994:116). These were a “source of income and a sign of social power” (1994:117). Wallace-Hadrill posits a shift in the imperial period toward “big houses” with many separate family units living within them, more like the arrangements in Ostia (1994:106-110). From evidence in Ostia, Osiek and Balch suggest that atrium houses were the setting of Pauline churches (1997:16), but most families lived in small, crowded apartments or insulae (1997:31-32). Rowlandson notes a similar pattern amongst the poor in Greek and Roman Egypt: “Families tended to congregate together, living within the same building or in adjacent dwellings” (1998:85).

The sense is probably “with the accompanying circumstances of” (BDAG).

Cf. 5:14. The base sense of this verb is “to bear or beget children,” but several commentators suggest that it could mean to raise or rear children, with a focus on women’s role because of their ability to give birth rather than the act of childbirth itself (Moo 1981:205; 1980:72; Spicq 1947:73; Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972:cf. Marshall 1999:468-70). Stanley E. Porter rejects this interpretation (1993:95), but suggests the possibility of interpreting δια in a temporal sense, rendering the meaning “during the time of childbearing.” He settles on an instrumental sense, “by means of childbearing” (1993:97). Kenneth L. Waters suggests that it is an allegory; the “children” are actually virtues, which, if cultivated, will provide salvation (2004).

The author switches subjects mid-sentence from the woman (singular) to her children (plurals). Similarly, I argue that he changed subjects in 5:4: if any widow (sing) has children or grandchildren, they (plural, i.e., the children and grandchildren) should learn first their duty to their own household (Chapter 9). I argue for a similar subject shift in 5:20, where there are accusations against an elder (singual), and those who continue to sin (i.e., the accusers, plural) should be shamed before everyone (see Chapter 12).
implication is that the women would teach their children these virtues, and the result of their efforts will contribute to their “salvation.” Instructing the children to have purity with self-control is similar to two of the items the older women were to teach the younger women in Tit 2:5 (σωφρονας ἀγνός). The context also suggests that older women and/or mothers had some responsibility in helping their daughters (and sons) continue in faith (πίστις), guidance that the younger widows who are forsaking their “first faith” (τὴν πρωτὴν πίστιν; 5:11) may be lacking. This may have been, in part, a very practical kind of help, such as securing a suitable marriage partner within the community.

5.3. Marriage arrangements: matchmaking and dowries

Following the relatively long description of the young widows, 5:16 concludes the section this way:

εἰ τὶς πιστὴ ἔχει χήρας, ἐπαρκεῖτο αὐτῶς καὶ μὴ βαρεῖσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἵνα ταῖς ὀντως χήραις ἐπαρκέση.

If any believing woman has widows, let her aid them and do not let the church be burdened, in order that it might aid the real widows.

It is my contention that here the author addresses the responsibilities of middle-aged women directly.

Older women, by virtue of their experience and freedom from certain domestic responsibilities, would be in a position to support and mentor younger women, which would include a lead role in marriage arrangements.497 They may be responsible to support young widows, financially in the short term if need be, but more importantly to find them new husbands, which involved matchmaking and/or providing dowries.

497 A mother-in-law may play a key role in choosing her daughter-in-law in Iraq (Fernea 1965:164). Judith K. Brown points out that male ethnographers may attribute decision-making about marriage to men when in fact women are the most influential figures in the process (Brown 1982:144).
Marriage was, of course, not a romantic union, but rather a family driven and socially sanctioned duty to produce legitimate children. Marriages were arranged by family members. According to the *Lex Julia*, “people who wrongfully prevent children in their power from marrying, or who refuse to provide a dowry for them… can be forced by proconsuls and provincial governors to arrange marriages and provide dowries for them. Those who do not try to arrange marriages are held to prevent them” (*Digest* 23.2.19). Family members continued to have an obligation to get involved in marital relationships when need be. According to Bradley, marriages inevitably involved “intervention, management, and manipulation, the natural corollaries, in fact, of marriage by arrangement” (1991:191).

Marriage arrangements involved a material component in terms of a dowry. Dowries were usually provided by a woman’s family or a patron. If a young widow’s family could not provide a dowry, an older woman in the community might have come to her aid as a patron. Treggiari notes that wealthy women were known to make charitable donations to young women for dowries. It was less acceptable for men to do so (1991:344). For example, Livia, the wife of Augustus, helped to pay dowries of many young women, for which an arch was built in her honour (Dio Cassius *History of Rome* 58.2.3). In the *Laudatio Turiae* (CIL 6.1527), a woman is praised by her husband for helping her female kin by taking them in and helping with dowries. He states: “For you brought up your female relations who deserved such kindness in your own houses with us. You also prepared marriage-portions for them so that they could obtain

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498 The dowry represented wealth from a bride’s natal family, and could give her a kind of authority and security in marriage. In the propertied classes a widow would have received back her dowry, and perhaps a legacy, usufruct or inheritance from her husband (usually the inheritance that would be passed on to his [their] children, who would continue the family lineage). She continued to be a member of her natal family.

499 Patronage between women of different status was common. Even modestly wealthy women were patrons of freedwomen (and freedmen; see Osiek and MacDonald 2006:202-3). In a second or third century epitaph, a woman named Epiphania is praised for her financial aid for other women, motivated by piety: “And to friends abandoned as woman to woman I provided much, with a view of piety (φίλες τε λειπομένες ώς γυνη γυνηξί πολλά παρέσχον, εἰς εὐσεβήν ἄφορόσα)” (SEG 24 1081; translation in *New Documents* 2.55-56). See also Osiek and MacDonald for evidence of Christian women as patrons (2006:214-19).
marriages worthy of your family” (1.44-49; translation by Wistrand 1976:23). Since young women receiving the gift would not be direct descendants of the donor, such action offers another piece of evidence for female networks.

Widows had a more difficult time securing a second or subsequent marriage than young women did for their first marriage. They often had a large dowry as compensation for their lack of virginity. They might be more assertive than virgins, and the fact that they already had one husband die was suspicious—a potential sign of women’s power that a man might want to avoid (Apuleius Apology 92:6-11; Harlow 2007:202; cf. Buitelaar 1995:10, 15).

Parents were involved in the choice of a second marriage. In the Laudatio Murdiae (CIL 6.10230), Murdia had become a widow with one son. She remarried a second time and had subsequent children. The inscription states “her parents gave in her marriage to worthy men,” suggesting that her parents were integral in her finding a second husband as well as the first.

While fathers (if they were alive) had the final say about marriage, older women were involved in, perhaps integral to, getting young people married. For one thing, marriage arrangement involved networking among other women to find suitable marriage partners. A mother had some responsibility in choosing marriage partners for her children. Treggiari emphasizes that a young man’s mother, especially a widow, would actively seek a wife for her son. This involved "being approached by other matronae" who obviously represented young

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500 She had no children herself (2.31), so she proposed that her husband marry a younger woman to beget children, and she would act as a sister and mother-in-law (2.34-35). He evidently did not marry again (at least while his first wife was alive).

501 “The greater freedom allowed to matrons and viduae (divorced women and widows) meant that they could take some initiative in finding new husbands” (Treggiari 1991:135). Plutarch describes a recently divorced woman, Valeria, flirting with Sulla, recently widowed. After checking into her family and past, Sulla sought to marry her. Plutarch does not find Valeria’s actions questionable, but does comment that Sulla allowed his passions to guide him like a young man would (The Life of Sulla 35.3-5).

502 For example: “Many a mother in Tyrhene towers longed for her as a daughter[in-law] (nurum) in vain” (Virgil Aenid 11.581-82). Similarly, addressing a young woman, Catullus describes a mother’s role in her daughter’s marriage choice:

And you, maiden, strive not with [do not resist] such a husband; it is not right to strive with him to whom

Queen Amata wept over her daughter’s marriage to Turnus, the Trojan, who was to take her daughter away. Mother often wept for their daughters who left them (7.357), but in Amata’s case, she felt her mother’s rights over her daughter’s marriage had been disregarded (Virgil Aenid 7.402). In the Acts of Paul and Thecla, no father is mentioned, so Thecla’s mother was likely a widow who secured a highly desirable marriage for her daughter. Thecla’s mother probably felt her own welfare was secured with such a marriage to the well-positioned Thamyris (cf. §43). When Thamyris and Thecla’s mother realize she is “lost” to Paul’s message, they weep, along with the servants, for their lost future wife, daughter and mistress (§10).

Aunts, married elder sisters and matrons who were family friends might help a young virtuous virgin be noticed by other women in hopes of a good offer of marriage; women’s networks provided ways to find out about potential brides (Treggiari 1991:135, 138).

Cicero recounts a story of a woman whose sister’s daughter wanted to marry. The young woman and her aunt went to receive an omen, which Cicero notes was an ancient custom. After waiting a long time, the young woman asked to sit in her aunt’s chair, to which the aunt replied she could

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Livy recounts the following story of a mother’s indignation at her husband arranging a marriage for their daughter without her consent.

When the contract had been duly made at this public ceremony and Scipio had returned home, he told his wife Aemilia that he had arranged a marriage for their younger daughter. When she, being irritated, as a woman would naturally be, that he had not consulted with her about the daughter of both of them, had added that not even if her were promising her to Tiberius Gracchus should the mother have been excluded from the deliberation, Scipio, they say, rejoicing at their harmony of opinion, replied that it was to Gracchus that he had betrothed her. (38.57.6-8)

Treggiari describes details about Cicero’s negotiations for his daughter’s third marriage that involves a number of women who present their candidates. Cicero’s wife is heavily involved in the process (1991:127-31).
take her place. This action was the omen, for the young woman married the aunt’s husband after the aunt unexpectedly died (Cicero On Divination 1.104).

A letter from Jerome to a middle-aged woman is illustrative of mother-daughter dynamics between a widowed mother and her “virgin” daughter within the later Christian community. The young woman appears to be in a questionable relationship with a man (Jerome Letter 117.3). Jerome recommends that living with her mother will protect the young woman’s chastity. He indicates that the daughter does not want to live with her mother because her mother was behaving in a “worldly” manner, but Jerome emphasizes the mother-daughter bond: she carried her in her womb, raised her with affection, washed her clothes, sat with her when she was ill, bore the “sickness of maternity” to bring her life, reared her to become a woman, and taught her to love Christ (4). He exhorts the mother to focus on helping her daughter (11; Kraemer 1988:170-77). Jerome implies that the mother is responsible for her daughter’s chastity and/or marriage.

6. Middle-aged women and the opposing teachers

The age hierarchy works well when middle-aged women are reputable. Women like the 60+ widow in 5:9-10 contribute well to the community’s honour. In the author’s view, however, some women were not behaving properly (2:9-15, 5:6). Perhaps influenced by the opposing teachers, he characterizes them as self-indulgent and cultivating a poor reputation. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that the author characterizes some young women, specifically young widows, as following in their footsteps in acting wantonly (5:11).

505 Older women were also sometimes employed as professional matchmakers in the Eastern empire (Arjava 1996:30; cf. Noy 1990:385), so it is possible that this function of older women may also be in view. In modern Sicily, Chapman notes that while parents usually arrange marriages, an old woman (or man) may encourage a marriage “for the benefit which she may derive from its successful conclusion” (1971:95, 99), by which I assume she means a financial reward.
The text about young widows contains a strange paradox: they want (θέλω) to marry (5:12), which seems problematic, but then the author has Paul state that he wishes (βουλομαι) young women to marry (5:14). On the one hand, the author may be projecting a stereotype of young women desperate to marry. In modern Sicily, marriage is a duty for a man, but “marriage is represented as the ardent desire of every woman.” Songs, proverbs, and legends suggest that because of sexual desire women are more interested in marriage itself than in any particular man (1971:89-90). Ancient male authors also thought women wanted to be married. Philo describes the women in the Judean monastic communities near Alexandria as “aged virgins, who have kept their chastity not under compulsion, like some of the Greek priestesses, but of their own free will in their ardent yearning for wisdom. Eager to have her for their life mate they have spurned the pleasures of the body and desire no mortal offspring…” (On The Contemplative Life 68-69 (translation in Kraemer 1988:27). Philo alludes to the sexual desire of Greek priestesses who are nevertheless compelled to remain virgins. He also suggested that women normally expected and desired marriage and children by emphasizing that elderly Judean virgins exchanged a sexual relationship and children for wisdom. Thus, this text suggests that women normally desired a husband and children.⁵⁰⁶ In the male perspective, marriage preserved the family structure and family honour. It also perpetuated the generational cycle. Clearly men desired women to marry.

6.1. Why the young widows wish to marry

There were also a number of reasons for a young widow herself to want to remarry. First, she may want to secure her material well-being. Krause, who argues that the “emancipatory” element of female asceticism is overestimated, posits that the material need of

⁵⁰⁶ Abu-Lughod and Mari H. Clark both comment on their experiences as female ethnographers who did not have children of their own. They occupied a liminal status while doing their fieldwork because they were not considered girls, but not really considered women either, since having children is “one of the most defining characteristics of women” (Abu-Lughod 1986:17; Clark 1983:123-25). For Iraqi women, children also bring solace, especially when a woman is not with her natal family (Fernea 1965:36).
most women, especially among the non-elite, would motivate them to remarry (1995:109-10). Widows might have received an inheritance or legacy from her husband, but her standard of living might also have dropped significantly (Treggiari 1991:500-2). A poor young woman would want to remarry to secure her material future; a woman from a family with some property or wealth would want to remarry to qualify for inheritances, as specified by the Augustan marriage laws (Harlow and Laurence 2003:88-89).

Second, marriage would reinstitute a “normal” status for a widowed woman. Widows whose husbands died (or women whose husbands divorced them) were the victims of circumstance, yet they are viewed with suspicion because they are sexually awakened women who were no longer in a proper sexual relationship. In a cross-cultural assessment of widowhood, Marjo Buitelaar argues that a widow is anomalous and the object of cultural anxiety in cultures where marriage is the central organizing principle of a society. In such a society, marriage is the only acceptable opportunity for sexual relations, and marriage is the main way that men control female sexuality. A woman’s sexuality is symbolic and her chastity forms the basis of her identity. A virgin is also anomalous, but her sexual inexperience means she is not yet a woman. A widow on the other hand is a “real” woman because of her sexual experience, but she is no longer in a sanctioned sexual relationship (through marriage). Thus, she is considered suspicious, a potential seductress or at least her chastity is “more precarious.” Buitelaar makes a distinction between fecund women (married and younger widowed women) and not fecund (virgins and post-menopausal women) (Buitelaar 1995:7-10). More so than with widowers, whose identity is both public and private, women’s identity is wrapped up with her husband. His death means that a widow might be more associated with the “power, awe or

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507 She may have the right to continue living in the house, for example. If she receives the inheritance as a widow and then remarries, she may bring the new husband to live in the house, and even bring along her father-in-law (Digest 7.8.4.1). Her children, freemen and parents may also live there (Digest 7.8.6).
dread” of the dead. She may also be viewed as suspicious because she has outlived her husband (Buitelaar 1995:10, 15). One way for the community and for the widow herself to deal with the ambiguous nature of widowhood is to remarry, thus placing the woman back into a “normal” category of womanhood.\(^\text{508}\)

Third, marriage was an important identity marker in a woman’s life. It was key to women’s power, for marriage, motherhood and adult children gave them power as they progressed through the life course. Young women could foresee their own rise to power within the domestic sphere based on the examples of their mothers, mothers-in-law, grandmothers and other female kin and neighbours. Krause suggests that the desire to be mothers far outweighed the risks of pregnancy and childbirth (1995:109-10). A woman’s role as wife and mother evolved as she aged, and her age afforded her greater power and freedom, especially if she had children. Among the elite, women who survived their husbands often promoted their sons (e.g., Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi). It may have been similar among the non-elite. In this sense, celibacy did play a role in women’s power later in life when they were widowed and considered beyond the age at which they should be sexually active because they were no longer fertile. A young widow, especially if she had no children or young children (who may or may not survive to adulthood) was in a vulnerable position with very little social power. Her normal avenue for gaining power over the life course would be to re-establish herself as a wife and matron of a household.

\(^{508}\) A Sarakatsan widower would marry non-virgins, or “used women” (honourable widows and dishonoured maidens; Campbell 1964:83, 128, 159, 304). In this way, such women were fitted into normal categories of family and marriage so that they do not have the shame of “remaining” (1964:304; cf. Stirling 1965:111, 196). In Sicily, “except for house-nuns, who have taken vows of chastity, unmarried women are regarded as not responsible for their condition and are not blamed” (Chapman 1971:89), but there is a general suspicion of women who live alone, and the slightest blunder produces gossip about them (1971:108). This kind of suspicion of women, especially widows, is evident among early Christian groups in the ancient Mediterranean (see MacDonald 1996:49-126). Another potential avenue of honourable status is religious devotion, but this is usually reserved for the elite (Buitelaar 1995:12-13). Those who argue that the younger widows were pursuing celibacy might find this compelling, but the young widows were not elite, and the “first faith” is not necessarily a vow of celibacy (as argued below).
In sum, sexual desire (implied in 1 Tim 5:11) is certainly a possible reason for why younger widows would want to marry, but probably a young widow’s anomalous status would prompt an accusation of sexual misconduct even if a social faux pas had nothing to do with sexual activity. All of their behaviour reflected on the honour of the family, and the men who were bound to protect them. Marriage was the best way to protect women’s chastity. Marriage was also a cultural and social expectation. Remarriage would alleviate material need, allow them to escape the suspicion associated with their widowed status, and permit them to pursue the life course that typically afforded women power as they aged.

6.2. Barriers to remarriage

Younger widows may have wanted to remarry, but they may not have been able to remarry. If one third of all adult women were widows (Krause 1994a:73), we cannot expect that all young widows could remarry. A young widow might be able to return to her father’s home with hope of remarrying. If she had children, they might remain widowed and raise her children; if she remarried she may raise the children with a stepfather, or they may be raised by paternal kin. A wealthy widow had more choices than a poor one (Harlow and Laurence 2003:89).

