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Construction of Masculinity in Antiquity and Early Christianity^{*}

Zusammenfassung:

Männlichkeit bildet in der griechisch-römischen Antike eine zentrale Kategorie zur Deutung und Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit. Einige auffällige Aspekte dabei sind: Der menschliche Körper ist eingeschlechtlich, bringt sich jedoch auf zwei unterschiedliche Weisen geschlechtlich zum Ausdruck; Männlichkeit muss durch öffentliche Selbstdarstellung in Konkurrenz zu anderen erworben werden; Kontrolle und Herrschaft sind zentrale Vollzugsweisen des Mannseins; der moralische Tugenddiskurs dient dazu, männliche Identitätsmerkmale positiv festzusetzen; männliche Kontrolle kann auch die Form von Selbstkontrolle annehmen; die Adoleszenz ist die »Schule der Männlichkeit« und der Ort des Mannes ist »außerhalb« im öffentlichen Raum. Gegenüber dieser »hegemonialen Männlichkeit« legt der Apostel Paulus einige interessante Aspekte von Kontinuität und Diskontinuität an den Tag (insbesondere in der Korintherkorrespondenz). Einerseits entzieht er sich den Konkurrenzmechanismen öffentlicher Rede und Modellen von männlicher Härte (2. Korintherbrief). Andererseits verwirft er »weibliche«, langhaarige Männer und jegliche Übertretung der symbolischen Geschlechterdarstellung (1. Korintherbrief). Er stellt die aktive Rolle des Mannes nicht in Frage, qualifiziert diese allerdings in zwei Richtungen: Ein christlicher Mann gehört in seiner körperlichen Existenz zu Christus. Er ist ferner moralisch dazu verpflichtet, seine Liebe gegenüber anderen durch Verzicht auf Aspekte seiner männlichen Autonomie auszudrücken. Schließlich limitiert Paulus Sexualität auf die Ehe, denn Sexualität impliziert immer einen Entzug aus dem Bereich der ganzheitlichen Herrschaft Christi. Daher ist die wichtigste Form der Kontrolle die Selbstkontrolle.

I. Preliminary Remarks

The classic anthropological discourse has largely been dominated by the concept of an essential, naturally given bipolarity between two sexes, male and female, and by a tacit fusion of male/man and humankind. Within the theological guild it is largely due to the critical ferment of feminist theology that the concept of »man« has been put under

scrutiny for the first time. The early feminist agenda rightly brought aspects to the fore like sexism and patriarchy, thus, focusing on the problem of male/man basically as a problem of power, domination and violence¹. The main impetus in the first period has been to produce socially relevant changes by projecting something like the idea of a »new man«.

While a strict bipolarity between male and female is often operative in these concepts, there is another more important opposition, which has become nearly unquestionable: the difference between biological *sex* and socially constructed *gender*². Recently, under the influence of philosophers like Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, the discussion has moved away from »changing men«³. Postmodernism emphasizes the analysis of the pluralities of socio-historical construction and the deconstruction of hegemonic concepts of femininity and masculinity. Under the rather vague umbrella-term »gender studies« a subfield called »male studies« or »masculinity studies« has emerged⁴. When applied to the study of history and documents of the past one important starting point is the basic insight that paradigms of manliness are never culturally neutral but part of the social construction of reality⁵.

In the following I would like to raise some questions concerning the construction of masculinity in Early Christianity against its cultural background. Following a recent proposal by the German New Testament scholar Martin Leutzsch one can distinguish four different approaches⁶:

1. How do New Testament narratives characterise individual figures as male?⁷
2. How is Jesus as the main figure of all Gospels narrated with respect to ancient concepts of masculinity?
3. How is God conceptualized as male?
4. How do individual argumentative texts construct or implicitly transmit certain ideas of what it means to be a man?

Time and space do not allow to cover all these questions. I will, therefore, focus on the last approach, especially with respect to the letters of the apostle Paul. As one of the most influential and controversial figures of Early Christianity Paul is especially interesting because the letters he wrote between the years 50 and 60 have quite a lot to say about Paul himself and about important aspects of male identity. Most of the texts,

analysed here, are from the Corinthian correspondence (1Cor and 2Cor). First, however, I will briefly sketch some important Greco-Roman concepts of masculinity.

II. Being a Complete Man in the Greco-Roman world⁸

Gender questions are so much part of modern critical discourse that at first sight it may seem anachronistic to explore ancient literature with such questions in mind. I hope, however, to show that the ancients were very much concerned with issues of male identity⁹. In some ways the modern gender-discourse has made us realize for the first time the variety and complexity of the ancient discourse.

I would like to illustrate the problem of masculinity by a comparison between two very different »men« and rhetorical masters at the turn of the first to the second century CE¹⁰: Favorinus of Arles and Polemo of Smyrna.

Favorinus was born into a rich family in southern France as a »malformed« baby: He should have been exposed to death, but against all odds he was some sort of *Wunderkind* and became one of the most learned representatives of Greek culture. The sexual ambiguity of Favorinus was notorious. Philostratus describes him as follows:

»Favorinus, like Dio, was a philosopher whose verbal facility proclaimed him a sophist. He came from the Gauls of the west, from the city of Arles on the river Rhone. He was born double-sexed, both male and female, as his appearance made plain: his face remained beardless even into old age. His voice revealed the same ambiguity, for it was penetrating, shrill, and high-pitched, the way nature tunes the voices of eunuchs.«¹¹

His archenemy was M. Antonius Polemo, a descendant of the Hellenistic kings of Pontus, born in Laodicea, and in many ways, an ideal Roman man. In his study on physiognomics he caricatures Favorinus as follows – and that says quite a lot about his ideal of manliness:

»He was libidinous and dissolute beyond all bounds. [...] He had a bulbous brow, flabby cheeks, a wide mouth, a gangling scraggly neck, fat calves, and fleshy feet. His voice was like a woman's, and likewise his extremities and other bodily parts were uniformly soft; nor did he walk with an upright posture: his joints and limbs were lax. He took great care of his abundant tresses, rubbed

ointments on his body, and cultivated everything that excites the desire for coitus and lust.«¹²

Favorinus and Polemo can be seen as antitypes of Roman masculinity. While Polemo is a representative of the »hegemonic masculinity« which dominated Roman culture, Favorinus forms something like a »subordinate variant«¹³. It becomes clear from this example, that the study of male identity in the Greco-Roman world implies an awareness of some basic differences with respect to modern notions.