Bassler argues that the author of 1 Timothy required women to marry because he pushed for traditional household roles for women, children and slaves in order to gain more positive outside opinions of the community (2003:133). But the author also required men to marry and take up traditional household roles. This was a stipulation for men who wanted to be considered for positions of responsibility in the community, namely overseer and deacon (3:1-10, 12; see

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509 Marriage was a complicated affair, and remarriage even more so, since a woman often retained ties with family of her first marriage, especially if she had children. Treggiari notes, “When a woman reached marriageable age or was divorced or widowed while still reasonably young, it was natural and usual that suitors would present themselves” (1991:126), but the search for suitable marriage partners, at least among the elite, was often “tedious and complicated” (1991:127). In addition, if she had children, their interest in her inheritance might be threatened by a new husband (Harlow and Laurence 2003:89). This was the case Pudentilla’s marriage to Apuleius (see Chapter 10).
Chapter 12; cf. Krause 1995:109). If the opponents promoted abstaining from marriage (4:3), their teaching probably affected men’s decisions about marriage.510

If young men were choosing not to marry (and widowers were choosing not to remarry), then there may have been a dearth of believing men for young women to marry. This would especially be the case for young widows, who were already at a disadvantage for marriage prospects. Unlike virgins, who were sexually inexperienced and retained purity, widows were sexually experienced, and even if they were chaste, their experience made them prone to suspicion, as we have seen.

Harlow and Laurence suggest that the status of a father-in-law was important for a bridegroom who was striving for heightened status. In Chapter 8, I outline the potential for young men’s ambitions to raise their status among the non-elite. Harlow and Laurence specifically outline ages according to elite political offices (2003:95-98), but status and social alliances were also important for the none-elite. If a man married at the age of 25, his father would likely be in his late fifties, the age at which his public life (or life time) might be drawing to a close. If he married a woman who was 15, his father-in-law might be in his late forties, a time of life at which he was particularly powerful in public life. If a man was around 40 when he married (for the second time) a woman of 20, his father-in-law would be at a similar stage of life, and might provide a suitable peer alliance. A prospective groom might also be interested in a woman’s brothers or other male kin as social or political alliances. My point is that it was not just the woman he would be interested in marrying, but the potential connections that such a marriage would secure to increase his status. If a young widow had no father, as is suggested by

510 Perhaps their mothers were encouraging them not to marry (or remarry if widowed). Roman mothers were influential in their sons’ lives (Dixon 1988:168-202), just as they are in the modern Mediterranean (Kiray 1976:263-65; Campbell 1964:165-66). According to Cool and McCabe, sons are emotionally reliant on their mothers, and may seek their advice and approval for marriage (1983:65-66).
her unrestrained behaviour in 5:13, she may be a less desirable mate. The lack of a father-in-law might change the potential prospects for a young man’s status and lessen a young widow’s options even more.

6.3. The “first faith”

The young widows are incurring judgement because they rejected “the first faith” (τὴν πρῶτην πίστιν). A typical view is that their sexual desire drives them to want to marry, which turns them against Christ. They do not deny their faith by desiring to marry, but in their rejection of a vow of celibacy (Bassler 2003:131). Bassler’s argument is based on how celibacy “could provide women a basis for increased autonomy and power” (2003:126), especially freedom from “hierarchical dominance” of a father or husband, the dangers of childbirth and the rigours of childrearing (2003:139; cf. 2003:129-30). This view is anachronistic and ethnocentric. While there is strong evidence for some celibate women in

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511 Demographically, many men and women married after their father’s death (Saller 1994:229).

512 Among the Sarakatsani, there is little prestige in marrying a widower, but for non-virgins (honourable young widows and young women with tainted reputations), marrying a widower might be their only choice to avoid the shame of being unmarried (Campbell 1964:83, 128, 159, 304).

513 Or perhaps a specific commitment to prayer (5:5; Johnson 2001:266).

514 Feminist interpreters tend to focus on male oppression of women and the author’s squelching of women’s leadership roles (e.g., Fiorenza; Thurston 2003:172). Linda M. Maloney, for example, states of the letters to Timothy and Titus,

these letters are both frustrating and depressing to the Christian woman who reads them: their tone (especially as regards women and their roles) is negative to point of ferocity, and it is this negative and oppressive quality that has dominated interpretation and authoritative application of these texts in the succeeding two millennia… there can be no doubt that the author of these letters had an agenda, and that agenda did not include fostering the advancement of women, whatever their class or rank, nor of slaves, male or female. The point of view is androcentric and patriarchal almost to the point of absurdity…” (1994:361).

Certainly women did have important roles that were recognized, as many scholars point out (Maloney 1994:362). While this perspective is important to acknowledge for devotional application of the text as modern religious text, my goal as a historian and anthropologist is to discover the cultural dynamics and occasion behind the text as well as the expression of cultural values that comes out of the text. The feminist critique has been enormously helpful in prompting scholars to illuminate women’s lives in the ancient world, but the presuppositions attached to some scholarship colour their findings with Western, twentieth century angst that simply was not part of ancient Roman culture. For example, the language of “freedom” and “equality” for women amid patriarchal society, a product of centuries of Western thought, was highly unlikely to have been on the minds of first century women (e.g., Kloppenborg 1996b). New insights about the social and cultural milieu of the ancient Roman world have affected some feminist interpretation. For example, in Bassler’s recent reassessment of 1 Tim 5:3-16 she notes that Gal 3:28
the early Christian communities (especially in the second century and later), 515 Bassler admits that celibacy was “not a real option for most women in this world,” (2003:127), especially in the long term. The Vestal Virgins remained celibate for thirty years (and beyond, if they chose not marry after this; Plutarch Life of Numa Pompilius 10), but “lifelong celibate women are otherwise practically unexampled, although nothing can be proved for the lower class” (Treggiari 1991:83). 516 Thus, it is difficult to confirm that “first faith” was a vow of celibacy. 517 Considering the meaning of the “first faith” in light of my hypothesis, there are two possible explanations. Both are speculative.

First, if young widows had few believing men available to marry, but they still wanted to marry they might wish to choose someone outside of the group. 518 Winters posits that a young widow’s wish to remarry was a wish “to abandon her faith in order to secure a husband who

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515 For example, Ignatius suggests there are young women in Smyrna who are celibate with his phrase “virgins who are called widows” (Smyr. 13.1). In the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla Thecla is a young virgin who chooses not to marry. In the third century interpretation of 1 Tim 5:3-16, the Apostolic Constitutions suggest that younger widows could not be part of the “order of widows” because of the temptation to marry a second time. A second marriage would not be a problem in itself, but would be considered immoral because of the falsehood of a widow’s promise to remain unmarried (3.1.2). This vow of celibacy was a later development that we cannot assume for the early stage of the Christian community represented by 1 Timothy.

516 Treggiari notes one instance of a woman called perpetua virgo by Pliny the Elder (Natural History 35.147).

517 For the author of 1 Timothy, the terms πίστις (noun) and πιστός (adjective) denote boundaries about who is “in” the group and who is not. For example, God judged “Paul” as faithful (πιστῶν) and appointed him this service (1:12), as an example for those who believe (πιστεύων) in Christ (1:16). Timothy is to have faith (πίστιν) and a good conscience (1:19), being a good model in speech, behaviour, love, faith (ἐν πίστει) and purity (4:11), and rejecting improper things so he can pursue righteousness, ἔσεβεσθαι, faith (πίστις), love, endurance and gentleness (6:11). On the other hand, the opposing teachers “promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith (ἐν πίστει)” (1:4, NRSV). They forbid marriage and eating certain foods, but the author states that those who believe (τοῖς πιστῶσι) and know the truth should gratefully receive these things (4:3). There are those whose faith (τῇ πίστιν) has been shipwrecked (1:19). Some who are eager to be rich have wandered away from the faith (ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως; 6:10), and some who profess knowledge that is false have missed the mark with regard to the faith (τῇ πίστιν; 6:21). One’s status as someone who has faith affords them certain obligations. A believing woman (πιστῇ) who has widows should assist them (5:16), and slaves with believing (πιστῶσι) masters should be especially obedient because their service benefits believers (πιστοῖ; 6:2).

518 Most younger widows are able to remarry in Turkey because they have the option of becoming a co-wife (Stirling 1965:111, 196). This was not a culturally acceptable option for the early Christians.
would not marry her if she remained a Christian” (2003:137).\footnote{However, if a young widow was actually sexually promiscuous, as Winters suggests, I find it hard to believe she would be easily able to remarry with such a tainted reputation.}

Similarly, Collins argues that the young widows’ “first faith” (5:14) refers not to celibacy, but to the loss of faith a young widow would experience if she married a pagan husband (2002:141). Most young widows probably either grew up in the Christian community or became part of the community when they married a man who was already part of the community. Women were expected to participate in their husband’s religious practices,\footnote{Plutarch states: “A wife ought not to make friends of her own, but to enjoy her husband’s friends in common with him. The gods are the first and most important friends. Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the front door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god do stealthy and secret rites performed by a woman find any favour” (“Advice to the Bride and Groom,” 19).} so either way, their “first faith” would be to Christ. Therefore, if a young woman’s first marriage involved loyalty to her husband and to Christ, marrying a pagan could mean giving up her “first faith.”\footnote{This was not necessarily so, since some women with pagan husbands did belong to Christian communities (1 Pet 3:1). However, based on 1 Cor 7:6-8, Tertullian desires his wife not remarry at all, but especially not to marry someone out of the faith community (To His Wife 2.1.4). On the complexities of Christian women married to pagan men in the first century, especially the restrictions and suspicion they drew, see MacDonald 2003:14-28. For an interesting but flawed analysis of how women marrying pagan men helped the movement to grow, see Rodney Stark 1996:111-15. Cf. Harlow and Laurence, who note that in the case of Pudentilla’s remarriage, the fact that Apuleius was an outsider provoked suspicion (2003:89).} Romans generally considered the early Christians a superstitious movement,\footnote{E.g., Tacitus Annales, 15.44; Suetonius Life of Nero 16; Pliny Letters to Trajan 10.96. See also MacDonald 1996.} so a pagan husband may be loathe to accept a new wife who belonged to the movement. Religious unity of the married couple (or sectarian endogamy, or both) may have prompted Paul in his directive to the Corinthians to marry “in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39). Marrying someone outside of the community may also have been discouraged for the women in the audience of 1 Timothy.

Collins argues that younger widows’ active hunt for a new husband was problematic, since marriage was usually passively accepted by young women. Treggiari notes that a young woman often did have some choice, especially in a second or subsequent marriage (1991:134-
However, I would propose that the middle-aged women who were responsible to help young widows remarry were actually discouraging them on the basis of the opposing teachers’ instruction (4:3).

The text does not make clear who is judging these young women. It is usually assumed that the community or God is judging them for their wanton behaviour. A second potential explanation of the “first faith” is that the middle-aged women are judging them, and the phrase “the first faith” relates to rhetoric used by the opposing teachers to encourage widows to remain unmarried. This exact phrase occurs nowhere else in the letter, but the phrase “the faith” (ἡ πίστις) occurs in contexts that suggest the author may be turning his opponents’ rhetoric to his own advantage. It is used in contexts where the author is emphasizing his correct teaching and/or condemning the opponents’ teachings. The author portrays the young widows as confused and in need of guidance and intervention (5:11). When the young widows behave wantonly (like the problematic middle-aged women do), they are doing this against Christ. The middle-aged women who were training and guiding these young women, encouraged them to remain unmarried, reflecting the teachings of the opposing teachers (4:3). Yet, as young women always do (or so the author would have thought), they wanted to remarry. But their middle-aged mentors did not want to help them find new marriage partners, nor were they encouraging the unmarried men to marry. Remarriage was condemned by the middle-age women, and so they “judged” the young women for it, saying that they had abandoned their “first faith.” In his view, the author knows that true faith for women is found in cultivating appropriate behaviour, so he wishes them to marry, have children and run a household (5:14).

523 For example, in 4:1 the fictive Paul states that in later times some will renounce “the faith,” and concludes the letter with lamenting that some have missed the mark regarding “the faith” (6:21). The faith is known by those who know the truth (4:3); the faith is in Christ Jesus (3:13), is in accord with a clear conscience (3:9) and healthy teaching (4:6), and involves a “good fight” (6:12).
In either scenario, the author portrays the middle-aged women as negligent, needing to step up to their responsibilities and support the young widows to remarry. In 5:16, the author concludes his section on widows by directing his comments to the believing woman—a middle-aged woman.

7. Assistance and the believing woman (5:16)

The common interpretation of 5:16 assumes that the author is returning to the subject in 5:4 where children and grandchildren are directed to care for their older female relatives (e.g., Knight 1992:230). However, this interpretation interrupts the line of thought. Rather, after highlighting the exemplary 60+ widows (5:9-10) and outlining the problematic behaviour of the younger women (5:11-15), the author finishes with a statement directed at the middle-aged woman and her responsibility for younger women. She is called a “believing woman” (πιστή; 5:16)\(^{524}\) to highlight her membership in the group, and point to her responsibilities. The widows associated with the believing woman are the younger widows (5:11). In this interpretation, these middle-aged women are responsible specifically for assisting the rebellious young widows, so that the church could focus on assisting the “real widows.”\(^{525}\) But the more pressing issue involved the church recovering its honourable reputation.

The author has Paul address the believing woman through a third person imperative. The author’s use of the third person imperative is a unique feature of 1 Timothy as compared to 2 Timothy and Titus (Appendix 4; cf. Richards 2002: Appendix C) that allows him to have the

\(^{524}\) Interestingly, the variants for “believing woman” (πιστή) are “believing man” (πιστός) and “believing man or woman” (πιστός ἡ πιστή). The first variant has the strongest evidence. The variant of “believing man” may have arisen if later interpreters of the text assumed that a father should be responsible for his widowed daughter(s). Guthrie prefers the “believing man” variant because he wrongly asserts, “it is difficult to believe that the exhortation to relieve the church of its responsibility to care for widows would be confined to women” (1990:117).

\(^{525}\) The word for assist (ἐπαρκέω) is used twice in 5:16: the believing woman is to assist her widows continuously (ἐπαρκεῖτω, present tense), so that the church can assist (ἐπαρκέσθη, aorist tense) the “real widows” (τοῖς ὀντοῖς χήραις). While 5:16 could be returning to the notion of 5:3-8, that young believing women taking care of mothers and grandmothers, I think the ideas presented here make better sense of the flow of the text.
fictive Paul address third parties. He addresses deacons (3:10, 12), slaves (6:1, 2), a widow’s children and grandchildren (5:4), women (2:11, 5:16) and indefinite “others” (4:12, 5:9, 5:17) in this way. The references to women are notable. They are both in the singular, and both refer to proper behaviour amid descriptions of alarmingly improper behaviour (in the author’s perception). The phrase “let a woman learn (μαθαίνετε) in full submission” (2:11) is embedded in the context of the fictive Paul’s directives for women to dress and act modestly, his declaration the he permits no woman to teach or have authority over a man, and his justification of a woman’s submission in the story of Adam and Eve (2:9-15). The second phrase “let the believing woman who has widows take care of (ἐπαρκεῖτω) them” (5:16) directly follows the section on the poor behaviour of young widows, some of whom have even turned away after Satan (5:11-15). The similarity in grammatical construction and context suggests that the third person imperative in 5:16 is also meant to be a directive to correct improper behaviour, and that it relates to the young widows described immediately before. Thus, I suggest the believing woman was a middle-aged woman who has been shirking her responsibilities toward younger women.

This interpretation makes sense of the parallel grammatical structure in 5:4, 8, 16 as well:

5:4 εἰ δὲ τις χήρα τέκνα ἠ ἐγγονα ἔχει
5:8 εἰ δὲ τίς τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ
5:16 εἰ τίς πιστὴ ἔχει χήρας

The phrase in 5:8, “if someone does not care for her or his own and especially their own household,” creates a pivotal shift in topic. It is sufficiently ambiguous so that it indirectly connects the problem of adult children shirking filial duty with the problem of middle-aged

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526 He addresses “others” when he represents Paul saying to Timothy, “let no one look down on you because of your youth” (4:12). The other two instances involve the passive voice. The verb καταλεγέσθω suggests that someone else is to create the list upon which certain widows would be placed (5:9), and ἀξιούσθωσαν suggests that elders were not being given their rightful honour (see Chapter 12).
women shirking their responsibility for the younger women, whose behaviour was out of control. Both were problematic for the community’s reputation.

8. Conclusion

The context for 5:16 might be paraphrased something like this (added context in italics):

Enlist the proven old widows on the basis of their exemplary life-time of virtue. *They are to be role models for the older women. And since the older women are not fulfilling their duties in keeping the younger women in check*, intercede for the problematic younger widows, who are behaving very badly, bringing shame on themselves and the community. I wish them to behave properly: marry, have children and manage a household so that those who oppose us have no reason to insult us. *This is really the responsibility of* the believing *older* woman, who should assist the *younger* widows who depend on her, so that the church is left only with the burden of the real widows (who are really alone).

In sum, no longer responsible for young children, and with younger female kin (daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces) to take on the bulk of domestic chores, middle-aged women had more time and freedom to pursue other interests, but also had responsibility for the younger women. In the view of the author, they were not providing the proper modeling, guidance or support to the young women of the community. The result was behaviour that appeared to outsiders as scandalous, giving the church a bad reputation. The author appeals to the cultural norm of an age hierarchy, appealing to the middle-aged women to step up to their responsibilities in guiding the younger generation so that the community could appear to be honourable.
Chapter 12: Elders

1. Introduction

So far in 1 Tim 5, we have seen that the author has the fictive Paul introduce cultural expectations of age hierarchy, including respect for the older generation (5:1-2), filial piety (5:4) and proper behaviour of middle-aged women (5:11-16) modeled by exemplary old widows (5:9-10). The next section, 1 Tim 5:17-25, represents a shift in topic from women to men, and involves the πρεσβυτέροι or “elders.” While the word eventually came to be associated with an “office,” its first century meaning carries a strong sense of age and seniority. I focus especially on 5:19-20, “Do not accept as correct an accusation against an elder, except on the basis of two or three witnesses. In front of everyone, rebuke those who keep sinning, in order that the rest also might have fear.” (5:19-20; my translation). Most commentators presume that “those who sin” in 1 Tim 5:20 are the elders, but it is worth considering whether they are those who accuse the elders. That is, younger men falsely accusing the older men of the community are, in the view of the author of 1 Timothy, dishonouring their elders, displaying irreverent behaviour, and disrupting the order of the community.527

In this chapter, I consider the definition and function of the πρεσβυτέροι (elders) in 1 Tim 5:17-22. While some scholars have been interested in tracing the development of the

527 The only other commentator who suggests that those who sin are younger men rather than elders or the community in general is Young. She asserts that the sinners are individuals who “challenge or refuse to accept teaching of ‘seniors,’” that is, those who rightfully carry the traditions and “corporate memory” of the community. She rightly points to the age structure of Roman society. “As in any household in antiquity, age bore with it certain status and authority. It was the older people who were guardians of the corporate memory. They were not to be lightly disregarded, still less corrected. Timothy himself was to deal with his elders respectfully.” She argues that the elderly members of the group were associated with apostolic tradition, citing Papias (Eccl. Hist. 3.39; Young 1994:107). Verner recognizes that the section on elders “deals with behaviour toward elders rather than elders’ behaviour” (1983:101), yet he reverts to the typical interpretations for the sinners: “5:20 envisions either guilty elders being convicted in the presence of the presbytery or sinners in general being convicted in the presence of the congregation” (1983:156). As far as I can tell, no recent commentator has taken up Young’s suggestion, nor sought fit to argue with it. For instance, neither Towner (2006:370) nor Marshall (1999:618) lists it as a possibility.
“office” (that is, the static rank or position) of “elder,” I consider the possibility that the term πρεσβύτερος had more to do with the pervasive and fluid cultural value of honour than with an “office” in the late first and early second centuries. In this way, the author uses πρεσβύτερος to emphasize his conservative view of age structure, whereby the young should properly respect the old, lest the reputation of the community is tainted. I compare 1 Tim 5:17-22 to the factious younger men causing problems in 1 Clement. I also compare the text with Roman elite texts about young men, suggesting that the author’s story about Paul and Timothy may reflect his own anxiety about younger men’s potential power in his own time of social crisis.

2. The Elders (πρεσβύτεροι)

2.1. Church “office” and the “elders”

Meeks has stated: “The Pastorals are essentially manuals for church officers,” a genre comparable to second and third century texts that promoted “the solidification of catholic organization” (1983:133).528 This description is misleading and anachronistic. It assumes attributes of later church manuals for ecclesiastical discipline and behaviour (e.g., Apostolic Constitutions, see Chapter 10, §7), but this was not their original intent. Rather, as I outline in Chapter 7, 1 Timothy was written to combat an opposing teaching and dictate “proper” behaviour at a time of when the community’s identity was uncertain.

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528 This was Meeks’ position in the first edition of First Urban Christians. Similarly, in the first edition of The Writings of St. Paul, he states that this “church manual” includes “directives for prayer and worship” and “duties of bishops and deacons” along with household codes applied to the “household of God” (1972:133). This characterization of the letters to Timothy and Titus is selective, and ignores much of the text. Meeks tentatively dates the letters to 125 CE (1972:134). In the second edition of Writings, Meeks gives a range of dates for the letters (95-125 CE). He no longer characterizes them as a “church manual,” presumably recognizing that “more elaborate church organization” did not necessarily constitute a “manual” as such (2007:122-23).
Traditionally, three church “offices” have been grouped together: overseers, deacons and elders. The earliest instance of this grouping appears to be in a letter from Ignatius to the Magnesians (110 CE):

I urge you to hasten to do all things in the harmony of God, with the bishop (τοῦ ἐπισκόπου) presiding in the place of God and the presbyters (τῶν πρεσβύτερων) in the place of the council of the apostles and the deacons (τῶν διακόνων), who are especially dear to me, entrusted with the ministry (διακονίαν) of Jesus Christ…” (6.1). While Ignatius describes the three titles of overseer, elder and deacon together, their functions are not clear or developed. In other contemporary proto-orthodox literature, the three titles are not normally seen together. For example, in Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians he directs his listeners to “be subject to the elders and deacons (ὑποτασσόμενος τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις καὶ διακόνοις) as to God and Christ” (5.3). The Didache directs the community to “elect for yourselves bishops and deacons” (χειροτονήσατε έαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους; 15.1), the same pairing as found in Phil 1:1. A unique pair is found in Hermas: bishops and those who are hospitable (ἐπίσκοποι καὶ φιλόξενοι; Parables 104).

The tripartite grouping found in Ignatius is not obvious in 1 Timothy. Viewing the roles of overseers, deacons and elders together in this letter is anachronistic at best, and does not reflect the progression of the letter. In 1 Tim 3 we find qualifications for someone who aspires

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529 I use the term “overseer” for ἐπίστοπος to avoid the anachronistic connotations of the usual translation “bishop,” except in direct quotations of others (cf. Campbell 1994:179, n.11).

530 The word διακόνος literally means “servant,” but can refer to an “attendant or official in a temple or religious guild” (LSJ). The term later came to be known as an official title in the Christian church: “deacon.” I recognize the potentially anachronistic sense of the English rendering “deacon,” but I employ it here because it distinguishes the distinct role assumed in 1 Tim 3:8-13 better than translating it “servant” or “attendant” would.

531 The three titles are listed together also in 2.1, when he mentions the overseer Demas, two elders (Bassus and Apollonius) and a deacon (Zotion) by name. Zotion is “subject to” (ὑποτάσσομαι) the overseer and the council of elders. In 13.1, Ignatius mentions the overseer and council of elders together, with an afterthought to the deacons. In other parts of the letter, only the overseer and elders are mentioned together (3.1; 7.1). The point of the letter is that the “young” ( νεοτερικὴν) overseer deserves respect despite his age. Ignatius recognizes that Demas is the exception as a young overseer (Barclay 2007:239). Ignatius is careful to note that the elders (τοὺς ἅγιους πρεσβύτερους; “the holy presbyters”) have deferred or yielded (συγχωροῦντος) to him because of his prudence (or wisdom) in God (φρονίμω ἐν θεῷ; 3.1; cf. Gnilka 1983). Ignatius’ efforts to convince this audience that Demas is worthy of authority despite his young age suggests that he is an exception to the norm (Barclay 2007:238-39).
to be overseer (3:1-7), qualifications for deacons (3:8-10, 12-13) and their wives (or deaconesses; 3:11), and then a section discussing elders in 1 Tim 5 (5:17-25). The “elders” in 1 Tim 5 are not presented as a third “office.” Furthermore, the characteristics listed in 1 Tim 3 for overseer and deacons do not mirror the directives regarding elders in 1 Tim 5:17-19; the sections have different purposes and can hardly be considered a list of three “offices.” The author does not conceive of the three together.

Moreover, while the author is setting out specific qualifications for the overseer and deacons, we cannot begin with an assumption that either these positions or the label “elders” were developed “offices.”

2.2. The functions of the πρεσβύτεροι (5:17)

Directly after the instructions to the believing woman who has widows (5:16), the author discusses the elders (πρεσβύτεροι). The anacoluthon in 5:17 suggests a change of thought, but continues the themes of age and improper behaviour.

Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιούθωσαν, μᾶλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ.

Let the elders who lead well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. (5:17; my translation)

The term προίστημι has two possible meanings: “to exercise a position of leadership, rule, direct, be at the head (of)” or “have an interest in, show concern, care for, give aid” (BDAG). However, one meaning did not necessarily supersede the other, as illustrated by an inscription honouring Artemis in second century Ephesus. It declares that the edict was publicized “while Titus Aelius Marcianus Priscus, son of Aelius Priscus, a man very well thought of and worthy of all honour (τειμής) and acceptance, was leader (προεστῶτος) of the festival and president of the athletic games” (lines A.16-21; New Documents 4.19). As the

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532 Neither are the 60+ widows an “office,” as I argue in Chapter 10, §6.1.
leader of the festival, Priscus had authority over its proceedings, but such a position required the care of a benefactor as well. In this way, both senses of the verb are implied: “the inscription… reflects the ease with which Graeco-Roman urban dwellers accepted the compatibility of the two notions of benevolent actions and structured authority” (Horsley 1979:82; cf. Marshall 1999:611).

This dual function is reflected in the use of προϊστημι earlier in 1 Timothy, in the list of qualifications for overseer. Someone who aspires to this position must manage his own household well (καλως προισταμενον του ιδιου οικου), having submissive children with all respectfulness (3:4). The author goes on to clarify, “if someone does not know how to manage well his own household (ει δε τις του ιδιου οικου προστηναι ουκ οιδεν; 3:4), how can he care for (ἐπιμελησεται) the church of God?” (3:5). The verb προϊστημι has a sense of authority and care that is inherent in the role of paterfamilias, or male head of the household (Marshall 1999:481). The analogy between a person’s literal household and the metaphorical household of God (3:15), associates the two terms ἐπιμελεομαι and προϊστημι. The latter also represents this dual function.

The verb ἐπιμελεομαι is widely attested in association inscriptions, and the cognate noun ἐπιμελητας is used for a supervisory role in the Attic associations of the imperial era. The title was borrowed from the ancient civic offices in Athens (Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011). Often several ἐπιμεληται are honoured or listed in an inscription (three men are listed as ἐπιμεληται in IG II² 1327).

For example, in IG II² 1256, two ἐπιμεληται are honoured for their service (ἐπιμελεομαι) in the association. Their honesty and care (ἐπιμελειας) are highlighted.

Philokrates proposed (the following) motion: Whereas Euphies and Dexios, who were supervisors (ἐπιμεληται) of the sanctuary during the year that Kephisophon was archon, performed their service honorably and with ambition (καλως και φιλοτιμος ἐπιμεληθαυν) and in a manner worthy of the goddess (αξιως της θεου) and of the
orgeōnes, the orgeōnes have resolved to crown Euphyes and Dexios on account of their honesty and care (δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἑπιμελείας), each with a gold crown worth 100 drachmae, and to inscribe this decree on a stele and to set it up in the sanctuary of the goddess.

Although this inscription is not explicit about their responsibilities, the terms δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἑπιμελείας (honesty and care) suggest they had financial responsibility and put the interests of the association before their own (Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011). The functions of the ἑπιμελητάς normally included financial and cultic responsibilities (e.g., offering sacrifices, financing and leading processions), and they often functioned as benefactors for the association.

In IG II² 1261, Stephanos, a breastplate maker, became supervisor over all of the affairs of the association, administering them with proper care (ἐπιμελέσατο τὴν ἑπιμέλειαν; Ι.Α.5-6), and “conducted the procession in honour of Adonis, in accordance with ancestral customs (κατὰ τὰ πάτρια”) (Ι.Α.9-10; also IG II² 1324).533 The ἑπιμελητάς often offered sacrifices (IG II² 1290, IG II² 1262, SEG 2:9), in accordance with the ancestral customs (IG II² 1277).

According to IG II² 1277, the ἑπιμελητάς managed (ἐπιμεληταῖ) the sanctuary of the temple, performed sacrifices, adorned the statue of the goddess, and constructed the original altar, largely at their own expense. They “took responsibility” (ἐπιμελήσατοι) for members who had died (they made arrangements and paid for their funerals), and kept accurate financial accounts. The ἑπιμελητάς acted as benefactors by repairing buildings, such as the kitchen (IG II² 1301.3-8), or the temple (IG II² 1324) at their own expense. In addition, they were responsible to have the inscriptions made for the association (IG II² 1327.26-27; IG II² 1361.16).

It is evident that in these associations the verb ἑπιμελέσαι denoted both supervision and care in organizing events (such as processions, sacrifices and funerals), managing cultic

533 The inscription highlights that the proper ritual follows the ways of the ancestors, which reflects the past-oriented (rather than future-oriented) thinking of the ancient Romans.
space, and offering benefaction. In a manner similar to προίστημι, ἐπιμελέομαι indicates a combination of supervisory responsibilities and benevolent care.\(^{534}\)

The elders who manage and offer care (presumably for the community) do it “well” (καλῶς), a word that carries a notion of noble and honourable behaviour.\(^{535}\) For example, Plutarch characterizes the purpose of an old man’s life as καλὸς (honourable; Moralia 783C). The phrase καλῶς καὶ φιλοτίμως is commonly used to describe the character of ἐπιμεληταί in association inscriptions: they serve honourably and with ambition (IG II\(^2\) 1256, IG II\(^2\) 1262, IG II\(^2\) 1277, SEG 2:9).\(^{536}\) The phrase οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες (1 Tim 5:17) is directly parallel to the one that describes the overseer in 3:4, καλῶς προϊστάμενον,\(^{537}\) suggesting that the person who aspired to be an overseer was expected to reflect the same noble and caring managing skills

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\(^{534}\) The verb ἐπιμελέομαι does not necessarily imply leadership, since it can mean to take care of material objects. In Thucydid, it refers to organizing horses, arms and other items for war (6.41.4). The sense of attention and supervision remains, however.

\(^{535}\) This word suggests a contrast with the middle-aged women who are not properly performing their duties (i.e., the believing woman, 5:16). By contrast, the model of female virtue, the 60+ widow, bears witness in her noble works (ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη). Also, the verb ἐπαρκέω also has a strong sense of supplying material needs, as in 5:16 (see Chapter 11). I argue that this word has to do with benefaction of middle-aged women for younger widows who need dowries to be able to remarry.

\(^{536}\) The author of 1 Timothy does not use the word φιλοτίμως (neither is it found in 2 Timothy or Titus), perhaps because the younger men were proving to be too ambitious, which was causing problems. Paul employed the cognate verb φιλοτιμέομαι (Rom 15:20, 2 Cor 5:9, 1 Thess 4:11). The term is used in a positive sense in typical Roman thinking. Plutarch quotes Thucydides’ assertion that “the love of honour never grows old” (φιλότιμον ἀγίρων; Thucydid 2.44.4). Some inscriptions suggest that honouring those with φιλοτιμία helped to motivate others to pursue it and receive honours. In one instance, the inscription is set up “so that as many as are ambitious (φιλοτιμούμενοι) will see that the θιασότατοι know how to recompense with due thanks (those who serve the association)” (IG II\(^2\) 1261.C.53-54; also IG II\(^2\) 1277.30-33; IG II\(^2\) 1301:8-10). Polybius reflects similar sentiments in a military context. The soldier was the first to mount a city wall in an attack were rewarded with a gold crown: “By such incentives they excite to emulation and rivalry in the field not only the men who are present and listen to their words, but those who remain at home also” (6.39; cf. Valerius Maxiumus 3.1.1). On the other hand, Horace suggests that pursuing honour might become all-encompassing: “When one has reached manhood in age and spirit, the objects of his enthusiasm are altered, and he seeks wealth and connections, becomes a slave to the trappings of honor, is hesitant to have set into motion what he will soon struggle to change” (Ars Poetica 166-68; translation by Golden 1995).

\(^{537}\) Cf. 3:1. The person who aspires to be an overseer desires a “noble work” (καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ).
that the older men highlighted in 5:17 display. The verb normally takes the genitive, which is not supplied in 5:17, but the community is almost certainly in mind.

In 1 Thess 5:12 προϊστημι is coupled with κοπιῶντας (grow weary), which is also found in 1 Tim 5:17 (κοπιῶντες) as in a directive for “Timothy” to “toil and struggle” for the sake of sound teaching (4:10). All three instances (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 4:10, 5:17) have a sense of labour (growing weary) in one’s work on behalf of the community, indicating great effort. Plutarch cites what seems to be a popular stereotype of old men: “it is not right to say, or to accept when said by others, that the only time when we do not grow weary is when we are [profiting by] making money (ὡς κερδαινοντες μόνον οὐ κοπιῶμεν)” (783F). The

538 The phrasing may suggest that one or more of the older men were overseers, but the text does not make this clear, nor is the author’s purpose to make that specific connection. He does, however, make it clear that the act of leading in a καλως manner was important for those who aspire to be overseer (3:4), and was a mandatory attribute of those elders who were worthy of double honour (5:17).

539 Hermas is told to read his visions to the community (τῆς ἐκκλησίας; genitive) with the presbyters who lead the church (μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν προϊσταμένων τῆς ἐκκλησίας; Hermas Visions 8.3).

540 Malherbe argues that the meaning in 5:17 is similar to 1 Thess 5:12 (2008:283), “we appeal to you brothers and sisters to respect those who labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and admonish you” (ἐρωτεύμεν δέ ύμας, ἀδελφοί, εἰδέναις τοὺς κοπιῶντας εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ προϊσταμένους ύμων ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ γονατίσωσθας ύμας).”