1. The human body was constructed as one single-sex body sexually differing only in inverted genitalia, and two very different sexed bodies. In Greek medical literature women are simply »inverted« men. The male and female genitals were perceived as basically equal with the difference that one is outward and the other inward¹⁴. The influential philosopher and physician Galen (2nd century CE) states:

»The female is less perfect than the male for one, principal reason because she is colder [this can also be found in Aristotle], for if among animals the warm one is the more active, a colder animal would be less perfect than a warmer. A second reason is one that appears in dissecting [...]. All the parts, then, that men have, women have too, the difference between them lying in only one thing, which must be kept in mind throughout the discussion, namely, that in women the parts are within [the body], whereas in men they are outside, in the region called the perineum. Consider first whichever ones you please, turn outward the woman's, turn inward, so to speak and fold double the man's, and you will find them the same in both in every respect. [...] In fact, you could not find a single male part left over that had not simply changed its position; for the parts that are inside in woman are outside in man.«¹⁵ [Sounds like an instruction on how to build a woman...]

From Hippocrates to Galen ancient embryology »envisaged a mingling of male and female seed, in which various proportions were possible: an infant's gender was not an absolute but a point on a sliding scale [...]. Masculinity in the ancient world was an achieved state, radically underdetermined by anatomical sex«¹⁶.

Besides these medical specifications there are many mythical narrations which bear evidence to the notion of one-sex bodies and two genders: In the first half of the second century CE Phlegon of Tralles collected in his »Book of Marvels« (*Peri thaumasion*)

many creepy and marvellous popular stories, many of them belonging to the category of »Sex-Changers and Hermaphrodites« (chapters 4-10), e.g.:

»A maiden named Philotis, whose family came from Smyrna, was of marriageable age and had been betrothed to a man by her parents when male genitals appeared in her and she became a man.«

The myth of a primeval androgyne is found in Hellenistic circles and is widely shared in mainstream Jewish interpretations of the creation account¹⁷. Thus, the Palestinian Midrash *Genesis Rabbah* reads:

»And God said let us make a human etc... R. Yermia the son of El'azar interpreted: When the Holiness (Be it Blessed) created the first human, He created him androgynous, for it says, ›Male and female created He them.« R. Samuel the son of Nahman said: When the Holiness (Be it Blessed) created the first human, He made it two-faced, then He sawed it and made a back for this one and a back for that one.« (quoted according to *Boyarin*, Carnal Israel, 42)

2. This one-sex model of humanity creates »a situation in which the cultural polarity between the male and the female was made internal to the masculine gender«¹⁸. Therefore, »[m]anliness was not a birthright. It was something that had to be won«¹⁹ over against the danger of being unmanly, which equals being feminine. Anthropological research has corroborated that in many cultures, surely in the context of the ancient Mediterranean Sea, masculinity was a matter of constant public self-presentation; it was always under negotiation, always at the risk of losing male honour or increasing it²⁰. According to Gleason one of the most important competitive fields for showing one's manliness in ancient Rome was not, in first place, the battlefield²¹ or the *gymnasium*²², but rhetorical education and public performance²³.

One of the ways to show manliness in public has to do with gesture and physiognomics. In his study on physiognomics Polemo of Smyrna makes it clear that the male gender is not dependent on anatomic sex:

»You may obtain physiognomic indications of masculinity and femininity from your subject's glance, movement, and voice, and then, from among these signs, compare one with another until you determine to your satisfaction which of the two sexes prevails. For in the masculine there is something feminine to be

found, and in the feminine something masculine, but the name *masculine* or *feminine* is assigned according to which of the two prevails.« (*Phys.* 2.1.192F = Gleason, *Making*, 58)

»The male is physically stronger and braver, less prone to defects and more likely to be sincere and loyal. He is more keen to win honor and he is worthier of respect. The female has the contrary properties: she has but little courage and abounds in deceptions. Her behavior is exceptionally bitter and she tends to hide what is on her mind. She is impulsive, lacks a sense of justice, and loves to quarrel: a blustering coward.



Aphrodite from Knidos. Roman copy of an original by Praxiteles (ca. 350/340 BC), Munich, Glyptothek

Now I will relate the signs of male and female physique and their physiognomical significance (*signa formae maris et feminae et explicationem physiognomoniae*). You will note which prevails over the other [in any single individual] and use the result to guide your judgment (*utrum prae altero valeat observabis et eo potissimam iudicii tui partem moderaberis*). The female has, compared to the male, a small head and a small mouth, softer hair that is dark colored, a narrower face, bright glittering eyes, a narrow neck, a weakly sloping chest, feeble ribs, larger, fleshier hips, narrower thighs and calves, knock-knees, dainty fingertips and toes, the rest of the body moist and flabby, with soft limbs and slackened joints, thin sinews, weak voice, a hesitant gait with frequent short steps, and limp limbs that glide slowly along. But the male is in every way opposite to this description (*sed mas huic descriptioni ex omni parte contrarius*), and it is possible to find masculine qualities also in women (*licet marium similitudinem in feminis quoque invenias*).« (*Phys.* 2.1.192-194F = Gleason, *Making Men*, 60)



»Alexander Rondanini«, Roman copy of an original from the 3rd century, Munich, Glyptothek

3. Being a man in antiquity was very closely linked to the role of being an active agent rather than passive. Be it in politics, in sports, in war, in rhetoric or in the vast field of sexuality²⁴, what qualified an individual as a *man* was his active control of the situation²⁵. This »hegemonic masculinity« formed one end of a gradient scale which moved along the combined lines of domination and masculinity²⁶. Since the amount of masculinity is a limited good aspirants to masculinity have to compete against each other²⁷. It follows from the above that adult citizens of the Greco-Roman elites had easier access to maleness than what »might best be labelled *unmen*: females, boys, slaves (of either sex), sexually passive or »effeminate« males, eunuchs, »barbarians«, and so on«²⁸.

From this it also follows, that the degree of masculinity can change during a life cycle. Especially old men are in danger of becoming unmanly:

»And of the many forms of baseness none disgraces an aged man more than idleness, cowardice, and slackness, when he retires from public offices (*ek politikôn*) to the domesticity (*eis oikourian*) befitting women.« (Plutarch, *Old Men in Public Affairs* 784A)

To be sure there was one field where a clear gender-sex attribution was fundamental: Roman law²⁹. In order to guarantee the legal status of an individual usually the sex would be assigned at birth simply by looking at the external appearance of the genitalia. Roman lawyers did not care too much for further subtleties³⁰.

4. The dominant philosophical notion that true happiness (or *eudaimonia*) is achieved through virtue is firmly rooted in the morality of free adult men. To be virtuous means to be a perfect man. Greek *aretê* refers to the excellence and perfection³¹ and is traditionally part of ideal male heroism. One of the four cardinal virtues was »courage« or »manliness« (*andreia*) which derives directly from the Greek word for man *anêr*³². In Latin the connection is even clearer since the Romans translated general *aretê* by *virtus* which derives directly from Latin *vir* = man.

5. The fact that control and domination are the most salient feature of manliness allows for a philosophical redefinition of masculinity in terms of self-domination, measure and strength of will (contrary to *akrasia*; cf. below). Plato's Gorgias gives evidence for alternative concepts of masculinity: on the one hand the dominant Achillean version of courage, violence and total control and on the other hand an inward version of

discipline, endurance and self-sacrifice (479a-480d, 522e). Moral rhetoric in ancient Greece and Rome associated lust and lack of self-control with the feminine, austerity and self-control with the male realm³³. The most active agent would be a man who controls himself with respect to anger and all other forms of passions, especially those associated with sexuality.

6. If it is true that one is not born a man but made a man, than the adolescence (Latin: *adulescentia*) has to be considered the most important phase for the development of a Greco-Roman man³⁴. This phase which starts between 14 and 15 and may well go up to 30 (from taking up the *toga virilis* to the point of own political responsibility) is a »school of roman manliness«³⁵. The key element for the transmission of virile values was the father as a model of moderation, dignity, control and provision³⁶. His authority as *paterfamilias* was absolute and without question³⁷.

7. The division of public and private spaces as the proper spaces for men and women respectively is all-pervasive in antiquity³⁸. To be a man meant to »go public«, to be outdoor. This is not only a matter of conventional space-division but corresponds with bodily differences between men and women:

»It [= Reason] saw how unlike the bodily shapes of man and woman are and that each of the two has a different life assigned to it, to the one the domestic life (*katoikidios*), to the other a civic life (*politikos*), it judged it well to prescribe rules all of which though not directly made by nature were the outcome of wise reflection and in accordance with nature.« (Philo, *Virt.* 19)

Something like a »natural correspondence« between the concept of women as »inverted men« and their place inside the house seems to have existed.

III. Aspects of Masculinity in Paul's Letters³⁹

1. Masculinities under attack (2Cor)

As a starting point I have chosen Paul's very personal and emotional defence in his second letter to the Corinthians (esp. in ch. 10-13) against a group of super-apostles who questioned his authority. This conflict has been the object of many scholarly contributions⁴⁰, but not until recently it has become evident that one dimension which has been unnoticed so far touches the ancient masculinity-discourse outlined above⁴¹.

The allegations against Paul touch upon his role as public speaker and his personal character:

1. As I have noted above, public speech was one of the most important indicators for the self-representation of masculinity. As a speaker Paul would automatically be driven onto the stage of Roman male-competitiveness. The »perfect orator«, according to Cicero:

»...will maintain an erect and lofty carriage, but with little pacing, and never for a long distance. As for darting forward, he will keep it under control and use it seldom. There should be no effeminate bending of the neck (*mollitia cervicum*), no wagging of the fingers, or marking of the rhythm. Rather, he will control himself (*se ipse moderans*) by the pose of his whole torso, and by the manly attitude of his body (*virili laterum flexione*)...« (*Or. Brut.* 18.59; cf. also Seneca, *Ep.* 114)

Every man who entered the field of public speech would be submitted to a test of masculinity. It was therefore a well-known polemical topic to criticise opponents for their unmanly performance⁴². Paul's opponents in Corinth obviously made some derogatory remarks about his physical appearance. Paul quotes them saying:

»His letters are weighty and strong (*bareiai kai ischyrai*), but his bodily presence is weak (*hê de parousia tou sômatos asthenês*), and his speech contemptible (*ho logos exouthenêmenos*).« (*2Cor 10:10*)

If read on the background of ancient physiognomics it becomes evident that these invectives were intended not simply to denigrate the content or style of Paul's speech but especially his physical performance⁴³.

2. With respect to Paul's character the opponents seem to have charged him of being inconsistent in the fulfilling of his plans (»lightness of mind« lat. *levitas* / gr. *elaphría*) and a coward when it comes to face conflicts. Paul has to justify his change of travel plans, something which he never does in other letters:

»Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say ›Yes, yes‹ and ›No, no‹ at the same

time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been ›Yes and No.« (2Cor 1:17f)

Paul seems to take up their criticism when he says of himself: »I who am humble (*tapeinos*) when face to face with you, but bold (*tharrô*) towards you when I am away!« (2Cor 10:1) Paul characterized himself as someone who has made himself »a slave to all« (1Cor 9:19-23) and tries »to please everyone in everything« in order to save as many as possible (1Cor 10:33). Such statements could easily be used as a charge against Paul as being a flatterer⁴⁴, a character trait »utterly inconsistent with the ideals of masculinity«⁴⁵. It is also possible that Paul's decision to earn his living by his own work or the fact that he had been flogged on several occasions (2Cor 11:23-25) were seen as limitations of his male autonomy.

In 1Cor 4:21 Paul had asked the congregation: »What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick (*en rhabdô*), or with love in a spirit of gentleness (*en agapê pneumatî praotêtos*)?« Paul's response in 2Cor has not much to offer if judged according to the standards of masculinity. Quite to the contrary he appeals to the »meekness (*praotês*) and gentleness (*epieikeia*) of Christ« (2Cor 10:1; cf. 11:21,29f; 12:5,8-10). He reminds the Corinthians tongue-in-cheek that, contrary to his opponents, he and his co-workers have been simply too »weak« to subdue them:

»For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too ›weak‹ for that!« (2Cor 11:20f)

But right at the end Paul seems to concede to the Corinthians and their expectations concerning his role as male leader:

»I warned those who sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not spare (*ou pheisomai*).« (2Cor 13:2)

Paul applies many metaphors of masculinity to himself: He is father of the church in Corinth (1Cor 4:14f; 2Cor 11:2f; 12:14), he is a warrior (2Cor 10:3-5) and a victorious athlete (1Cor 9:24-27). Nevertheless he seems to have been reluctant to make use of his authority. Especially his theology of the cross marks a critical antithesis with respect to the Corinthian's obsession with wisdom and rhetorical skills (1Cor 1-2). By excluding

himself from the competitive circuit of public speech Paul opens the possibility for alternative constructions of masculinity. It is, therefore, interesting to take a closer look on moral exhortations, which directly or indirectly touch on aspects of male self-representation.