541 On the efforts of an old person in intellectual endeavours see Cicero On Old Age 11.38.

542 Thucydides (ca. 460 BCE-400 BCE) has Pericles declare to the defeated Athenians: “The love of honour alone never grows old (φιλότιμον ἀγὴρος μόνον), and in the useless time of old age the greatest pleasure is not, as some say, in gaining money (κερδαίνειν), but in being honoured (τιμᾶσθαι)” (2.44.4). Horace depicts an old man as seeking gain: “Many troubles assail an old man, whether because he seeks gain (quaerō), and then wretchedly abstains from what he possesses and is afraid to use it, or because he attends to all his affairs feebly and timidly” (Horace Ars Poetica 169-71; translation by Golden 1995). Plutarch also condemns “money-making” (χρηματισμοῦς; 785E), which he equates with femininity and self-indulgence: “Pompey said that it was more untimely for an old man to indulge in luxury (τρυφσα) than to hold office” (786A). He says old men should “prepare themselves for the pleasure of the mind, not ignoble and illiberal ones like that of Simonides, who said to those who reproached him for his avarice (φιλαργυρία) that, since old age deprived him of all other pleasures, he was comforting his declining years with the only one left, the pleasure of gain (κερδαίνειν)” (786B). The author of 1 Timothy likewise condemns ἡ φιλαργυρία (the love of money) as a root of all kinds of evil (6:10). Polycarp condemns the love of money (avaritia) with regard to a presbyter (a term denoting an office? Latin: presbyter) who had embezzled from the church (11.1-2), and lists the opposite (ἀφιλαργυροὶ) as a trait necessary to be a deacon (διάκονος; 5.2). It would tempting to parallel this situation with the one in 1 Timothy by considering the sinners in 1 Tim 5:22 elders who have fallen into this kind of avarice, associated with the opposing teachers (6:3-10). However, a reading of the letter that is sensitive to cultural concepts of age suggests that the author perceived that younger men were seeking gain, resulting in their lack of respect for traditional social roles, including deference to older men. The evidence is threefold. First, it makes much more sense culturally (in relation to age hierarchy) for the sinners to be younger men in 1 Tim 5:22. Second, in this fictive story of an older Paul directing a younger
opposing teachers in 1 Timothy appear to have as similar vice, “imagining that godliness is a means of gain (νομιζόντως πορισμόν ἔιναι τὴν εὔσεβειαν)” (6:5). The word πορισμός can mean to earn a living, but 6:9-10 makes it clear that this word has a negative connotation related to obtaining material wealth (LSJ). This is in line with the meaning of Plutarch’s κερδοσίνω, which is to gain profit or advantage (LSJ). Perhaps the author of 1 Timothy has this stereotype in mind when he describes the elders, suggesting they are not motivated by gaining profit (like the opposing teachers are), and so they are weary. But they are weary in doing proper activities, namely leading well (καλῶς), and preaching and teaching (κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ δίδασκολία in the right way, as opposed to fighting over words (λογομαχία, 6:4; cf. 1:6, 2:8) and teaching other things (ἐτεροδίδασκαλεῖ, 6:3; cf. 1:3).

Hong Bom Kim argues that the elders who “rule well” are contrasted with elders who are “false or idle” (2004:367). But there is no evidence for such elders, only the assumption that 5:20 concerns elders who are sinning. Kim further argues that “ruling” is not the same as “teaching” (2004:367-68). However, for the author of 1 Timothy, sound teaching is performed by those who are able to manage or care for the church. The two functions need not be exclusive to one another, and does not denote different sets of people. An overseer, for

543 Plato suggest that among the pursuits one should have, money should come last after the soul and the body (Laws 5.743E).

544 The sense of μάλιστα in the letters to Timothy and Titus has been heavily debated (see also Chapter 9, §5.1). The word can mean “especially” (highlighting a sub-group within a group) or “namely” (further defining the attributes of a group). Campbell (following Skeat 1979) argues that μάλιστα means “that is to say” or “I mean,” so that the preaching and teaching function “defines” the elders who manage well and are worthy of double honour (1996:200-1). Marshall agrees with Campbell, suggesting that the translation “especially” “does not give an intelligible, unambiguous meaning: are those who do not labour in teaching to get the double honour or not?” (1999:612). Part of the question rests on how many groups of elders are implied: elders in general, elders who manage, elders who manage well, and elders who preach and teach. Campbell suggests καλῶς refers to “good works” (καλὸν ἔργον; 1 Tim 3:1) rather than a distinction between elders who do and do not rule well. He posits just one group of elders (1996:200-1). Kim favours the traditional translation of “especially” for a number of reasons, most notably to contrast the elders who “rule well” with “false or idle” ones (2004:367), which I believe is a false contrast.
instance, should be an apt teacher and a good manager of his household (3:2, 4; cf. Tit 1:9).

Since the author is defining roles that have not yet been universally defined, it is noteworthy that he marks teaching as a more important function than financial or cultic duties, especially in light of comparable terminology used in the association inscriptions above.

2.3. The identity of the πρεσβυτέροι

The term πρεσβυτέρος is often used as a substantive. Like the English rendering “elder,” πρεσβυτέρος has two overlapping and flexible meanings. It can mean older man, or it can refer to a political title or committee position, which may or may not be based on age (Bornkamm 1964:652-53; cf. Campbell 1994; Marshall 1999:173). In early Christian literature, Judean elders (οἱ πρεσβυτέροι) in the gospels (e.g., Mark 11:27, Luke 20:1, Matt 21:23), and elders of the church (e.g., Acts 15:22; 20:17; Ign Eph 2.2, 4.1; Mag 2, 6.1, 7.1; Trall 3.1, 12.2; Smyr. 8.1; Rev 4:4) have some kind of official role.

Most theories about the identity of elders in 1 Tim 5:17-22 assume that “elder” refers to a leadership role, not a reference to age. Campbell (1996), Burtchaell (1992) and others who seek to solve the problem of the identity of the “elders” cite Tit 1:5-9. In Tit 1:5 the author states that he has left “Titus” to “appoint elders in every town” as part of unfinished business. Here, we find a list of qualifications reminiscent of the one found in 1 Tim 3:1-7 for overseers. The

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545 Borkhamm argues that πρεσβυτέρος has a “positive element of venerability” as compared to the more negative sense of other words for age (e.g., γεώργιος, παλαιός; 1964:652). However, in his treatise, “Whether an Old Man should Engage in Public Affairs,” Plutarch makes little distinction:

Cato, for example, used to say that we ought not voluntarily to add to the many evils of its own which belong to old age (τῷ γήρᾳ) the disgrace that comes from baseness. And of the many forms of baseness none disgraces an aged man (ἀνδρα πρεσβυτῆρα) more than idleness, cowardice, and slackness, when he retires from public offices to the domesticity befitting women or to the country where he oversees (ἔφορόντα) the harvesters and the women who work as gleaners. (Moralia 784A)

546 The plural πρεσβυτέροι could refer to old men and women, but is unlikely to include women in this context. Women were told they could not teach in the public forum (2:12), for this would constitute improper behaviour. Osiek and MacDonald argue that women were much less likely to preach and teach in mixed company than they were to act as patrons and hosts of the Lord’s Supper (2006:161-62.)

547 Tit 1:7-9: “For (γάρ) it is necessary for the overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) to be blameless (ἀνέγκλητος) as the steward of God, not arrogant, not easily angered, not a drunkard (πάροινον; cf. 1 Tim 3:3), not violent (πλήκτρον; cf. 1 Tim
connecting word γὰρ suggests that the author is elaborating on the πρεσβυτέροι, but 1:7 goes on to describe the qualifications for the overseer (ἐπισκόπος), who is specified as “God’s steward” (θεοῦ οἰκονόμου; 1:7-9; cf. 1 Tim 1:4). Various attempts to solve the problem presented by these two roles being mentioned together include a monarchical episcopate (Campbell 1996) the merging of two different systems of leadership (von Campenhausen 1969), and an evolution of official roles as the community required more structure (Burtchaell 1992). The identity and function of elders and the overseer is a difficult issue to determine based on texts that clearly are not concerned with the distinction, nor were they meant to endorse a particular church structure (Young 1994:108; Verner 1983:150). A quest for the beginnings of orthodox church structure demands too much of the text, especially if one assumes that πρεσβυτέροι in 1 Timothy refers to an “office.”

In 1 Tim 5:1, πρεσβυτέρος clearly means an older man as compared with the νεωτέροι, younger men (Chapter 8; cf. πρεσβύτας in Tit 2:2). In keeping with the theme of intergenerational relations and age in 1 Tim 5, it follows that the introduction of πρεσβυτέροι

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548 The relationship between the overseer and elders is a long debated issue (see Campbell 1994; Burtchaell 1992; Chapter 1), mostly focused on leadership function and titles. I am not as interested in this debate as I am in the appearance of the elders in 1 Tim 5.

549 Campbell has much to say about age that is valuable, although his argument for a monarchical episcopate relies too heavily on Ignatius with little corroborating evidence. Similar to Campbell, Johnson posits a single overseer “who functions as part of a ‘board of elders’” based on 1 Tim 4:14, hinging on 1 Tim 5:17 where elders “govern” as a “basic job” with potentially other duties “depending on gifts and needs” (1996:218).

550 Burtchaell reiterates von Campenhausen’s argument that church order can be derived from the Jewish synagogue of the Second Temple period. He posits that Christians would have used the normative Jewish organization as the basis of their own, eventually altering roles and terminology to distinguish themselves from their Jewish roots. In the early church, power was in the hands of the charismatic leaders, namely prophets and apostles, while the officers (especially elders) presided in the background. When the church’s unity was challenged, the officers became more powerful and important in maintaining order (1992).
in 5:17 has the connotation of age rather than a title (Jeremias 1949:32). Otherwise, there
would be a radical change in subject matter (Malherbe 2008:282).

In a study of 1 Pet 5:1-5, Elliott takes age seriously by asserting that the terms νεώτερος
and πρεσβύτερος both imply an “intermingling” of age and office or rank (1970:377). For
Elliott, natural affinities for certain roles based on age (e.g., an older man as an elder) only help
to define the term within church structure. The ambiguity of these terms is undeniable, but the
idea that set church order necessarily forms the background for how early Christian authors
utilized these terms is arguable on cultural grounds.552

First, Elliott posits, “a contrast between ‘elder’ and ‘younger’ would make little sense
unless these terms had already assumed technical ecclesiastical status” (1970:376). For example,
he argues that in Luke 22:27, “the greatest” (ὁ μείζων) and “the youngest” (ὁ νεώτερος) must
contrast leaders and non-leaders (specifically neophytes). This depends on one’s definition of
“leadership” at this stage of the church. If we understand more about the cultural assumptions
behind age (especially deference to those who are older), we do not need to assume “technical”
church offices are in view here.

Second, Elliott ties the notion of πρεσβύτεροι as “examples” (role models of the
νεώτεροι) to church order (1970:378), but again, cultural norms dictated that older people were
typically expected to be role models for younger generations. This is evident among women, as
we saw in Chapter 11 (Tit 2:2-5), but it is also true among men. For example, Plutarch states
that:

551 Cf. Campbell (1994). However, Campbell, who also equates them with Judean elders, is more cognizant of age
being an issue in this context.

552 In his more recent comments from a social-scientific perspective, Elliott refutes this, arguing that “office” is not
an appropriate term for Christian social structure in the first two centuries CE (2003:6; see below). Nevertheless, as
Campbell demonstrates (1994:179), some scholars still use the term of “office” with little consideration whether it
is anachronistic to use for 1 Timothy. A critique of Elliott’s early position is therefore still relevant.
old men (γέροντα) should engage in affairs of the State for the education and instruction of the young (νεωτοί) … the statesmen, not only by speech or making suggestions from outside, but by action in administering the affairs of the community, directs the young man, whose character is moulded and formed by the old man’s actions and words alike (ἀργοίς ἀμα καὶ λόγοις). (Moralia 790E-F)

Finally, Elliott seeks to narrow the meanings of νεωτέρος and πρεσβύτερος to fit within church order. To illustrate, he asserts that the “organizational polity, vocabulary and thought” of the Qumran community had direct influence “upon the NT in general” (1970:381), so that it is “wholly possible, if not probable” that Christian communities borrowed the meaning of the word νεωτέροι for its own newly initiated members. There are several problems with this assertion. First, the assumption that the early Christians were influenced by the Qumran community requires substantiation. If indeed the church did have a firm ecclesiological order by the end of the first century, many communities were based in Gentile regions in Asia Minor, geographically and temporally removed from the influence of this reclusive Judean sect. Second, the texts describe a very narrow portion of the male member’s life course (1QSa=1QS28a 1-20): formal enrolment when he is twenty, service for the congregation at twenty-five, and at thirty a more official role among the “chiefs” (unless he is a “simpleton”). Thus, the newly initiated were young men, having been raised within the community “from youth.” There is no clear provision (at least in this section) for outsiders who wanted to join. The Christian communities appear to have comparatively vague standards for “membership” in the texts we have available. Elliott admits that he is uncertain about the “specific terminological equivalent to neōteros in the Qumran literature” (1970:381, n.52a). While 1QSa clearly outlines how age and rank were related, the early Christian texts cited by Elliott are not nearly as clear regarding their use of age-related terms.

It is unlikely that the author was considering the qualifications of “office” for generations to come. Rather, he highlighted role models, namely, certain older men, who
supervised, preached and taught honourably (5:17), in light of the present crisis of “other teaching” (1:3; 6:3) that was influencing community members. In fact, rather than an “intermingling” of age and office, the designation πρεσβύτερος was deliberately utilized because its duality of meaning reflected more about the function and significance of honour (implying flexible usage depending on circumstances) than the development of rank or office (implying set positions, which was a later development in the Christian church). The circumstances included a crisis of identity (Chapter 7). According to the perception of the author, this crisis formed the context in which, “other” teaching caused problematic behaviour and a questionable reputation. In 1 Tim 5:17-25, the author portrays Paul as dealing with problematic behaviour that he challenges with an appeal to traditional age structure.

2.4. The honour due to elders

Elliott has more recently argued that the position of elders as presented in 1 Tim 5:17 reflects a “traditional mode of authority” more than a “bureaucratic institution” (2003:6). If “elders” are best defined as having authority that is handed down by cultural custom, understanding age in its ancient Mediterranean context is crucial. In the Mediterranean world, age is an important aspect of honour, for older people generally deserve honour because of their age. For Mediterranean men and women, honour is connected with age, and depends on context.

As described in Chapter 6, §3.2, honour is not only based on gender, but also inextricably linked to age. Familial hierarchical relationships form a prototype for community relationships. Like patriarchs, senior men control resources and make decisions. Like a patriarch’s dependents, those who are weaker or younger are expected to be modest and

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553 Shaw argues that elders, designated seniores, functioned in a traditional sense in North Africa in the third and fourth century. They gave counsel and advice, but left active decision making to other, younger men. They were neither clergy (presbuteroi were part of the clergy at this point), nor regular laity, but a council of older men derived from the village council of elders. They had judicial power, and though they could step in to clerical roles when needed, they were not spiritual leaders. He emphasizes that this is a distinctly North African village phenomenon, and was less prominent in urban areas of the region.
submissive. These relationships are based on reciprocity. The senior is obligated to protect and provide for his dependants; the dependants respect the elder, demonstrated by modest behaviour in his presence. This respect is necessary for the senior men to retain honour (Abu-Lughod 1986:103). Age does not guarantee a person’s right to authority or honour—one must be morally worthy. Certainly with age a person tends to hone his self-control (an important aspect of honour) and is increasingly responsible for others. Also, as he ages, those who once had authority over him pass away, and he gains respect from his juniors (1986:92; see also Chapter 8, §3.2).

In 1 Tim 5:17-22, the use of πρεσβυτέροι represents an age designation. The author uses this term because it allows him to appeal to the privilege that rightfully belongs to older men who are morally worthy of respect when they fulfill their role honourably (καλωσ; 5:17). In other words, in using this term, the author has Paul appeal to culturally appropriate behaviour according to age structure: these older men have responsibilities to protect and support the younger members of the community, and they deserve respect and deference from younger members. Any lack of respect and deference would threaten the reputation (honour) of the older men because it would appear that the older men were not worthy of respect. The author has Paul introduce the elders in 5:17 with a sense that those who should be considering them worthy of honour are not giving them honour. The same sense is implied in the directives to Timothy to speak kindly to an older man rather than rebuke him in 5:1. Whereas these directives are part of the story of Paul and Timothy, the urgent tone that builds in 1 Tim 5 (especially 5:21) suggests that a real situation compelled the author’s fiction.

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554 See discussion on καλωσ above.
555 As he does in 5:16, the author chooses to use a third person imperative in 5:17. He tends to use this verbal structure in the letter in order to address third parties whose behaviour is problematic (see Appendix 4 and Chapter 11).
3. Older and younger men

The author is careful (through “Paul’s” words) to present the elders as morally worthy (5:17-18), and severely reprimands behaviour that displays a lack of respect (5:19-25). If outsiders were privy to such disrespectful behaviour, it would affect not only the honour of the older men, but of the reputation of the community as well.\footnote{If we interpret πρεσβυτέροι to be a term of honour due to older age rather than an office, the text in Tit 1:5-9 also seems less problematic. Some older, honourable men were to be appointed as overseers in various cities in Crete.}

3.1. Worthy elders and wayward sinners

The elders who perform their duties as older men were worthy of “double honour” (διπλῆς τιμῆς; 5:17).\footnote{Kim suggests that the author is contrasting the real widows in 5:3 and 5:16 with elders in 5:17 since both are to have “honour” (2004:366-67). However, the two instances of “honour” are not the same, grammatically, contextually or culturally. Aristotle’s sentiments about mother and father would probably be applicable to the Roman era as well:}

“Double honour” διπλῆς τιμῆς probably does not refer to monetary payment per se, but an honorarium (Malherbe 2008:285); perhaps portions of food at the

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\footnote{While all older men were to be “temperate, serious, prudent and sound in faith, in love and in endurance” (πρεσβύτας υπερφαλίους εἶναι, σεμνὸς, σωφρόνας, ὑγιαινοῦντας, τῇ πίστει, τῇ ἀγάπῃ, τῇ ὑπομονῇ; Tit 2:2), some particularly honourable older men (πρεσβυτέροι) were to be chosen for specific leadership positions if they had dutifully married, raised believing children and demonstrated good character. In particular, they were to be blameless (ἀνέγκλητος; 1:6), a quality that is elaborated in 1:7: “For it is necessary for the overseer (ἐπίσκοπον) to be blameless (ἀνέγκλητος) as the steward of God.” Thus, from among the older men who qualified because of their marital and paternal status and character, “Titus” was to appoint overseers. The quality of being “blameless” was so important that the author of Titus had Paul explain specifically what characterized a “blameless” man (1:7-9). Towner suggests that the term πρεσβυτέρος mainly “denoted status or prestige rather than function,” based on “age, family, and probably also social standing as heads of households” (2006:245). He understands elder and overseer to be equivalent, as two “aspects of the reality of leadership” (2006:686), where elder refers to prestige and overseer to function (2006:247).}

Honour (τιμή) is also due to parents, as it is to the gods, though not indiscriminate honour: one does not owe to one’s father the same honour as to one’s mother, nor yet the honour due to a great philosopher or general, but one owes to one’s father the honour appropriate to a father, and to one’s mother that appropriate to her. (Nicomachean Ethics 9.2.8-9)
communal meal are in view (Schöllgen 1989). The author then cites two quotations to support this action of honouring the elders (5:18), not directly quoted from the HB, but derived from Christian tradition that was familiar to the real audience of the letter (Malherbe 2008:287; cf. 1 Cor 9). The appeal to tradition suggests that the author needs to convince his audience of the importance of honouring elders, especially for their efforts in correct teaching.