2. Masculinities under construction (1Cor)

If we go back to 1Cor we will find many concepts of masculinity implied in Paul's moral exhortations, especially in chapters 6 to 11:

a) Paul against »unmanly men«

In 1Cor 6:9 Paul pronounces a sharp invective against those wrongdoers who »will not inherit the kingdom of God«. Among them are fornicators, idolaters and adulterers (*pornoi*, *eidôlolatrai*, *moichoi*) and also *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. Fornication and idolatry is a fixed linguistic tandem, especially as a topic of Jewish polemic against pagan »wickedness«⁴⁶. Adultery is probably the most common sexual offence⁴⁷. But what does *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* mean? Many modern translations associate both expressions directly with homosexuality.

Let me first look at *arsenokoitês*, sometimes translated as »sodomites« (NRSV 1989), »sexual perverts« (RSV 1946, REB 1992) or »homosexual offenders« (NIV 1973)⁴⁸. An obvious point to start with would be to analyze the separate parts of *arsenokoitês*, which refer to »male« (*arsen*) and to »coitus« (*koitês*), thus »a man who has sex with men«⁴⁹. Of course, this looks like the old etymological fallacy of defining a word's meaning by the meaning of its components. The problem, though, is that the word itself rarely appears. It is sometimes used in contexts, which emphasize economical sins. A far more specific meaning has, thus, been proposed, namely the economic exploitation of others by means of sex, perhaps but not necessarily by homosexual sex⁵⁰. But in any case we should be very cautious when applying a term like »homosexuality« to an ancient text. It is important to remember that within the history of sexual discourse »homosexuality« is a rather new invention⁵¹. At least the term was coined not until the 19th century in anonymous writings penned by the Austro-Hungarian author Karl Maria Kertbeny⁵².

The translation of *malakos* should be more to the point since this Greek word is attested fairly often in ancient literature. While older translations up to the 19th century opted for »effeminate« (KJV 1611, ASV 1901) many modern translations have shifted to specific activities associated with homosexuality like »male prostitutes« (NRSV 1989, NIV) or, by combining both terms, »homosexual perversion« (RSV 1946, TEV 1966,

NEB 1970, REB 1992). The *Greek-English Dictionary Based on Semantic Domains* (by Louw & Nida, 1988) simply renders the term: »the passive male partner in homosexual intercourse – ›homosexual‹.« (88.281)

This is one of the cases where older translations are much more exact than the new ones, because *malakos* refers primarily to something soft⁵³: clothes, gourmet food or a breeze of light wind⁵⁴. »When used as a term of moral condemnation, the word still refers to something perceived as ›soft‹: laziness, degeneracy, decadence, lack of courage, or, to sum up all these vices in one ancient category, the feminine.«⁵⁵ Being a *malakos* could imply a man submitting to sexual penetration but it was used in a much broader sense for lazy men, cowards, men living in decadence and luxury (cf. Josephus, War 7.338; Ant 5.246; 10.194)⁵⁶. Furthermore, it was also a matter of physiognomics whether someone was more or less male, more or less effeminate⁵⁷. In the context of sexuality a *malakos* may have attracted men as well as women⁵⁸.

By excluding effeminate men from the »Kingdom of Heaven« Paul is clearly taking sides with the Roman values of masculinity. The elites in the Corinthian community may have had some inclinations towards a decadent and luxurious life-style (cf. 1Cor 11:17ff). For Paul's concept of Christian masculinity this is unacceptable⁵⁹.

Paul's implicit »homophobic« sentiments appear again in 1Cor 11:2-16⁶⁰. There are many disputed issues involved in the interpretation of this passage⁶¹. What is obvious, though, is that Paul strives for a construction of public maleness, which excludes any form of blurring the symbolic difference between men and women. While men are called not to speak in public with long hair, women should avoid open hair in public (1Cor 11:4-7,14)⁶². The aversion against long-haired men moves well along the same lines as Paul's exclusion of the effeminate man from the kingdom of heaven (cf. above)⁶³. The only real argument Paul can adduce for such statements is public shame and honour⁶⁴, making therefore his construction of masculinity dependent from the surrounding Roman culture⁶⁵.

b) Limitations of male strength and autonomy

The whole discussion in 1Cor 8-10 deals with the problem of meat sacrificed in pagan temples. What is interesting is that the »strong« base their attitude of indiscriminate consumption on their self-understanding as autonomous and free persons. The »strong« are true men because they are self-determined⁶⁶. Paul does not question their moral

integrity. He only wants them to subordinate their freedom as male subjects to the needs of their weaker brothers.

»But take care that this liberty (*exousia*) of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.« (1Cor 8:9)

Paul celebrates the right to renounce one's own right in order to achieve a higher goal: the salvation of humankind

»Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right (*exousia*), but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. [...] What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights (*exousia*) in the gospel. For though I am free (*eleutheros*) with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them.« (1Cor 9:12b,18f)

The athlete, a paradigm of masculinity, becomes a model for someone who renounces in order to achieve a higher goal (1Cor 9:24-27). We have here two competing concepts of masculinity: self-determined strength versus self-renouncement for the love of others.

c) Male identity, sexuality and allegiance to Christ

The discussion in 1Cor 6:12-7:40 shows a very complex negotiation of what it means to be a man with respect to sexuality. There are two opposing views: As Michel Foucault and many others have pointed out, male sexuality in Antiquity was considered as a simple satisfaction of a physical need akin to hunger and food⁶⁷. For many moral philosophers sexuality was, like eating, only a moral problem once it escapes the control of the male rationality. Satisfaction and control give us two important points of reference to frame Paul's discussion in this passage.

Paul's starting point is a completely different one: According to his Jewish heritage the human always forms a unity of bodily and non-bodily identity. Based on the creation account, he sees sexuality between a man and a woman as an intimate act of becoming »one flesh« (6:16). He furthermore believes that salvation implies belonging to the Lord as a complete person, not only the inward soul-person but also the outward body-person. The male body is *not* a morally neutral sphere but part of God's redemption. Paul states against the Corinthians that the body belongs to the Lord (13b), that the body is a member of Christ (15a), that the Christian is »one spirit« with the Lord (17), and,

finally, that the male body is a »temple of the Holy Spirit« (19a)⁶⁸. This bodily dimension of Christian salvation is rooted in the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead (6:14) and, as chapter 15 will make clear, this act of resurrection is an act of *bodily* redemption. Instead of satisfaction and domination Paul conceptualizes the male body as a sphere of intimacy and exclusive belonging to the risen Christ.

The following three cases were disputed between Paul and the Corinthians: sex with a prostitute, sex within marriage, no marriage and no sex.