Malherbe notes that 5:19 is not connected syntactically to 5:18, and the subject—conductor toward elders—has not changed. However, “the tone becomes much sharper,” shifting from a third person imperative (calling for the elders to be honoured) to two second person imperative directives (Appendix 4).

κατὰ πρεσβυτέρου κατηγορίαν μὴ παραδέχου, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ δύο ἢ τριῶν μαρτύρων. τοὺς ἀμαρτάνοντας ἐνώπιον πάντων ἐλέγχε, ἵνα καὶ οἱ λοιποί φόβον ἔχωσιν.

Do not accept as correct an accusation against an elder, except on the basis of two or three witnesses. In front of everyone, rebuke those who keep sinning, in order that the rest also might have fear. (5:19-20)

The first imperative calls for “Timothy” not to accept (μὴ παραδέχου) an unjust accusation against an elder (based on established tradition; 5:19), and the second directs him to rebuke (ἐλέγχε) those who continue to sin (5:20; Malherbe 2008:288-89).

The author has Paul direct Timothy not to “accept any accusation against an elder” (NRSV) unless two or three witnesses can corroborate the accusation (5:19). This directive

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558 This view is favoured by Marshall (1999:615). An association inscription determines that a member who becomes quinquennalis (chief officer of the society, a post held for five years) is freed from certain obligations and should receive a “double share of all distributions” (CIL 14.2112, 2nd century). For a summary of theories and interpretations of this phrase, see Marshall 1999:612-15. Plutarch notes various rewards for public service including festivals, food, and other material rewards (Moralia 787B). Handouts in the Roman city (of cash or food) were distributed by rank, and favoured the elite, not the poor. That is, “honor qualified, rarely need” (MacMullen 1974:118). This was also the case with the gerusia; it was not so much a person’s need or age, but their social status that qualified him for a pension (e.g., P.Oxy. 3099-3102; El-Abbadi 1964:167). Malherbe has argued that the overseers in Tit 1:5-9 were not necessarily household owners and patrons, since elders (whom he then equated with overseers) in 5:17 received material reward (1983:99). In the ancient world the wealthy did get more rewards. In fact, this was one way to secure “liquidated” wealth for those who owned property. Their wealth also gave them rights to take loans or material favours based on their ability to pay it back, namely their ownership of property (e.g., olive trees, farmland).
would have helped to discourage unfounded accusations, but also suggests that at least some elders were wrongly slandered. If the accusers are younger men, their accusations against their elders reflected a lack of proper deference. Their haughtiness would reflect badly on the honour of the community.

The incidence of the accusation was more problematic than the content of the accusation. The author reveals nothing explicit about why the elders were accused. At least some accusations were not made through proper judicial procedure (with two or three witnesses). They were most likely without merit because the author is adamant that the accusations constitute improper behaviour. In the modern Mediterranean, a man of any age is only provoked by extreme insults, because insults are dishonourable for those who hurl them (Campbell 1964:286). Public accusations constitute dishonourable conduct, which would affect the reputation of the Christian community.

The participle τοῦς ὁμορτάνωντας, “those who keep sinning,” does not have a clear antecedent. The typical interpretation of 5:19-20 assumes “the sinners” in 5:20 are sinning elders, contrasted with the “good” elders who preach and teach, and deserve “double honour” in 5:17 (e.g., Kim 2004). In this interpretation, the antecedent of the plural participle “those who sin” is the singular noun from 5:19, “an elder.” Quinn and Wacker, for example, argue that the parallel participles in 5:17 (προεστώτες, κοπιῶντες) justify using the singular to define the participle in 5:20 (2000:465). They justify this interpretation by saying, “such abrupt shifts from singular to plural are rather characteristic of the PE and their sources not only in this chapter (5:13-16) but also in 2:9-15” (2000:465). In fact, the shift in 2:15 changes subject from

559 What was the content of the accusation against the elder? In Tit 1:6 the elder to be appointed was not to be corrupt or disobedient by accusation (κατηγορία). Sirach 42:8 states: “do not be ashamed to correct the stupid or foolish or aged when guilty of sexual immorality.” It is possible that some were accused of senility and inability to perform their duties in their right mind (Plato Laws 928DE; Plutarch re Sophocles). These are all purely speculative suggestions.

560 In this scenario, they were to be rebuked before the other elders (Quinn and Wacker 2000:464; Fee 1988:130).
the (singular) woman to her (plural) children (Chapter 11), and 5:4 shifts from the (singular)
widow with children and grandchildren to the (plural) children and grandchildren.\textsuperscript{561} Such shifts
from one singular subject to a different plural subject add evidence to the sinners being the
accusers rather than the elders.

The sinners are to be rebuked, that is shamed or disgraced (ἐλέγχε) in front of everyone,
so that the “rest” might have fear (φόβον). If we consider the proper conduct and attitudes with
regard to typical male age structure we meet with a rather odd contradiction. In 1 Tim 5:1,
Timothy is told not to “rebuke” (ἐπιτίμησις) an older man. If Timothy is to refrain from
rebuking an elder, being told to rebuke—to shame—elders, especially publicly hardly coincides
with the first directive of this section: Timothy was to treat an elder like a father.\textsuperscript{562}

3.2. Rebuke as discipline

In Mediterranean cultures, a junior does not discipline an older person and submissive
behaviour is inappropriate for a superior person. In Milocca, a grown son may advise his father,
but the father retains authority and responsibility for decisions (Chapman 1971:79). In Turkey,
“To disagree publicly with his father is a declaration of rebellion” (Stirling 1965:224). As noted
in Chapter 8, §3.3, Campbell observed that young Sarakatsani men rarely made their differences
with their father public (Campbell 1964:159-63).\textsuperscript{563}

Even in extreme need, a father would never properly or honourably beg his son for
anything. In Seneca the Elder’s first controversy (see Chapter 9, §3.1), a participant described

\textsuperscript{561} I am unsure to what Quin and Wacker are referring in 5:13-16 as a shift from singular to plural.

\textsuperscript{562} A few commentators argue that the phrase refers to sinners in general, who would be rebuked before the whole
congregation (e.g., Guthrie 1990:118), but it is difficult to justify the shift in topic here from elders to the
community at large (Meier 1973:331-32).

\textsuperscript{563} Similarly a wife may respectfully give her opinion at home, but never in public (1964:151-52). Plato states that
violence of younger people against older people is shameful, worthy of banishment, and should be subject to
punishment by the state (Laws 879B-C, 881D, 932A-C). Saller summarizes the differences between discipline for a
son (who had honour) and punishment of a slave (who had no honour). A son would receive mostly praise and
criticism, but a slave would receive corporal punishment (1994:144-45; e.g., Terence Adelphi, a Roman comedy).
the difficult obligation the youth experienced, caught between obeying his uncle (his adopted father) and supporting his birth father, who had disinherited him for supporting his uncle previously.

My father came to me, and spoke to me in words that were not humble (*submissis*). He did not beg: he knew how one ought to behave towards a son—he gave me orders to feed him. He recited the law to me—a law that I have always supposed covers an uncle too.” Then he said: “I gave less than I ought to have given to my father—but as much as I could slip past him who forbade me [his uncle]. (1.1.17)

By contrast, the following participant describes the father, once rich and proud, begging for food—a disgraceful sight. Both versions demonstrate that a superior person was to act with authority with his subordinate, or he would lose honour.

In 1 Tim 5:20, a rebuke in front of everyone must have been meant to shame the young men. The term ἐλεγχε occurs also in Tit 1:9 with regard to rebuking opponents (cf. 1:13, 2:15). It would be highly unusual for an elder to be rebuked in such as way. Bassler, who follows the majority view that the elders are the sinners, explains the contradiction by saying the text “avoids excessive harshness” toward the sinning elders, emphasizing the “pedagogical value of rebuke” before the rest of the elders (Bassler 1996:101). In Greco-Roman thought, *younger people* more commonly needed discipline, not the elderly. Indeed it would have been culturally inappropriate to discipline older men. The goal of the rebuke was so that the others (presumably the other young men) might have fear (*φόβος*), which also suggests discipline (see below).

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564 Malherbe has suggested that the author of the Pastorals was writing from the perspective of an old man (1994). An older man would hardly have directed young men to chastise older men in public.
3.3. Rebellious and impressionable youth

Age hierarchy was evident among men in public life, military and voluntary associations, and is suggestive of intergenerational conflict among the non-elite (Chapter 7).

Plutarch offers some insights about relationships between generations in the public realm. Writing as an old man, Plutarch strongly feels that the young and old have their respective places in the natural order. Grey hair is a crown created by nature as a symbol of honour (Moralia 789F). Different stages in the life course dictate roles; that is, “youth is meant to obey and old age to rule” (789D, 795F). Plutarch recognizes that “envy and jealousy” (φθόνον ἤ φιλονεικίας) of younger men against older men does occur. He advises that older men “should rather extinguish this by power (τῇ δυμῇ) than turn their backs and go away naked and unarmed” (787F).

According to Plutarch, young people are prone to envy (φθόνον) and seeking power (790C, 796A), the greatest evil (μεγίστον κακόν; 787C) for public life. Older men have fewer passions, and are less prone to envy and discord (788E, F). They no longer need to seek ambition because they have had a lifetime of experience, gaining wisdom, learning moderation and earning respect. Plutarch believes age is the most certain way of being honoured (787D).

His use of honour-shame language is instructive. His main thesis is that if an old man gives up public life, he is dishonourable: a coward, feminine, and domestic. Giving up public life makes old age an even more “shameful” time of life than it already is. It is honourable to continue to be role models and guides for the young. To illustrate the point in a rather extreme way:

Younger men may demonstrate deference while harbouring resentment toward older men because of their control over roles and resources. Older men may be threatened by younger men’s desire to gain autonomy, especially if they are physically or mentally declining (Foner 1984:31-55). One of the ways such conflict is mitigated is simply through the natural progression of the life course: a man gains power as he progresses through his active adult years. Foner’s etic model is an attempt to identify how cultural values and behaviours related to age mitigate “strains and tensions” between young and old people (1984:xv), ranging from open hostility (such as witchcraft accusations) to accommodation and cooperation.

In Egyptian Bedouin society, the “code of modesty” often used to describe women’s behaviour toward men, also applies to the behaviour of younger members of the group toward their elders (Abu-Lughod 1986:99). Willingly submitting to elders is honourable; being coerced into subordination is shameful.

See quotation above, Chapter 8, §3.2.
way, he says that someone who gives up public service to take up work in the market-place is “like stripping a freeborn and modest woman of her gown, putting a cook’s apron on her, and keeping her in a tavern” (785D).

According to Plutarch, an old man should still seek honour because “the love of honour never grows old (φιλότιμου ὀγήρων)” (783F; cf. Thucydides 2.44.4). It is important to understand the distinction Plutarch makes between the youth’s ambition for power and the old man’s desire for honour. Desiring honour is not a selfish or self-centered act, but a virtue. Old men desire honour for the good of society, for its stability and continuation. Young men’s ambition can upset the balance of society and should be controlled by the older, wiser men. Cicero notes that “the greatest states have been overthrown by the young,” who are rash (temperitas) “and sustained and restored by the old” who (unlike the young) have prudence (prudentia), reason and good judgement (On Old Age 6.20, 19.67)

Young men were thought to be vulnerable to suggestion. In histories of Rome, young men are depicted as deceived into involvement with conspiracies. A strong leader would gain support from gullible young men who were “not yet in control of their bodies or their minds” (Harlow and Laurence 2002:71). For example, Sallust described Catiline as easily deceiving young men into crime because of their foolishness and proclivity toward excess (Catiline 14; Cicero Catiline 2.4; Harlow and Laurence 2002:70-71). Sallust also indicates that the lure of riches caused a decline in young men’s virtue.

As soon as riches came to be held in honour, when glory, dominion, and power followed in their train, virtue began to lose its lustre, poverty to be considered a disgrace, blamelessness to be termed malevolence. Therefore as the result of riches, luxury and greed, united with insolence, took possession of our young manhood. They pillaged, squandered; set little value on their own, coveted the goods of others; they disregarded

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568 Perhaps we could understand it using the analogy of the modern Olympic games. When an athlete from our nation wins a gold medal, her victory is not hers alone, but “ours.” She represents and demonstrates our success as a nation to, and in the midst of, the other nations. The athlete desires victory for more than just herself.
modesty, chastity, everything human and divine; in short, they were utterly thoughtless and reckless. (*Catiline* 12.1-2)

Young men were typically considered rebellious. Cicero suggests that this is a phase in which they need to work out their rebelliousness in order to become responsible adult men. I quote the following at length to suggest that Cicero’s view illustrates the conservative element of generational cycle:

I could instance, if I liked, any number of famous men: this one as a youth chafed at the bit, that one squandered his substance on riotous living, a third was laid low by debt and extravagance, a fourth reveled in lust. But all these faults were palliated by the virtues that developed later, and anyone who cared might excuse them with the simple words, “Yes, but the man was young.” (*The Defense of Caelius* 18)

Cicero thought young men would typically grow out of their youthful stage of life, but he also asserts that older men should instruct and train young men (*adulescentis*) for all functions and duties (*On Old Age* 8.29). Similar to Plutarch (above), Seneca notes how zealous young men (neophytes) can attain the highest ideals, if someone teaches them well (*Letters* 108.12, 23, 26-7). But Sallust, less hopeful, recounts his perception of how difficult it was as a young man to work toward virtue:

When I myself was a young man, my inclinations at first led me, like many another, into public life, and there I encountered many obstacles; for instead of modesty, incorruptibility and honesty, shamelessness, bribery and rapacity held sway. And although my soul, a stranger to evil ways, recoiled from such faults, yet amid so many vices my youthful weakness was led astray and held captive my ambition (*ambitione*); for while I took no part in the evil practices of the others, yet the desire for preferment (*honoris cupido*) made me the victim of the same ill-repute and jealousy as they. (*Catiline* 3.3-5)

In retrospect as an older man, Sallust blames his own poor behaviour as a young man on an innate and immature sense of ambition and passion for honour.

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569 Similarly, Philostratus recounts how Isaeus the sophist turned from a misspent youth to decency and success: “Isaeus, the Assyrian sophist, had devoted the period of his early youth to pleasure, for he was the slave of eating and drinking, dressed himself in elegant stuffs, was often in love, and openly joined in drunken revels. But when he attained manhood (ἀνδρός) he so transformed himself as to be thought to have become a different person, for he discarded both from his countenance and his mind the frivolity that had seemed to come to the surface in him” (*Lives of the Sophists* 513).
These views were perpetrated by older men. For example, Cicero was 62 when he wrote 
his treatise on old age (Powell 1988:2), and Plutarch was over 50, perhaps over 60, when he 
 wrote “Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs.”570 Even at 44-45 years old 
(Pelling 2003:1348), Sallust would have been considered a mature man, and thus “older” when 
he wrote Cataline. Demographically, older men were in the minority. If we consider men over 
45 to be “older,”571 they would comprise only about 20% of the whole male population, and 
about 30% of males over the age of 15. As Parkin has pointed out, it was “not just a man’s 
world, it was a young man’s world” (2003:50).

Young men had power—physical strength, youthful passion and ambition. Harlow 
surmises that the older generation of Roman male elite were threatened by the younger 
generation who could push them out of positions of power (2007:198; Reinhold 1990; cf. 
Plutarch 787F, above). In Eyben’s view:

The Romans (and Greeks) had a healthy fear of a young man’s ambition, rashness, 
audacity, impetuosity, arrogance, insolence, inexperience, and were thus reluctant to 
entrust serious civil and political responsibilities to him. It is clear, however, that precisely 
for that reason—because a youngster was not normally considered a ‘finished product’ and 
taken seriously—tensions were created and a juvenile might try to affirm himself in a less 
than desirable way. (1993:27, emphasis added)572

Eyben hypothesizes that the young men acted immorally because older men denied them 
responsibility, though the ancients themselves did not acknowledge or recognize this (1993:27).

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570 Plutarch’s age when he wrote this work is uncertain. However, he was over 50 when he did most of this writing 
(Jones 1966:74), and died at the age of 74. Based on the mention of his own γήρος (783B) and his mention of 
“many Pythiads” (intervals of four years) he had served as priest of Apollo (791F), C.P. Jones deduces that he was 
at least 60, but perhaps 65 when he wrote this treatise (1966:74). Jones assumes that “old age” (γήρος) began at 60, 
but Plutarch himself does not define old age in chronological terms.

571 If a man married at about age 30, he may have a son reach the age of 15 by this time (an age at which some adult 
responsibility, such as an apprenticeship, would be expected).

572 One manifestation of this conflict was a legal accusation of senility, which occasionally did give the accusing 
son effective control of the father’s property in the capacity of curator. Plutarch comments that Sophocles was 
charged with dementia by his son (Moralia 785A). Though this is probably not historically true, Plutarch’s story 
demonstrates that that the threat and/or the fear of this charge was in the minds of some first century folk.
But we might question how rebellious and disobedient young men actually were, since the older men writing about them seemed to perpetuate this stereotype that younger men were immature, careless and in need of guidance. In other words, the rhetoric used about younger men may not have reflected real rebellion, as much as it reflected anxiety among older men about their potentially precarious position in society. What we see in these Roman sources are ideological notions of young men in a world ruled (largely) by older men, in families, in politics and in civic society. While some younger men were undoubtedly irrational and erratic, such stereotypes are pervasive in older men’s depiction of them. Portraying younger men as erratic and treacherous helped them to retain power over resources and positions of authority. This probably promoted stability, but also preserved a hierarchical economic and social system. Young men were the ones sent to front lines of battle; younger men were expected to be obedient to their elders, and wait their turn to gain power when they grew older. It was in the interest of older men to perpetuate this structure, especially because young men outnumbered them significantly.

Cicero states that “the crowning glory of old age is influence (auctoritas)” (On Old Age 17.61), meaning that “one’s views were accepted without too many questions” (Cokayne 2007:210). For Plutarch there was a “need for esteem and glory in old age” (Cokayne 2007:210), perhaps because old men were no longer performing laudable deeds (Moralia 783B). Such views (and rhetoric) served to perpetuate the political and/or social power of older men, and may suggest some insecurity about their position. After all, older men relied on younger

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573 In a study of upper class Roman men, Cokayne describes the desire for old men to retain status in society as “competitive and status-conscious” (2007:210). Boasting was a way to “re-assert their status and overcome the fear that they might be overlooked or neglected” (2007:210). She argues that old men feared marginalization because of physical decline. Inactivity was considered weak and not manly (2007:215). Plutarch argues this point throughout his treatise. For example, he argues, “kings are said to grow better among wars and campaigns than when they live at leisure” (Moralia 792A).
men, as students and apprentices, in war, and in labour, to affirm their influence and offer their esteem.\(^{574}\)

I argue in Chapter 7 that the end of the first century was a time of social change in the Empire, when age structure was challenged (e.g., Augustus’ rise to power as a young man), yet the traditional moral structures continued to be affirmed, especially by the older generation. Based on a life course perspective, I call this the generational cycle: when younger men grow older, they too reaffirm the age structure (Chapter 3). At the time 1 Timothy was written, its original members were aging and dying, and the community was struggling to define itself. The author of 1 Timothy opts for a conservative approach, advocating for traditional family values, and gender and age structure to try to “solve” what he saw as the problem of the opposing teachers. The opposing teachers forbade marriage (4:3) which would have upset family structures, perhaps by encouraging young women not to marry, and by not providing enough candidates for young women, especially young widows, to marry (Chapter 11). The opposing teachings also may have (directly or indirectly) encouraged young men to be overly ambitious, perhaps desiring positions of power before their age, marital status and experience granted them such a right.\(^{575}\) Plutarch called this “envy and jealousy” (φθόνου Ἡ φιλονεικίας; 787F). It threatened the rightful position of their seniors, and seems to be what the author was so adamantly opposed to in 1 Tim 5:17-25.\(^{576}\)

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\(^{574}\) Similar age structures are found in many traditional cultures. In his novel Things Fall Apart (1958), Chinua Achebe illustrates the breakdown of such structure. The influence and prestige that an older man spent his lifetime building became meaningless in the face of radical social change. Younger men gained positions of power under a different worldview because of the introduction of Christianity. With no support from the younger generation, the old worldview collapsed, and with it the social structure that upheld the social power of older men.

\(^{575}\) The qualifications of overseer and deacon in 3:1-13 include age (old enough to have children who obey, 3:4, 12), marital status (husband of one wife, 3:2, 12), and experience (not a neophyte, 3:6; good reputation with outsiders, 3:7).

\(^{576}\) Plutarch notes that old men are hated for squelching opportunities for young men, holding onto their power too tightly. When this happens, old men’s “love of precedence and of office is held in no less disrepute than is other old men’s love of wealth and pleasure” (Moralia 793E).
4. **Intergenerational conflict in 1 Timothy**

The author of 1 Timothy was concerned to construct a traditional model of proper order and proper behaviour with regard to age structure, which included the old receiving deference from the young, and the young waiting their turn to become people of influence in the community. The πρεσβυτέροι were older men whose continued activity (managing, preaching and teaching; 5:17) was honourable for the whole Christian group. If younger men were vying for power, accusing the elders as a way to undermine them, they were upsetting the proper order of the “household of God.”

4.1. **The situation in 1 Clement**

*1 Clement* elucidates a potentially similar situation. Some elders have been deposed by what appears to be a faction of younger people (44.5-6; 47.6; 54.2; 57.1; cf. 2.3; 3.3; 21.6). In Clement’s view, they have caused a schism and need to repent of their sins. Why the schism formed is not clear, but Clement wants to restore proper order (Young 1994:106). Though there is modern debate about whether or not the references to age in *1 Clement* are the core issue (e.g, Maier 1991:87-94; Bowe 1988:65), age is almost certainly an important element (Horrell 1996:264, n.134). On two occasions, Clement outlines lists of what proper order means in 1.3 and 21.6-8 (cf. 41.1): (1) respecting and submitting to their leaders, (2) honouring elders.

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577 The word πρεσβυτέροι in *1 Clement* appears to be used for an age designation in some contexts, and for a leadership role in others. I think we can accept the ambiguity here, and retain some connotation of age in all instances.

578 The mention of jealousy and envy (ζηλος και φθόνος; 4.7; 5.2) as a root of the problem is reminiscent of Plutarch’s rhetoric about the “envy and jealousy” of young men (φθόνου ἤ φιλονεκρίσις; 787F), although *1 Clement* focuses on jealousy (ζηλος; 4.1-5.7).

579 Hans Leitzmann argues that the conflict in *1 Clement* is between the young and old, finding an analogy with voluntary associations. He suggests that the young wanted elections for office as it was “everywhere customary” in religious organizations, so that they had a chance for office (1961.1:192). Harry O. Maier suggests that this was one manifestation of the conflict, as was women’s factions, but that the “precise difficulty” is more complicated (1991:89-90).

580 The word σιδέρωσε (1 Clem. 21.6) means to have shame, and fits the classic framework of honour and shame. It can mean (1) to be ashamed or (2) to have shame (in the positive sense), which is best translated “to revere” or “to respect.” It can also mean to reconcile. Perhaps Clement uses this word deliberately to give some nuanced shades to
(πρεσβυτέροι), (3) instructing or disciplining young people (νέος) to think moderate and respectful thoughts and to fear God, and (4) directing women or wives to be pure, dutiful, respectful and submissive. 1 Clem. 21.8 adds a section on training children (παιδία) in humility, love and discipline. Elders who are to be honoured most certainly mean “older people” here (which does not discount the idea of some leadership qualities, and these need not be exclusive categories). Young adults are to be disciplined. The letter begins with defining those who are causing trouble as “reckless and headstrong” (προσπετή και αυθάδη; 1.1)—characteristics that older elite men tended to associate with rebellious young men.

The letter argues that not honouring the elders and the order of the community, which was set up by God, is “exceedingly shameful” (47.6) and sinful (59.2).

Thus you who laid the foundation of the faction should be subject to the [elders] and accept the discipline that leads to repentance, falling prostrate on your heart. Learn to be submissive; lay aside the arrogant and haughty insolence of your tongue. For it is better for you to be considered insignificant but reputable (μικρος καὶ ἐλλογίμους) in the flock of Christ than to appear prominent (ὑπεροχή) while sundered from his hope.

This depiction reflect the way elite Romans wrote about rebellious youth who were arrogant and overly ambitious (see above), wanting to gain power before it was their time. Furthermore, the perpetrators need discipline (57, 56). The primary word for discipline in this context is παιδεύω, but Clement employs a quote from Proverbs (1:23-33), which uses ἐλεγχω, the same word used on 1 Tim 5:20 to rebuke the sinners. For Clement, παιδεύω and ἐλεγχω appear to the necessity of exhibiting proper modest behaviour before leaders, that is, respecting them, as well as being reconciled with (under?) them.

581 This list provides some instructive parallels to 1 Timothy: an overseer, who has a leadership role, is to be respectable (3:2), women are the focus of 1 Tim 2:9-15 and 5:3-16 (5:11-15 is especially close in intent to 1 Clement) where the author also directs them to be devoted and submissive wives, and 1 Tim 5:1 clearly prescribes the ideal relationships of Timothy to different age groups.

582 As Harry Maier points out, at this stage of community building some people question why things are the way they are, and others (like Clement) legitimate the order that is already in place. As the first generation of the church passed away, “order” need to be “objectivated” (in a Berger and Luckman sense), that is, explained, justified and made explicit using tradition rather than memory (1991:109-21).
be approximately synonymous, used for disciplining the young so that they will attain righteousness. Discipline leads to φόβος or “reverential awe” of God.\footnote{This may mean the fear of God’s wrath for disgraceful behaviour. Reinhold suggests that the Israelites were the first to have a law honouring parents that invoked divine wrath for disobedience, reflecting the social stability that resulted from the centrality of family (1970:351). Plato discusses the fear of punishment by the gods of children who are violent with their parents and elders (Plato \textit{Laws} 718A, 879B-C, 880E, 881A-B, 931C). Philo mentions fear in correlation with respect and affection for parents (\textit{Special Laws} 2.239).}

We see a parallel situation 1 Tim 5:20. Those who sin are those who \textit{accuse} the elders. Their sin is wrapped up in the act of accusing inappropriately; that is, they are dishonouring some older folk, and disrupting the proper order of the community. Timothy is told to rebuke them in front of everyone as a form of discipline, not unlike Clement’s exhortation to discipline the young men who have formed a faction against the elders in Corinth. The result is that “the rest might have fear,” presumably the rest of the younger men in the community. This parallels \textit{1 Clem.} 21.6, which directs: “we should discipline our youth in the reverential fear of God” (τούς νέους παιδεύσωμεν τὴν παιδείαν τοῦ φόβου τοῦ θεοῦ). In both instances, φόβος refers to the fear of God, which must be taught through discipline.

\textbf{4.2. The seriousness of the sin}

Unlike the \textit{suggestion} for younger widows to behave properly in 5:14 (βούλομαι), which I argue is the domain of middle-aged women, the author here gives a direct and severe command in the form of an imperative, rebuke (ἐλέγχε) those who continue to sin. Unlike other directives in 1 Timothy, the author’s command here invokes the presence of God and angels (5:21), emphasizing the seriousness of the wrongdoing. The author has Paul display some concern that Timothy might be tempted to follow the other young men in their sins (5:22). The author finishes the section with a general statement about sins:

\begin{quote}
τινῶν ἀνθρώπων αἱ ἁμαρτίαι πρωθηλοὶ εἰσίν, προάνουσαι εἰς κρίσιν, τισὶν δὲ καὶ ἐπακολουθοῦσιν ὁσαύτως καὶ τὰ ἔργα τα τὰ ἀλλῶς ἐχοῦντα κρυβῆναι.
\end{quote}
The sins of some people (not specifying men or women) are known to all, leading the way into judgment, but also following them. Likewise, honourable works (cf. 5:10) are also known to all, and those (honourable works) which might otherwise be hidden are not able (to be hidden). (1 Tim 5:24-25)

The visible nature of the sins suggests that the author was concerned for the community’s reputation in the larger pagan society, a concern he demonstrates elsewhere in the letter (2:2, 3:7, 5:14). Young men defying their elders would be a visible breach of proper behaviour, prompting potential judgment from outsiders.

In 1 Tim 5:17, presumably younger men are implied when “Paul” directs elders (πρεσβυτέροι) to receive “double honour” (διπλὴς τιμής; 5:17), and directs slaves to give their own masters “all honour” (πᾶσης τιμής; 6:1). Taken together, the two phrases recall the critique of Celsus that involves young men and slaves (see Chapter 5). Celsus is using a stereotype to illustrate his negative view of the Jesus movement, but it is possible that he is aware of intergenerational and slave-master conflict among them. At any rate, Celsus’ comments suggest that if an outsider observed such impertinent behaviour, it would severely affect the group’s reputation.

The author of 1 Timothy contrasts sins with honourable works (τὰ ἐργὰ τὰ καλὰ)—the kind of public praise offered in association inscriptions (see Chapter 11, §4.3). The same phrase is found in the context of the lifelong virtue of the 60+ widow who must “bear witness in honourable works” (5:10), and in the list of directives for those who are rich (6:18). Just as inappropriate behaviour might incur judgment, honourable works in the form of proper behaviour (as in the past deeds of the 60+ widow and the generosity of the rich) would present a positive perception of the community, and incur positive sentiments from outsiders. Honourable
works would allow them to gain honour in the eyes of outsiders who were watching them, and present their religious message in a positive way (2:4).\footnote{So also 1 Clement promotes this ideal: conduct that is honorable (καλὸς) and pleasing to God is associated with “harmony” and proper order (21.1).}

In the modern Mediterranean, a person can chastise kin for shortcomings in private. However, a person would never allow kin to be accused in public, as illustrated by a proverb: “A relation can speak to his kinsman but he cannot listen to something about him” (Campbell 1965:112). If a kinsman acts very badly, a person will be forced to abandon him, perhaps also condemn him so that he puts social distance between them. This demonstrates that he supports community values and avoids shaming himself. The potential loss of moral and practical support of kin upholds the norms and values of the community. It is a powerful form of social sanction (Campbell 1964:113). An act of ostracism is probably in view in 1 Tim 1:20 where the author has Paul say he has handed Hymenaeus and Alexander “over to Satan.” A similar but less severe social sanction is suggested in 5:20, where the author has Paul rebuke the sinners in front of the community so that everyone will be aware of the severity of the sin.

4.3. The fictive Timothy and age appropriate behaviour

The implied story in 1 Timothy (see Chapter 7) illustrates themes that reflect intergenerational dynamics. The author may be playing on typical Roman stereotypes of young men. He suggests that Timothy can rise above the usual vices of youth (4:12), because his training (4:7) and Paul’s example (1:16; cf. 2:7) lead him to behave properly (6:11), keep himself pure (ἀγνὸς; 5:2, 22), and teach others to do the same (4:11; 6:2b). Unlike the opposing teachers and the “sinners” in 5:19, the fictive Timothy exemplifies proper teaching and behaviour—as a young man (νεότητος; 4:12)—in four age related relationships.

First, he behaves properly toward Paul. The fictive Paul addresses Timothy with the figurative language of a father to a son: “To Timothy, my legitimate child in faith (Τιμόθεῳ
γνησίω τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει)” (1:2; cf. 1:18). The letter closes with language reminiscent of inheritance from a father to his son as Paul directs him to guard what (presumably) Paul has entrusted to him (6:20), and wants him to pass along to others in Paul’s stead (3:14-15; 4:6).

Second, the fictive Timothy displays proper behaviour toward the community. He is called a “good deacon” (καλὸς διάκονος) who follows proper and honourable (καλὴς) teaching (4:6). Paul urges him to teach others in the fictive community these proper teachings and model proper behaviour (4:11-16; 6:2b, 11-14, 20), in contrast to the opposing teachers (1:19-20; 4:1-5; 6:3-5, 21; cf. 1:3, 4:7).

Third, the fictive Timothy properly submits to the authority of his elders. In the story, Timothy has had a council of elders (πρεσβυτερίον) lay hands on him (ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν) to bestow a gift (χαρίσμα) on him through prophecy (4:14; cf. 1:18). The gift is related to his responsibilities in the community. The author gives Timothy a similar authority (5:22; χεῖρας ἐπιτίθει) with Paul’s warning against sharing in others’ sins (ἀμαρτία). The warning relates to the sinners (ἀμαρτάνοντας) in 5:19. As a young man himself, the fictive Timothy is directed not to behave like the sinning young men, but to display proper respect for his elders.

Timothy is not to lay hands on anyone too quickly (τὰ χέρων). This directive fits well with the third person imperative directed at those who would choose suitable men to be deacons: let them first be put to the test (δοκιμαζόντως) and only approved if they are found to be blameless (ἀνέγκλητοι; cf. Tit 1:7-9). While they may or may not be referring to the same role, both texts suggest a process of making sure people prove their worth before they are given special responsibilities in the community. Part of proving their worth is proper behaviour, including submitting to one’s elders and displaying proper behaviour toward elders.
Indeed one of the overall concerns in 1 Timothy is to bestow roles of responsibility on those who are worthy.\(^{585}\) It makes less sense that the elders, who already have functioning roles in the community, would need to have hands laid on them for commissioning.\(^{586}\)

Finally, “Timothy” behaves properly toward elders themselves (5:1, 17). In the story Timothy is a young man whose elders are like fathers and whose peers are like brothers (5:2) in age. Also, Timothy is to give worthy elders double honour (5:17). The author represents Paul as telling Timothy to “teach and urge these things” (6:2b), referring to all of the directives in 5:1-6:2, including proper behaviour toward older men.

“Paul” solemnly warns Timothy to “defend these things without prejudgment (ταύτα φυλάξεις χωρίς προκρίματος)” and without bias (5:21), suggesting adherence to a proper code of behaviour. If this code refers to age structure, which is the topic of 5:1-22, with a picture of younger men rebelling against their elders in a way that was visible to outsiders, a directive to rebuke the young men would be seen as both constructive and necessary to maintain the structure of honour in the fictive community.

The author presents a story in which Paul and Timothy are in an ideal intergenerational relationship. As an older man, Paul praises and encourages Timothy’s exemplary behaviour as a young man. The strong directives in 5:19-22 along with similar language in 1 Clement suggest that the author is implicitly contrasting younger men were publicly rebelling against older men in his community.

\(^{585}\) Which position they are potentially commissioned for is not clear, so we cannot assume it means ordination for elders. Meier (1973:343) cites 1 Clem. 54:2 as a verbal parallel to Tit 1:5, “the presbyters who have been appointed” (καθήτησαν). In the established community of Corinth, it seems that some old men are “ordained”; others are not. This helps to confirm that the term πρεσβύτεροι in 1 Clement connotes both age and the potential functions that some elders have.

\(^{586}\) Meier (1973:333) for example suggest that the sins may refer to those committed before ordination, but there is no evidence within 1 Timothy for associating laying on of hands with remission of sin.
The urgency of the language used in 5:19-25 suggests that this is a place in the letter where the real audience is invited to apply Timothy’s situation to their own. In other words, the rhetoric suggests that the real community had intergenerational conflict. The author’s story implies anxiety about young men behaving improperly toward their elders, suggesting the author himself was an older man. Perhaps like other older men who wrote about the younger generation around the first century, he felt threatened by the potential power of younger men in a time of social crisis. Portraying them as disrespectful and insolent reflected the similar sentiments about young men in other Roman writings, and served to promote his own conservative view of the age structure.