1. *Sex with a prostitute*: In 1Cor 6:12-20 Paul argues against some Corinthian men having sex with prostitutes. Probably these Corinthian male Christians projected their masculinity as a field where the penetration of women is a legitimate way of satisfying one's sexual needs. Paul starts by quoting a Corinthian slogan »Everything is permissible« (*panta moi exestin*) and juxtaposes his own modification: »But not everything is beneficial« and, more important, »I will not be dominated by anything« (6:12b: *ouk egô exousiasthêsomai hypo tinos*). If penetration is a sign of masculinity, exerting self-control is even more. Paul, thus, implies a contradiction in the Corinthian approach: the sexually active male becomes a passive victim of his passions.

Paul quotes what looks like a Corinthian argument in favour of having sex with a prostitute: »Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food« (6:13a). This fits fairly well into the idea of male sexuality as satisfaction of primary needs like eating. Sexuality only affects the body and not the soul, the real inner self. Paul argues heavily from his Jewish anthropological perspective: there is no neat division between body and soul, the male body belongs to salvation and sexuality is a complete personal union of man and woman (6:16). Paul can, thus, oppose bodily allegiance to Christ and bodily union to a prostitute. The idea of being »one flesh« and »one body« may have sounded strange to Greco-Roman ears, but it becomes the perfect antithesis for Paul. If the male body is united with Christ it cannot be united with a prostitute. Fornication affects bodily allegiance to Christ and is, thus, the only sin, which is committed against the body itself. For the apostle Paul, there is one way for a Christian male to give up his role as active agent: belonging to Christ. To have God's Spirit means that »you are not on your own« (19b).

2. *Sex within marriage / no marriage and no sex*⁶⁹: If the ideal of Christian masculinity is the complete independence from sexual passions and the complete bodily allegiance to the risen Lord, than even marriage becomes a problem. Some Corinthian men would

rightly have drawn one conclusion from Paul's teaching: »It is good for a man not to touch a woman«⁷⁰. This is the thesis with which 1Cor 7 starts. Until the end of a rather strange argumentation in this chapter it is not completely clear whether Paul approves or disapproves this position.

According to Paul, marriage has one basic *raison d'être*: Not raising children (as one would expect within Jewish and pagan context) but prevention of sexual immorality (*porneia*) – a reality vividly present in Corinth in form of a man living with his step-mother or in form of some male members going to prostitutes⁷¹. This is quite unique. The only positive thing the unmarried apostle can say about marriage is that it fends off immorality (7:2). It is, as he says in verse 5, a way of escaping »satanic temptation because of your lack of self-control« (*akrasia*). The opposite, the practice of self-control (7:9: *enkrateuomai*), is according to Gal 5:23 one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. Tit 1:8; 2Pet 1:6). It is not a coincidence that Paul uses the athlete in 1Cor 9:25 – one of the great ideal figures of masculinity – as an example of self-control »in all things« (*enkrateuomai*).

Akrasia was a central concept in the ancient moral discussion touching the question why people who *know* what is good can nevertheless act *against* this knowledge⁷². Philosophers discussed this as a problem of the weakness of human will⁷³. The problem Paul envisages here is, thus, not in the first place the external reality of sexual immorality but the inward lack of self-control. In a sense, marriage is only »plan B«.

What is striking, though, is that within marriage Paul fully acknowledges sexuality as a mutual debt or duty (7:3: *opheilên apodidômi*)⁷⁴.

»For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.« (7:4)

After having stated that the male body by its being »temple of the Holy Spirit« belongs to the risen Lord and to him alone, this seems to be a notable exception. In marriage the man has control over the female body – which is a very natural way of conceptualizing male domination – but, according to Paul, at the same time he loses control over his own body.

Marriage is a necessary »concession« (7:6: *syngnômê*) in order to create a secure space for male control-management. »It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion!« (7:9b) (Probably due to this statement the Apostle Paul will never be counted among the great defenders of romantic love). Paul's own ideal is that all Christian men should live celibate like he himself (7:7ff), though he has to admit that the necessary virtue of self-control is a gift by God (7:7). As the argument progresses, though, Paul gives two common-sense arguments for staying unmarried: First, the final times are times of crisis and married people will experience more distress (7:26-28). Second, married people are divided in their allegiance: they have to care for God and for each other, they have to please God and each other (7:32-35).

Paul emphasizes that his sole intention in saying this is to spare them problems (7:28: *egô de hymôn pheidomai*), sorrows (7:32: *thelô hymas amerimnous einai*) and, thus, to promote their benefit (7:35: *pros to hymôn autôn symphoron*). But one may wonder if the reason why Paul is suspicious of marriage is only motivated by his eschatological near expectation. The married man and the married woman are divided in their allegiance to God. The problem is not too dissimilar to the situation of Christian men uniting with prostitutes. The only difference is that marriage is not a sin (a fact which Paul emphasizes three times in 1Cor 7:28,36). The fundamental problem for Paul, though, is lack of self-control. Christian masculinity culminates in complete control over one's bodily needs for him. This anthropological choice paves the way for the latter Christian movement of celibate life. From this perspective, early ascetics and monks were not defective males but, quite to the contrary, hyper-masculine figures, able to control even the most forceful passions⁷⁵.

3. Circumcision, baptism and manliness

There is a final aspect, which has to be pointed out: The apostle Paul did not attribute too much importance to the rite of circumcision.

»Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision (*epispathô*). Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything.« (1Cor 7:18f)

It is well attested that the ancient polemics against Jewish circumcision saw it as a form of castration⁷⁶ therefore being a physical sign of unmanliness⁷⁷. Jews who wanted to

integrate fully into the hegemonic cultural context chose to undo their circumcision by a special surgery called »epispasm«⁷⁸. Although circumcision is not especially relevant for Paul there is no need for Jewish Christians to re-establish their masculinity by reversing the effects of their circumcision. Of course, there is also no need for non-Jewish Christians to circumcise, which again makes non-Jewish Christian men undistinguishable from non-Jewish non-Christian men⁷⁹.

The new Christian rite was baptism. At first sight this is a rite, which makes no difference between men and women. Paul expresses this clearly with the words of an early baptismal formula:

»26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.« (*Gal 3:26-28*)

There is nevertheless an implicit tendency towards a male perspective. The Christians are still called »sons« (26) and the article for Greek »one« is masculine (*heis*).

IV. Conclusion

1. The Corinthian correspondence has shown to be a productive place for getting a proven paradigmatic glimpse into the construction of masculinity in early Christianity. The clash between the Hellenistic Jew Paul and the culturally Roman Christians in Corinth shows that masculinity was under negotiation right from its beginning.

2. As a man Paul does not question the active role of the male agent. But he makes, at least, two qualifications: A Christian male belongs as bodily person to Christ and he is morally bound to express his love towards his fellow-believers by renouncing to important aspects of his male autonomy.