5. Conclusion

“Age is not a criterion for any formal group, but it carries respect and authority” (Stirling 1965:27). This seems to have been true in the mind of the author of 1 Timothy. Age was an important component of social relationships in the ancient Mediterranean, for one was to honour those who were older. The context of 1 Tim 5:17 suggests that the author referring to an age designation rather than an office.

In sum, he describes elders in laudable language: they are fulfilling their honourable duty by presiding, preaching and teaching. If the ambiguous term in 1 Tim 5:19 “those who sin” refers to the accusers rather than elders, it follows that the author has in mind younger men wrongly accusing some of their elders. This was an action that was understood as a grievous sin. Older men stood to lose respect with such accusations looming; younger men demonstrated dishonourable behaviour by accusing their elders and not acting with modesty around them. The author had Paul side with the elders, telling Timothy to rebuke (shame) the younger men for their action, and not get swept up in their wayward ways himself. In the view of the author of 1
Timothy, this would encourage honour where it was due, and proper order would be restored. The author, probably an older man himself, reflects urgent anxiety over intergenerational conflict, suggesting that the rebellion of young men in Paul’s fictive letter reflected a similar situation among the members of the real audience, at least as it was perceived by the real author.
Chapter 13: Conclusion

Age is a social category that has been explored very little in early Christian studies, yet age, aging and intergenerational relationships are crucial in studying social dynamics. It seems especially important when studying a group that incorporated all ages, like the early Christian communities did. The demographic data of the ancient world demonstrates radical differences from our experience of age structure: almost half of children died before they reached adulthood, many children grew up without a parent (usually a father), and reaching old age was much less frequent occurrence than most modern Canadians experience.

In addition to demographics, the cultural norms of age structure were more like modern traditional Mediterranean cultures than like typical Western culture. In other words, modern Western culture provides a relatively poor basis for a historical reading of early Christian texts, and is apt to render a reading of the text that reflects more about its modern reader than about its original author and recipients. On the other hand, the application of insights from modern Mediterranean anthropology illuminates aspects of social and cultural norms of the ancient Mediterranean that might otherwise remain elusive or obscure. Cultural anthropology not only aids us in seeing the ancient Mediterranean as a different culture from our own, but also creates a way for us to comprehend it at some level.

Using ethnographic data from modern traditional Mediterranean cultures, I developed a model of generational stability and social change. In the Mediterranean, the family is the focal point of a person’s identity, but a person’s identity shifts as she or he progresses through the life course. Older people generally attain precedence, and younger people are expected to be deferential to their elders, especially in public. Within the centrality of the family, younger people can “safely” challenge the authority of their elders within the private sphere without compromising the honour of the family. Though intergenerational tension is unavoidable, public
displays of tension are discouraged because of social sanction. Public disputes risk the family’s reputation. Except within the privacy of the home, men and women live in virtually separate spheres of existence, both of which operate according to age hierarchy. Historical circumstances may precipitate social change, but the centrality of family and the generational cycle (the fact that younger people grow into responsible adults) produces a conservative influence on social change. Thus, when a person grows older, she or he tends to replicate the cultural norm of her or his elders.

I apply this model to 1 Timothy 5. The heterographical (pseudepigraphical) letter of 1 Timothy is complex to negotiate. The real author, writing sometime around the end of the first century, created a letter based on a fictional story of Paul as an older man and his intergenerational relationship with the younger Timothy, his “child in faith” (1:2). The author uses this fiction, perhaps as a creative way of calling upon the authority of their forbearers, to deal with a real situation in his own time. However, the genre and approach allows us only glimpses of his perception of the real situation. Even further from our grasp is the real situation of the audience to which he was writing. Even so, there are points within the letter at which the real audience would have seen their own circumstances reflected in the situation ostensibly addressed by Paul. Paul’s instructions are conveyed in first person requests and second person imperatives (similar to 2 Timothy and Titus), as well as third person imperatives (which are virtually unique to 1 Timothy; Appendix 4). The third person imperatives seem to be particularly logical places for the audience to insert themselves into the text (e.g., “let them learn first to perform their duty to their own household and to make a return to their parents”; 5:4). In the author’s present situation, he uses the past as the way to solve problems (e.g., old, exemplary widows, traditional ways, sound teaching based on Paul’s authority). He is not focused on the future or future implications of his letter.
The letter depicts Paul as an authority figure writing instructions to Timothy. Within his story, Timothy is in Ephesus in an early Christian community with which the fictive Paul is familiar, and to which he plans to return. Paul is confident in Timothy’s abilities. His directives to Timothy focus on proper behaviour in the household of God (3:15), which Timothy is to exemplify and teach over against the influence of the opposing teachers, whom Paul condemns. The problems the author presents and the solutions that he proposes are ostensibly written by Paul to Timothy, but they betray a later era than the lifetime of the historical Paul. Rather than being directly from “Paul” to the community, the fictional story of the letter allows the audience to “insert itself into the letter” (Marshall 2008:800), especially when there are specific instructions for community behaviour and action.

The author of 1 Timothy was writing at a time of crisis and social change for the early Christian community. Jesus had not returned, the original founders and members of the movement are dead or very old, and the movement was evolving and changing. For the author, the opposing teachers represent a deviation from how he understands “the faith.” In addition, outsiders were questioning the honour of the community. The author wanted to allay suspicions by encouraging proper behaviour that aligned with traditional social, gender and age structure. He took a conservative view, promoting behaviour that reflected moral norms or ideals in larger society to demonstrate the Christians were not in violation of cultural standards. It was in this context at the end of the first century that age became more visible in early Christian communities. Social dynamics related to age are especially evident in 1 Tim 5, and reflect elements of the model of the generational cycle and social change.

The author depicts the community using a household (family) metaphor. In this way, he suggests that their focal point of identity was the “household of God” (3:15). His code of proper
behaviour was based on the ideal behaviour expected within hierarchical relationships of the household.

He advocates for older people’s precedence and younger people’s deference, especially in those actions that would be noticed publicly. The author exhorts “Timothy” to speak to older men and women like fathers and mothers, and age-peers like siblings (5:1-2). Adult children were to care for their widowed mothers and grandmothers (5:4). Old women over sixty were models of virtue (5:9-10), and worthy elders were to receive double honour (5:17). Because of its later designation for a formal leadership role or “office,” the term “elder” in the letters to Timothy and Titus has been difficult to define. Instead of the rigid notion of office or rank, the term πρεσβυτέροι (elders) here refers to an age designation: a group of older men as contrasted with younger men. The model of the generational cycle suggests that age designations are flexible and situational. Who deserves preference and deference depends on context, but the outcome of these behaviours is honour for the family or group.

The author of 1 Timothy notes problems involving generational conflict in the community. First, adult children were shirking their filial responsibilities, namely the support of their widowed mothers and grandmothers (5:4, 8). Such neglect would be evident to outsiders, and bring shame on the community.

Second, younger widows were perceived as unchaste, bringing shame to the community (5:11-15). The description of the younger widows’ poor behaviour demonstrates a dire problem for the community’s reputation because women embodied the honour of the group in their behaviour. I suggest that the culturally appropriate solution, in the author’s estimation, is to get the middle-aged women to behave properly, and assume their proper responsibilities in guiding and supporting younger widows to remarry and become good matrons (5:16; cf. 2:5-9). The author of 1 Timothy was contending with an important element of female power—the power of
middle-aged women. They had power based on their age and stage of life. No longer responsible for young children, and with younger female kin (daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces) to take on the bulk of domestic chores, they had more time and freedom to pursue other interests. These middle-aged women did not hold positions of power in the public realm, nor positions of community leadership on par with the overseer or deacon, but they did yield influence particularly among women. Shirking responsibility toward younger women, younger widows in particular, affected the reputation of the community.

Third, younger men had dishonoured their elders with public accusations (5:20). This lack of deference would also challenge the reputation of the community. If younger men wanted to assume precedence in positions of authority, “Paul” was unwilling to give them unless they proved their moral worth with proper behaviour, proper teaching and maturity. The young men who rebelled against the elders were to be rebuked in front of everyone (5:20) because their behaviour had compromised the reputation of the community.

In all three instances, outsiders would see the dishonourable behaviour as shameful for the whole group. The author of 1 Timothy endeavoured to solve these problems with several tactics that promoted the conservative viewpoint of an older man. He named and condemned bad behaviour, he encouraged good behaviour, and he set up appropriate examples of good behaviour (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-13). Timothy was the *example extraordinaire* of proper behaviour for a young man, including submission to the elders (4:14). The old widows in 5:9-10 were also examples, modeling female virtue that was distinctly connected to their Christian identity and lifelong service and faithfulness. The author attempted to re-establish the centrality of the household, both for individuals in the community (e.g., 3:4, 12; 5:14; 6:1-2) and as a metaphor for how the community should function (3:15). The author promoted the structure and stability of the household as a solution both to the inroads made by the opposing teachers (whom he...
characterizes as forbidding marriage, the foundation of the household; 4:3) and to the suspicions of outsiders (3:7; 5:14; 6:1).

From this interpretation of 1 Tim 5, we see an older man (“Paul”) who, through his obedient mediator “Timothy,” exercises his authority, over two main groups of people: middle-aged women and younger men. While he notes that younger women are behaving poorly, he does not have “Timothy” address them directly. Rather, he implicitly blames the middle-aged women of the group for not guiding and providing for the younger widows as they should. In the author’s conception of the situation, middle-aged women and younger men are rebelling against older men, and thus proper order, in ways that dishonour the community. Middle-aged women and young men have common ground in the age and gender hierarchy of Mediterranean cultures. Among the Egyptian Bedouin, Abu-Lughod considers them socially close and equal. She describes women and young men reciting oral lyric poetry amid mundane conversation. The ideas in the poems challenge public cultural norms of honour and modesty (which Abu-Lughod equates with the power structures of inequality), but implicitly reinforce the cultural value of resistance. These ideas include vulnerability (versus the cultural ideal of honourable autonomy) and romantic love (which is considered immoral and immodest). Personal emotions are expressed in these poems, offering a way to subvert “social domination.” They are often recited at weddings where older dignified men did not attend (1990:46-47; cf. 1986:25-26, 101,129, 183, 267).

Under the literary layers of the letter of 1 Timothy, we might glimpse a similar kind of resistance to older men’s authority among women and younger men, who, in the midst of the shifting identity of the group, found the alternative teachings of the author’s opponents appealing. The author’s conservative stance appealed to traditional behaviours that reflected the
household. His view was successful at least in part because it promoted the generational stability that undergirds Mediterranean cultural responses to social change.

The implications for studying age are far-reaching; there is great potential in insight in the social life of early Christians. Harlow and Laurence suggest that it provides a “framework for the study of temporal experience in the Roman world” if using life course “as a conception of time… provides us with a different way to understand specific actions… a human conception of time as a lived experience, in which there was an expected future for all individuals (however improbable) of living into old age. At the same time, the interplay of ages within the social world of the household and kinship networks structured the nature of memory and social interaction or expectation” (2002:147-48). The concept of age and the life course is likewise important in the study of social aspects of early Christianity. My case study of 1 Timothy 5 suggests that studying the texts with a framework that incorporates age and the life course can yield new insights about social process and interaction. It allows us to observe a culture very unlike our own modern Western culture in many ways (e.g., hierarchical relationships, past-orientation, strong honour-shame motivations), but also to “relate” to these historical persons because of our common experience of biological aging, moving through stages in the life course, and interacting with generations before and after us. In sum, age matters.
Appendix 1: Examples of model life tables

Source: Saller 1994:23-25, based on Coale-Demeny Model Levels 3, 6 and 24 (West Female); Coale, Demeny and Vaughan 1983.

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<td>45 &amp; .11967 &amp; 27705 &amp; 18.477</td>
<td>45 &amp; .09462 &amp; 38496 &amp; 20.688</td>
<td>45 &amp; .01501 &amp; 97327 &amp; 34.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; .15285 &amp; 24389 &amp; 15.636</td>
<td>50 &amp; .12200 &amp; 34853 &amp; 17.578</td>
<td>50 &amp; .01713 &amp; 96304 &amp; 29.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 &amp; .27149 &amp; 16712 &amp; 10.443</td>
<td>60 &amp; .22153 &amp; 25867 &amp; 11.866</td>
<td>60 &amp; .04680 &amp; 91983 &amp; 20.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 &amp; .60808 &amp; 4194 &amp; 4.878</td>
<td>75 &amp; .53518 &amp; 8520 &amp; 5.540</td>
<td>75 &amp; .26073 &amp; 68085 &amp; 9.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 &amp; .86502 &amp; 436 &amp; 2.544</td>
<td>85 &amp; .82408 &amp; 1278 &amp; 2.866</td>
<td>85 &amp; .57879 &amp; 30154 &amp; 4.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 &amp; .95126 &amp; 59 &amp; 1.784</td>
<td>90 &amp; .93072 &amp; 225 &amp; 1.994</td>
<td>90 &amp; .76776 &amp; 12701 &amp; 3.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95 &amp; 1.0000 &amp; 3 &amp; 1.234</td>
<td>95 &amp; 1.0000 &amp; 16 &amp; 1.364</td>
<td>95 &amp; 1.91501 &amp; 2950 &amp; 2.163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key:
Age \( (x) \) = exact age
\( q_x \) = probability of dying before reaching the next age represented in the table
\( l_x \) = the number of persons still alive at each age interval \( (x) \) out of a total of 100,000 births
\( e_x \) = the value of average life expectancy at age \( x \) (that is, years left to live after age \( x \))

The Coale-Demeny models are labelled North, South, East and West. The West tables are considered more generic than the others, and suit the paucity of evidence in the Roman world better than the others.

The table presented here compares three different populations. Level 3 West Female is based on an average life expectancy \( (e_x) \) at birth of 25.000 years. Parkin favours this model because it falls halfway between the commonly assumed range of life expectancy at birth in the ancient Roman world, namely 20-30 years. Level 6 West Female is based on an average life expectancy \( (e_x) \) at birth of 32.500 years. Saller designates this as a ceiling boundary for the ancient Roman experience. He uses Level 3 West Female and Level 6 West Female in his calculations of the kin universe simulation in order to demonstrate how the two models suggest different outcomes of ages and survival of kin. Level 24 West Female is based on an average life expectancy \( (e_x) \) at birth of 77.500 years, representing a population in the contemporary developed world. I include this for the purpose of contrasting the other two models, which possibly represent the Roman experience (see discussion on model life tables, section 2.2.5 above).

For each of the three models, age \( (x) \) is expressed in intervals of five years (except 0-1 year because of the high infant mortality rate in populations with relatively low life expectancy at birth). Each interval represents an exact age (not a range of ages). Life expectancy is calculated for each age given, so that \( e_x \) represents the number of years a person at age \( x \) can expect to live from that age (on average). For example, in Level 3 West Female, on average a ten year old can expect to live to the age of 47.5 years (i.e., live another 37.5 years), and on
average a twenty year old can expect to live to the age of 51.3 years (i.e., live another 31.3 years). Because of high infant and child mortality, life expectancy chances substantially if a person survives her childhood, and increases more if she survives her adolescence. By contrast, in Level 24 West Female, on average a ten year old can expect to live to the age 78.3, and a twenty year old can expect to live to age 78.4 years. Since the latter population has a much lower rate of infant and child death, the average life expectancy at birth (77.5) differs little from life expectancy at ages ten and twenty.

Although the figures in Level 3 West Female and Level 6 West Female are similar when contrasted with Level 24 West Female, a comparison of these two models demonstrates some substantial differences for infant and elderly death rates. In Level 3 West Female, a newborn has a 30.6% chance of dying within the first year of life, whereas a newborn in Level 6 West Female has a 23.4% chance of dying within the first year of life. In Level 3 West Female, after age 1, a child has a 21.6% chance of dying within the next four years of life, whereas the same aged child in Level 6 West Female has a 16.1% chance of dying within the next four years of life.

From there, the probability is not as significant until the ages of sixty to eighty, when the chances of dying are again significantly higher in Level 3 West Female. For example, at age sixty-five, in Level 3 West Female a person has a 34.8% chance of dying before reaching age seventy, but a Level 6 West Female person has a 29.1% chance of dying before reaching the age of seventy.

Further contrasts are evident from the column that demonstrates the number of persons who are still alive at each age interval (x) given a total of 100,000 births (lx). The starting figure of 100,000 is a conventional number. In Level 3 West Female, only a little over half of all children survive to the age of ten (51,156 out of 100,000). In Level 6 West Female, more children survive, but not quite two-thirds (61,279 out of 100,000), and about half of the original
birth cohort survives to age thirty (49,563 out of 100,000). In Level 24 West Female, the vast majority of children survive to the age of ten (98,930 out of 100,000). By contrast, it is not until the age of 80 that half of the population has died in Level 24 West Female (50,318 still survive out of 100,000), after which time there is a sharp increase in the probability of dying.
Appendix 2: Kin universe for men and women in the ancient world

The following data is reproduced from Saller (1994:51-53, 57-59). In Saller’s simulation, 0.0 indicates less than 0.1; - indicates no incident. “Level 3 West” refers to the Coale and Demeny model life table that, for Saller, represents a “general-purpose table that is unlikely to be grossly misleading,” but still represents a population with high mortality rates and a life expectancy at birth of 25 years (1994:23; also see Chapter 3). For a detailed explanation of the assumptions and data on life expectancy, marriage patterns, and fertility rates that created the date for the simulation, see Saller (1994:22-47, 66).

2.1. Kin universe for men in the ancient world

The data in Tables 8.1-8.4 present statistically probable elements of a man’s relationship with his father (from whom he will inherit his occupation and patrimony), his mother (listed here for comparative purposes) and his son (who will be his heir). I also include data on how likely it was that he might live to see a grandchild. I present non-elite and elite men for comparative purposes.