3. On the other hand it is evident that Paul has no sympathies for unmanly, effeminate men, men with long hair, and every symbolic transgression of cultural gender parameters. Paul would have been much more on the side of Polemo than on the side of Favorinus.

4. As a public speaker Paul inevitably had to expose himself to an external evaluation of his own masculinity. It seems that he did not conform to the physiognomy expected in higher Roman circles. His conviction that God's power operates through weakness makes him critical not with rhetoric as such but with the manly self-representation implied in speaking.

5. As a follower of Christ Paul clings to a system of values (or virtues) which has much in common with the Roman value system, but not all⁸⁰: being humble (*tapeinos*), for instance, is something which runs contrary to hegemonic forms of masculinity. On the other hand we do not find »courage« (*andreia*) as a virtue exposed by Paul.

6. As an unmarried Jewish man Paul limits sexuality to marriage. But even marriage is a lesser evil, because sexuality always implies a retraction from the complete rule of Christ. The most excellent form of male control is, thus, self-control.

V. Literature

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* Lecture delivered at the international interdisciplinary conference on »The Image of the Human Person in Science« organized by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia in Riga, from 22nd to 24th of February, 2006. I would like to thank my respondent, Lecturer Agita Misane, for important sociological insights, and, especially, my hosts and friends Dr. Dace Balode and Dr. Anta Filipsons for a very special time in

a wonderful city. For reactions on a first draft of this paper I would like to thank the friends from the »Netzwerk Geschlechterbewusste Theologie«, especially Heike Walz (Buenos Aires), Julia Müller-Clemm (Berne) and Martin Fischer (Vienna).

¹ *Dunde*, Mann, 51-56.

² Recently *Butler*, *Gender Trouble* has been very influential in questioning this consensus (cf. *Müller-Clemm*, *Gender-Archäologie*, 3f).

³ Thus the title of an important collection of essays edited by Michael *Kimmel*, *Changing Men*.

⁴ There are many political and academic frictions implied in men's studies, which are of no further interest here (cf. *Moore*, »O Man«, 3f).

⁵ Cf., inter alia, *Humpert*, *Männlichkeit*, 7.

⁶ *Leutzsch*, *Männlichkeit*, 601.

⁷ Cf. on Matthew: *Anderson / Moore*, *Masculinity*; on Mark: *Thurman*, *Masculinity*; on John: *Conway*, *Men; Behold*; on Luke (and Pastorals): *D'Angelo*, *Knowing*.

⁸ Some basic works I have been able to consult include: *Foxhall / Salmon*, *Thinking Men; Foxhall / Salmon*, *When Men; Gleason*, *Making Men; Golden / Toohey*, *Sex and Difference; Gunderson*, *Staging; Moxnes*, *Masculinty; Rosen / Sluiter*, *Andreia; Späth*, *Männlichkeit; Wyke*, *Parchments*.

⁹ Cf. *Liew*, *Re-Mark-Able*, 94-98.

¹⁰ Following especially *Gleason*, *Making Men*.

¹¹ *Philostratus*, *Lives*, 489.

¹² Cf. *Gleason*, *Making Men*, 7.

¹³ The important term »hegemonic masculinity« goes back to the pioneering work of *Connell*, *Masculinities*. I use the terms according to *Cornwall / Lindisfarne*, *Masculinity*, 3: »[I]t is useful to think of those ideologies which privilege some men (and women) by associating them with particular forms of power as ›hegemonic masculinities.‹ Hegemonic masculinities define successful ways of ›being a man‹; in so doing, they define other masculine styles as inadequate or inferior. These related masculinities we call ›subordinate variants.‹«

¹⁴ A basic reading for the history of body and gender is *Laqueur*, *Making Sex*, 24-43 (German: *Leib*, 39-49). *Laqueur* argues that this was the main view up until the 18th century (cf. also *Schiebinger*, *Skeletons*). Prior to the late nineteenth century, the lingering influence of ancient medicine portrayed sexual identity in terms of the dynamic interactions of quantities of humidity, temperature, and vital fluids (cf. *Cadden*, *Meanings*). The exact water-divide in the history of modern medicine is

disputed (cf. the exchange between *Stolberg*, *Woman and Laqueur*, *Sex*; *Schiebinger*, *Skeletttestreit*).

¹⁵ *Galen*, *On the Use of the Parts* 14.6-7 (C.G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia* [1821; repr. 1964] IV, 159f = transl.: M.T. May, *Galen, On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* [Ithaca, NY, 1968], II, 628f = Lefkowitz & Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, 351); cf. also *On the the Seed* 2.1,5 (= Kühn IV 596.634-636). According to *Galen*, *On the Seed* 2.2 (Kühn IV 596f) the Hellenistic anatomist Herophilus saw a basic homology between male and female reproductive organs (cf. *Staden*, *Herophilus*). Galen can be read in one line with Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 737a25-30; 775a.

¹⁶ *Gleason*, *Making Men*, 59.

¹⁷ Cf. *Boyarin*, *Carnal Israel*, 35-46.

¹⁸ *Conway*, *Behold*, 166.

¹⁹ *Gleason*, *Making Men*, 159.

²⁰ An important anthropological overview is offered by *Gilmore*, *Manhood* (German: *Mythos Mann*). Cf. also *Moxnes*, *Masculinity*. *Liew*, *Re-Mark-Able*, 96 aptly relates »Gilmore's emphasis on masculinity as an ›achievement‹ to Butler's concept of ›gender (as) performance‹«. Similarly *Richlin*, *Gender*, 91. The vast field of »male women« cannot be treated here (cf. *Aspegren*, *Male Woman*; *McInerney*, *Manly Women*). As an example I quote Philo's praise of Julia Augusta at the expense of her female sex: »For the judgements of women as a rule are weaker and do not apprehend any mental conception apart from what their senses perceive. But she excelled all her sex in this as in everything else, for the purity of the training she received supplementing nature and practice gave virility to her reasoning power, which gained such clearness of vision that it apprehended the things of mind better than the things of sense and held the latter to be shadows of the former.« (*Leg. ad Gaium* 319f = transl. Colson)

²¹ Cf. *Alston*, *Arms*.

²² *Nijf* emphasizes that »athletic excellence was a defining element of male identity among the elites of the Roman East« (*Athletics*, 284).

²³ This is the main thesis of *Gleason*, *Making Men*; cf. also *Gunderson*, *Staging Masculinity*; *Discovering the Body*; *Richlin*, *Gender*. A transition from the old heroic virtues of war and dominance towards the virtues of male leadership confined to the city-life seems to have taken place in the Greek cities under Roman rule (*Moxnes*, *Masculinity*, 266ff). Obviously under Roman rule Greek men did no longer have access to male identity as they had before. Dio Chrysostom recalls this difference in a speech to the Rhodians (*Or.* 31.161f): »For whereas they had many other ways in which to display their virtues – in assuming the leadership over the others, in lending succour to

the victims of injustice, in gaining allies, founding cities, winning wars – for you it is not possible to do any of these things. [162] But there is left for you, I think, the privilege of assuming the leadership over yourselves (*to heautôn proestanaî*), in administering your city, of honouring and supporting by your cheers a distinguished man in a manner unlike that of the majority, of deliberating in council, of sitting in judgement, of offering sacrifice to the gods, and of holding high festival – in all these matters it is possible for you to show yourselves better than the rest of the world.« Cf. also *Or.* 44.10-12. *Hobbs*, Plato argues extensively that Plato advocates for a »kinder« and »gentler« ideal of masculinity. According to her (pp. 193-198,239) Plato's *Hippias Minor* contrasts Achilles and Odysseus as models of masculinity. Seneca's play *Hercules Furens* is also interesting: Hercules and Orpheus appear as two models of masculinity. The first is the old and outdated model for rage, madness and violence, the second, the alternative, for arts and peace. *Alston*, *Arms*, 220f similarly concludes that the change from the Republic to the Empire also affected concepts of masculinity. While the Augustan circles tried to found their new image of the Roman *vir* in the past, the later elegists tried to produce an alternative.

²⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *EN* 1126a; *Probl* 879a-b (»Why do some men enjoy sexual intercourse when they play an active part and some when they do not?«); 880a (»Why are those who desire to submit to sexual intercourse greatly ashamed to admit it, whereas they are not ashamed to admit a desire for eating or drinking or any other similar thing«). The advocate Haterius says in Seneca's *Contr.* 4 pref. 10: »Loss of sexual virtue (*impudicitia*) is a crime in a free man, a necessity for a slave, and a duty (*officium*) for a freedman.«

²⁵ *Alston*, *Arms*, 207-209 establishes a connection between *libertas* and *potestas* in Roman society since the last two centuries B.C. *DuBois*, *Masculinities*, 321: »[V]irility was in antiquity associated not with the heterosexual dyad but rather with mastery.« *Späth*, *Männerfreundschaften*, 195: »Männlich ist der Römer, der uns in den *Annalen* entgegentritt, wenn er nicht auf Dauer und unabänderlich einer personifizierten Macht unterstellt ist; zwar schließt römische Männlichkeit keineswegs eine zeitweilige Unterordnung im – für das soziale Feld der römischen Aristokratie konstitutiven – Spiel um Macht aus, die momentane Überlegenheit eines andern aber muß als eine provisorische erkennbar sein und die Möglichkeit einer späteren Umkehrung der Abhängigkeitsverhältnisses beinhalten. Die Wahrnehmung einer dominierenden Position ist deshalb das wesentliche Merkmal von Männlichkeit, weil die Beziehungen der Männer untereinander als Relation zwischen je eigenständigen *patres familias* bestimmt ist, zwischen Vorstehern und Verkörperungen ihrer *domus*, das heißt der

Vorfahren und der ihrer Gewalt unterstellten Nachfahren und abhängigen Personen, die ebenso Objekte ihrer rechtlichen Gewalt sind wie der materielle Besitz.« Concerning sexuality cf. the summary in *Meyer-Ziffelhoffer*, Phallus, 213: »[D]ie sexuellen Beziehungen [werden] nicht als Geschlechterbeziehungen, sondern als Herrschaftsbeziehungen [...] objektiviert [...]. Man versteht sie als ein Verhältnis von Herrschaft und Unterwerfung, von Kraft und Schwäche, von Macht und Gehorsam, von Aktivität und Feminität, wobei hier Virilität ein Konzept von Männlichkeit ist, das persönliche Freiheit und Souveränität mit Herrschaft über andere verbindet.«

²⁶ *Anderson / Moore*, Matthew and Masculinity, 68f.

²⁷ *Liew*, Re-Mark-Able, 104f.

²⁸ *Anderson / Moore*, Matthew and Masculinity, 69.

²⁹ Cf. *Gardner*, Sexing.

³⁰ *Gardner*, Sexing, 147f summarizes: »[L]egal capacity and gender role in Roman society depended upon assigned sex at birth. Males were those who had what passed for male genitals (even if dysfunctional or later removed), and they had public and private rights, including *potestas*, which were denied to biological females. Sexual ambiguity was recognized only in the case of hermaphrodites and was resolved in a rough and ready way by assigning them the gender role of what appeared to be the prevailing sex.«

³¹ *Plutarch*, Roman Questions, 102: »A man should be four-square, perfect, like an odd number, while a woman should resemble a cube, loving the home, hard to shift.«

³² Cf. the word-studies by *Bassi*, Semantics and *McDonnell*, Roman Men.

³³ Cf. *Dench*, Austerity.

³⁴ Cf. for the following *Humpert*, Männlichkeit.

³⁵ *Humpert*, Männlichkeit, 8: »Schule der römischen Männlichkeit«.

³⁶ Cf. *Humpert*, Männlichkeit, 33-38; *Späth*, Männlichkeit, 290-306.

³⁷ Hippocratic tradition would emphasize the existence of both male and female seed, the one being stronger the other weaker. In the medical tradition there was a dispute concerning the female role in procreation, which in any case tended to downplay this aspect (*Harlow*, Name of the Father, 157-160; *Aspegren*, Male Woman, 16-19.34-36.54f). The role of the mother is reduced, thus, to a minimum. The following declaration of Apollo in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* may be considered as typical also for the Roman context: »Here is the truth, I tell you – see how right I am. / The woman you call the mother of the child / is not the parent, just a nurse to the seed, / the new-sown seed that grows and swells inside her. / The man is the source of life – the one who mounts. / She, like a stranger for a stranger, keeps / the shoot alive unless god hurts the roots.« (Aesch., *Eum.* 665-672; transl. Fagels, 1975, 260)

³⁸ Cf. *Elhstain*, Public Man, 19-54; *MacMullen*, Women; *Neyrey*, Jesus, 44-53. Cf., inter alia, Xenophon [428-354 BCE], *Oec.* 7.22; Aristotle [384-322 BCE], *Oec.* I 3.4 1343b30-1344; Philo [15 BCE-50 CE], *Spec.* 3.169 and Hierocles [117-138 CE], *On Duties* IV 28.21.