Table 7.1: Proportion of non-elite men with living kin (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.2: Mean age of living kin for a non-elite male (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Proportion of living kin for an elite male (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
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<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
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<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.4: Mean age of living kin for an elite male (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
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<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Kin universe for non-elite women in the ancient world

This data is reproduced from Saller (1994:48-50). Women’s identity is based primarily on her fertility, so the most pertinent categories of “kin” are husband, child and grandchild. The age at marriage for elite women assumed by Saller (between 12 and 23, averaging 15 years old) is probably not applicable to non-elite women, so I only list data for the latter (between 15 and 40, averaging 20 years old; 1994:47-48). Saller assumed that a woman would continue to remarry until she was past menopause, so the proportions of women who have a living husband are likely to be too high. In Roman Egypt, for example, Bagnall and Frier found that while 70% of men were still married into their forties, but women did not tend to remarry after about age 35 (between 30% and 40% were still married by age 50; 1994:126-27; cf. 1994:120).

Table 8.1: Proportion of living kin for non-elite female (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
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<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.64</td>
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<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.47</td>
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<td>0.61</td>
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<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.53</td>
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<td>Grandchild</td>
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<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2: Mean age of living kin for non-elite female (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
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<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>88.8</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kin</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>----</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3: Mean number of living kin for non-elite female (Level 3 West)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of ego in years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandchild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 3: Indicative first person verbs in 1 Timothy
(compared with 2 Timothy and Titus)

The charts that follow list all of the first person indicative uses of the verb in 1 Timothy, with 2 Timothy and Titus as a comparison. I have categorized each usage according to its function within the fictional narrative. The categories are:

1. Paul’s identity: in this category, the author uses the first person singular to demonstrate Paul’s identity. For example, “I myself was made ἐτέθη εγὼ herald and an apostle” (2:7).
2. Action: the author has Paul recount his past actions, state his present actions, or occasionally state what his future actions will be.
3. State of mind: especially in 2 Timothy, the author has Paul reveal his state of mind (e.g., I am certain).
4. Directive to Timothy: the author uses the first person indicative voice of Paul to exhort Timothy to do something. Sometimes the directive is neutral (e.g., I entrust this to you), but sometimes it is stronger (“I charge you before God,” 5:21).
5. In 1 Timothy alone, the author uses the first person to request certain actions of community members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function in the fictional narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>παρεκάλεσα</td>
<td>I encouraged you [Timothy] to remain in Ephesus</td>
<td>directive to Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:11</td>
<td>ἐπιστεύθην ἐχώ</td>
<td>I myself was entrusted [with the gospel]</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>χάριν ἐχώ</td>
<td>I give thanks to Jesus Christ</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>εἰμὶ ἐγώ</td>
<td>I myself am [among the foremost of sinners]</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:16</td>
<td>ἡλειόθην</td>
<td>I was shown mercy</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:18</td>
<td>παρατίθεμαι</td>
<td>I entrust this commandment to you, Timothy [my] child</td>
<td>directive to Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20</td>
<td>παρέδωκα</td>
<td>I have turned over [Hymenaeus and</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Translation (mine)</td>
<td>Function in the fictional narrative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παρακαλῶ</td>
<td>I urge [that] entreaties, prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all humanity</td>
<td>request of community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐτέθην ἐγὼ</td>
<td>I myself was made a herald and an apostle</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λέγω</td>
<td>I am telling the truth</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σὺ ψεύδομαι</td>
<td>I am not lying</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βουλομαι</td>
<td>I want men to pray [and women to adorn themselves]</td>
<td>request of community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐπιτρέπω</td>
<td>I permit no woman to have authority over a man</td>
<td>current action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γράφω</td>
<td>I write these things hoping to come to you soon</td>
<td>current action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἔρχομαι</td>
<td>until I come</td>
<td>future action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βουλομαι</td>
<td>I want young women to marry</td>
<td>request of community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δισμαρτύρομαι</td>
<td>I charge [you] before God</td>
<td>strong directive to Timothy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παραγγέλλω</td>
<td>I command you before God</td>
<td>strong directive to Timothy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicative first person verbs in 2 Timothy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function in the fictional narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>χαρίν ἔχω</td>
<td>I give thanks to God</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>λατρευώ</td>
<td>I serve [God]</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>ἔχω</td>
<td>I have memory of you</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>πληρωθῶ</td>
<td>so that I might be filled with joy</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>πεπείσμη</td>
<td>I am certain [faith] is also in you</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:6</td>
<td>αναμιμήσω</td>
<td>I remind you to rekindle the gift of God</td>
<td>directive to Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:11</td>
<td>ἐτέθην ἐγὼ</td>
<td>I was made a herald and apostle and teacher</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>πασχῶ</td>
<td>I suffer</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>οὐκ ἔπαισχύνομαι</td>
<td>I am not ashamed</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>οἶδα</td>
<td>I know (that which I have believed)</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>πεπίστευκα</td>
<td>(I know that which) I have believed</td>
<td>past state of mind (with implications for the present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:12</td>
<td>πεπείσμαι</td>
<td>I am certain that he is able</td>
<td>current state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:7</td>
<td>λέγω</td>
<td>consider what I say</td>
<td>directive to Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:9</td>
<td>κακοπαθῶ</td>
<td>I suffer hardship</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>ὑπομένω</td>
<td>I endure</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:11</td>
<td>ὑπομνήγκα</td>
<td>I bear up under persecutions</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>δισμαρτύρομαι</td>
<td>I charge [you] before God</td>
<td>strong directive to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Translation (mine)</td>
<td>Function in the fictional narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:6</td>
<td>ἐγώ σπένδομαι</td>
<td>I myself am being poured out like a libation</td>
<td>current action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:7</td>
<td>ηγώνισμαι</td>
<td>I have fought the good fight</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:12</td>
<td>ἀπέστειλα</td>
<td>I have sent Tychicus</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:13</td>
<td>ἀπέλιπον</td>
<td>which I left</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:17</td>
<td>ἐρρυσθῆν</td>
<td>I was delivered out the lion’s mouth</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20</td>
<td>ἀπέλιπον</td>
<td>I left Trophimus sick</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicative first person verbs in Titus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function in the fictional narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>ἐπισεύθην ἐγώ</td>
<td>with which I myself was entrusted</td>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>ἀπέλιπον</td>
<td>I left you in Crete</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:8</td>
<td>βουλομαι</td>
<td>I want you to speak confidently</td>
<td>directive to Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>πεθώ</td>
<td>I will send Artemas to you</td>
<td>future action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>κέκρικα</td>
<td>I have decided</td>
<td>past action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of first person indicative verb use in 1 Timothy with 2 Timothy and Titus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function of first person indicative in fictional narrative</th>
<th>1 Timothy</th>
<th>2 Timothy</th>
<th>Titus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s identity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current action</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past action</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future action</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current state of mind</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past state of mind (affecting present)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive to Timothy (neutral)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive to Timothy (strong)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>request of community members</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further observations:

- Titus does not contain the imperative tense nearly as much as the other two letters.
- 2 Timothy focuses on the actions and state of mind of Paul.
- 1 Timothy emphasizes Paul’s identity, perhaps to help the author establish his authority.
In 1 Timothy, the “request of community members” entails requesting a change of behaviour, which fits well with the theme of proper behaviour in this letter. This unique category functions in the fictional narrative as a direct appeal from the real author to the real audience using Paul’s authority and voice.
Appendix 4: Imperative verbs in 1 Timothy
(compared with 2 Timothy and Titus)

The charts that follow list all of the imperative uses of the verb in 1 Timothy, with 2 Timothy and Titus as a comparison. I have categorized each usage according to its function in the letter. The categories are:

1. Example of proper behaviour: the fictive Paul exhorts Timothy to behave in ways that are proper in order to be a good example for the community.

2. Benefits community members: these exhortations are meant for Timothy to perform actions that will benefit community members. For example, “command these things” suggests that the fictive Paul would have the fictive Timothy pass along the ideas he is writing in the letter. The real audience would understand that these actions would benefit the fictive community of Ephesus, and them indirectly.

3. Benefits for particular community members: a few times the author has the fictive Paul tell the fictive Timothy to exhort particular groups of people within the community, usually to their benefit.

4. Personal: these are directives to Timothy himself (e.g., bring my cloak).

5. Third person imperatives.

1 Timothy imperatives

Second person singular imperatives in 1 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:7</td>
<td>παραίτου</td>
<td>but reject profane old wives’ tales</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:11</td>
<td>παραγγέλλε</td>
<td>command these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>δίδασκε</td>
<td>teach these things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:13</td>
<td>πρόσεχε</td>
<td>pay attention to the reading aloud in public</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:14</td>
<td>μὴ ἁμέλει</td>
<td>do not neglect the special gift in you</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>μελέτα</td>
<td>cultivate these things</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Translation (mine)</td>
<td>Object of imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>ἰσθι</td>
<td>be in these things</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:16</td>
<td>ἐπεξε</td>
<td>take pains with yourself</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:16</td>
<td>ἐπιμενε</td>
<td>persist in these things</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃ</td>
<td>do not rebuke an older man</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>παρακαλεῖ</td>
<td>but speak kindly to him as a father</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:3</td>
<td>τίμα</td>
<td>honour widows who are real widows</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:7</td>
<td>παράγγελλε</td>
<td>command these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:11</td>
<td>παραιτοῦ</td>
<td>intercede for the younger widows</td>
<td>benefits the younger widows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:19</td>
<td>μὴ παραδέχο</td>
<td>do not accept an accusation against an elder</td>
<td>benefits an elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:20</td>
<td>ἐλεγχὲ</td>
<td>rebuke those who continue to sin in front of the everyone</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:22</td>
<td>μηδὲν ἐπιτίθει</td>
<td>do not lay hands on anyone hastily</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:22</td>
<td>μηδὲν κοινώνει</td>
<td>do not join in other people’s sins</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:23</td>
<td>μηκέτι, ὑδροπότει</td>
<td>drink water no longer</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:23</td>
<td>χρῶ</td>
<td>make use of a little wine</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11</td>
<td>φευγε</td>
<td>flee from these things</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11</td>
<td>δίσωκε</td>
<td>pursue righteousness, piety, [etc.]</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:17</td>
<td>παραγγέλλε</td>
<td>command these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20</td>
<td>φύλαξο</td>
<td>guard the deposit</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Third person singular imperatives in 1 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Object of imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:11</td>
<td>μακαναντῶ</td>
<td>let a woman learn in full submission</td>
<td>a woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:12</td>
<td>καταφρονεῖτω</td>
<td>let no one look down on you because of your youth</td>
<td>others (re. Timothy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:9</td>
<td>καταλεγένθω</td>
<td>let a widow be enlisted</td>
<td>widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:16</td>
<td>ἐπαρκεῖτω</td>
<td>let the believing woman who has widows take care of them</td>
<td>believing woman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Third person plural imperatives in 1 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Object of imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:10</td>
<td>δοκιμαζέωσαν</td>
<td>and also let these [deacons]</td>
<td>Timothy or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Translation (mine)</td>
<td>Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>ἔστωσαν</td>
<td>first be tested</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>let the deacons be the husband of one wife</td>
<td>deacons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:4</td>
<td>μανθανέτωσαν</td>
<td>let them learn to be pious</td>
<td>a widow’s children and grandchildren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:17</td>
<td>ἀξιοσύνθωσαν</td>
<td>let the elders who lead well be worthy of double honour</td>
<td>others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:1</td>
<td>ἡγείσθωσαν</td>
<td>let as many slaves who under the yoke regard their own masters worthy of all honour</td>
<td>slaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:2</td>
<td>καταφρονεῖτωσαν</td>
<td>let those who have faith not look down on [their] masters</td>
<td>slaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:2</td>
<td>δουλευέτωσαν</td>
<td>let them serve more</td>
<td>slaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Timothy Imperatives

Second person singular imperatives in 2 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>μὴ ἐπασχυνθῆς</td>
<td>do not be ashamed</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>ἔχε</td>
<td>hold to the standard of sound teaching</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>φυλαξῶν</td>
<td>guard the good deposit</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>ἐνδυναμοῦ</td>
<td>be strong</td>
<td>personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>παραθοῦ</td>
<td>entrust these things to faithful people</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<td>2:7</td>
<td>νόει</td>
<td>consider what I say</td>
<td>personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:8</td>
<td>μνημόνευε</td>
<td>remember Jesus Christ</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:14</td>
<td>ὑπομιμήσακε</td>
<td>remind them of these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>σπουδάσον</td>
<td>make every effort to present yourself</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:16</td>
<td>περιίστασο</td>
<td>avoid unclean chatter</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:22</td>
<td>φεύγε</td>
<td>flee from lusts</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:23</td>
<td>παραίτοῦ</td>
<td>reject speculations</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>γίνωσκε</td>
<td>know this</td>
<td>personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:5</td>
<td>ἄποτρέπου</td>
<td>turn away from these things</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>μένε</td>
<td>remain in what you have learned</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>κήρυξον</td>
<td>proclaim the word</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>ἐπίτιμθι</td>
<td>be ready</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>ἔλεγξον</td>
<td>rebuke</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Translation (mine)</td>
<td>Object of imperative</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>4:2</td>
<td>ἐπιτίμησον</td>
<td>warn</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>παρακλέσον</td>
<td>exhort</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
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<td>4:5</td>
<td>νήφε</td>
<td>be sober</td>
<td>personal</td>
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<td>4:5</td>
<td>κακοπαθησον</td>
<td>suffer hardship</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
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<td>4:5</td>
<td>ποίησον</td>
<td>do the work of an evangelist</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:5</td>
<td>πληροφορήσον</td>
<td>fulfill your service</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:9</td>
<td>σπουδάσον</td>
<td>make every effort to come to me soon</td>
<td>personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:11</td>
<td>ἁγε</td>
<td>bring Mark with you</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
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<td>4:13</td>
<td>φέρε</td>
<td>bring the cloak</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15</td>
<td>φυλάσσον</td>
<td>be on guard</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:19</td>
<td>ἀσπασαί</td>
<td>greet</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:21</td>
<td>σπουδάσων</td>
<td>make every effort to come</td>
<td>personal</td>
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</table>

Third person singular in 2 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Object of imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:19</td>
<td>ἀποστήτω</td>
<td>let everyone abstain from unrighteousness</td>
<td>everyone (πᾶς)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Titus Imperatives**

Second person singular imperatives in Titus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Translation (mine)</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>ἔλεγχε</td>
<td>rebuke them severely</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>λάλει</td>
<td>speak that which is suitable for healthy teaching</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:6</td>
<td>παρακαλέει</td>
<td>exhort the younger men</td>
<td>benefits the younger men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>λάλει</td>
<td>speak these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>παρακαλέει</td>
<td>encourage</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>ἔλεγχε</td>
<td>rebuke</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>ὑπομίμησε</td>
<td>remind them of these things</td>
<td>benefits the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:9</td>
<td>περίιστασο</td>
<td>avoid controversies</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10</td>
<td>παραιτοῦ</td>
<td>reject speculations</td>
<td>example of proper behaviour</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The following table shows the frequency of imperatives per 1000 words of text (2002: Appendix C):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistle</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Timothy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Timothy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations:

- Exhortations for proper behaviour are important for 1 and 2 Timothy, but not for Titus.
- Using imperatives for the benefit of the community was important in all three letters, but benefits for certain community members does not occur in 2 Timothy.
Personal directives to Timothy are much more prominent in 2 Timothy than the other two letters. One could argue that the personal directives in 1 Timothy are intended for demonstrating proper behaviour.

The third person imperative is used much more extensively in 1 Timothy than in the other two letters. It is a rhetorical strategy particular to 1 Timothy, and may indicate directives for the real audience of the letter.

In 1 Tim 5, the author begins with examples of proper behaviour (5:1, 3), shifts to exhortations that should benefit the community or certain members of the community (5:7, 11, 19, 20, 22), then returns to an exhortation for “Timothy” to practice proper behaviour (5:22), followed by a personal exhortation that could also be meant as an example of proper behaviour (5:23).
Appendix 5: Women in 1 Timothy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Stage of Life Course</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsibilities or privileges</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Textual references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>younger widow</td>
<td>childbearing</td>
<td>20s and 30s</td>
<td>behave wantonly, want to marry, compromise faith and reputation of community by acting and speaking inappropriately</td>
<td>Should be married, have children, run a household</td>
<td>widowed (or divorced)</td>
<td>5:11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believing woman</td>
<td>mother of adult children, grandmother</td>
<td>likely late 30s to 50s</td>
<td>has widows</td>
<td>should assist her widows</td>
<td>married, widowed or divorced</td>
<td>5:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-indulgent woman</td>
<td>mother of adult children, grandmother</td>
<td>late 30s to 50s</td>
<td>lives luxuriously</td>
<td>is dead while she is alive</td>
<td>probably widowed</td>
<td>5:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman/wife</td>
<td>mother of adult children, grandmother</td>
<td>late 30s to 50s</td>
<td>Concerned about appearance, wanting to teach in the assembly</td>
<td>should be modest and self-controlled and train their children and/or younger women to be also</td>
<td>probably married</td>
<td>2:9-15; cf. Tit 2:3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real widow</td>
<td>near or past menopause, but no surviving children</td>
<td>around 40 and older</td>
<td>alone, hopes in God, prays continually</td>
<td>should be assisted by community</td>
<td>widowed (or divorced)</td>
<td>5:3, 5, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widow with family</td>
<td>mother of adult children, grandmother</td>
<td>around 40 and older</td>
<td>has children or grandchildren</td>
<td>should receive support from her family</td>
<td>widowed (or divorced)</td>
<td>5:4, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exemplary old widow</td>
<td>old age; perhaps mother of adult children, grandmother, great-grandmother</td>
<td>60 and older</td>
<td>at least sixty, wife of one husband, bearing witness in good works</td>
<td>an example and model for the middle-aged women based on their past deeds and virtue</td>
<td>widowed (or divorced)</td>
<td>5:9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deaconess (or deacon’s wife)</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>likely late 30s to 50s</td>
<td>women (in the context of deacons)</td>
<td>be serious, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things</td>
<td>probably married</td>
<td>3:11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus.</td>
<td>ANTC. Nashville: Abington.</td>
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