³⁹ Although literature on Paul is rather copious I have only come across a few articles on the subject: *Leutzsch*, Männlichkeit; *Clines*, Paul. Clines starts wondering why no-one has »found it [...] really interesting for the understanding of his thought [...] that Paul is not just a Jew, a Pharisee, a scholar, a thinker, a traveller, an author – but also a man.«

⁴⁰ Cf. the standard New Testament introductions.

⁴¹ Cf. *Larson*, Masculinity; *Harrill*, Invective.

⁴² Cf. Tacitus, Dial. 18.5; Plutarch, Cic. 18.1-4; Dio Cass. 46.18.4-6.

⁴³ *Larson*, Masculinity, 89 points to Seneca's *Controversiae* 3, pref 2-3 where the rhetoric of Cassius Severus is lauded as strong and impressive.

⁴⁴ The polemic topos of flattery is discussed in Marshall, *Enmity*, 281-325 as an important background for these passages.

⁴⁵ *Larson*, Masculinity, 92.

⁴⁶ Cf. Acts 15:20 (»abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication...; cf. 15:29; 21:25); Rom 2:22; 1Cor 5:11f; 6:9; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; Rev 2:14 (»so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication«); 21:8; 22:15. Wis 14:12 states quite clearly: »For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life.«

⁴⁷ As *Foxhall*, Pandora, 177 indicates, *moicheia* should better be translated as »sex with a woman in someone else's charge«.

⁴⁸ The word appears in the New Testament only here and in 1Tim 1:10 (in combination with »lawless and disobedient, godless and sinful, unholy and profane, those who kill their father or mother, murderers, fornicators, *arsenokoitai*, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching«).

⁴⁹ Cf. *Wright*, Homosexuals; *Petersen*, Arsenokotai.

⁵⁰ Thus the summary in *Martin*, Arsenokoitês and Malakos.

⁵¹ Cf. *Halperin*, Homosexuality, 15-53.

⁵² Kertbeny wrote a private letter to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs on 6th. May, 1868 including the first use of the words homosexual and heterosexual which later he used in his pamphlets. From 1869 to 1875 he lived in Berlin and in 1869 he wrote two pamphlets, which were published anonymously. These demanded freedom from penal sanctions for homosexual men in Prussia and the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation.

⁵³ Cf. *Martin*, Arsenokoitês and Malakos.

⁵⁴ The adjective is used in Mt 11:8 (// Lk 7:25) where Jesus asks: »What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.« There may be an implication here against unmanly men in royal palaces.

⁵⁵ *Martin*, Arsenokoitês and Malakos.

⁵⁶ Cf. texts in *Martin*, Arsenokoitês and Malakos.

⁵⁷ Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* (ed. S. Vogt, 1999).

⁵⁸ *Herter*, *Effeminatus*.

⁵⁹ It would be interesting to relate this categorical exclusion with the shocking saying of Jesus about the »eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven« (Mt 19:12).

⁶⁰ The fact that this passage is mainly discussed in the context of the problem »Paul and women« evidences a blind spot in the male-dominated field of New Testament exegesis. The text has a lot to say about public self-presentation of men!

⁶¹ The question whether *kephalê* in 11:3 should be translated as »origin« or »head« is hotly debated. Probably many interpreters hope that by making a case for »origin« they can get rid of any patriarchal implications. To be sure, linguistically »origin« is much more to the point. But ancient masculinity-discourse would connect origin to male activity. There is, thus, no possibility to free this passage from its patriarchal stance.

⁶² For a discussion of the interpretation presupposed here cf. *Gill*, *Head-Coverings*; *Murphy-O'Connor*, *Sex and Logic*; *Oster*, *Veils*; *Thompson*, *Hairstyles*.

⁶³ Pseudo-Phocylides, *Sentences* 212: »long hair is not fit for men« (*arsesin ouk epeoike koman*). Cf. further texts in *Murphy-O'Connor*, *Sex and Logic*, 485-487. Chrysostom interpreted this passage as a reference to long hair (*In Epistulam 1 ad Corintios hom.* 26.1 = PG 61, 213).

⁶⁴ The semantic field of shame and honour is pervasive through all the text, but cf. especially: »disgraces his / her head« (11:4f), »disgraceful« (11:6), »proper« (11:13), »nature« (11:14 here, as so often, identified with culture).

⁶⁵ *Leutzsch*, *Männlichkeit*, 607 labels Paul's position as »Differenzandrozentrismus«.

⁶⁶ The central terms are *exousia* and *eleutheria* both of which have links to Latin *libertas*. *1Cor 8:9*: »But take care that this liberty (*exousia*) of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.« *9:1*: »Am I not free (*eleutheros*)? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?« *9:4-6*: »Do we not have the right (*exousia*) to our food and drink? 5 Do we not have the right (*exousia*) to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right

(*exousia*) to refrain from working for a living?« 9:12b: »Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right (*exousia*), but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.« 9:18-19: »What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights (*exousia*) in the gospel. 19 For though I am free (*eleutheros*) with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them.«

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Pleasure*, 53-62 (= German: *Gebrauch*, 71-83).

⁶⁸ In the context of the present argumentation Paul speaks only about the male body.

⁶⁹ The combinations »marriage and no sex« or »sex and no marriage« are nonsensical for Paul.

⁷⁰ For the thesis that 7:1b goes back to the Corinthians themselves cf. Merklein, »Es ist gut«, 229-232. As an absolute affirmation this statement would stand in blatant contradiction to the second creation account (Gen 2:18: »It is *not* good for the man to be alone!«), which is used as a basic argument in 1Cor 6.

⁷¹ *Porneia* is Paul's main negative concept. It is a fairly wide term for sexual immorality of any kind: fornication and, more specifically, prostitution (cf. Malina, *Porneia*; Jensen, *Porneia*). It may well be the case that Paul and the Corinthians agreed on the fact that *porneia* is something, which should be avoided; but they may not have agreed on what to count as *porneia*. Paul, therefore, has to emphasize that tolerating a Christian man living with his step-mother is a form of tolerating *porneia*, an act of *porneia* which even according to pagan standards is intolerable (1Cor 5:1 ff).

⁷² In Plato's Protagoras Socrates launches a decisive argument against *akrasia* as a »word-deed inconsistency« (cf. Woolf, *Consistency*). The simple question is: »How could a man fail to restrain himself when he believes that what he desires is wrong?« For Socrates it is impossible to know what is good and act against this knowledge. Aristotle took up the problem up (NE 7.3) and tried to reconcile the Socratic denial of *akrasia* with the commonly held opinion that people act in ways they know to be bad, even when it is in their power to act otherwise (cf. Henry, *Pleasure*; on the logical structure of Aristotle's argument cf. Grgic, *Akratic's Knowledge*).

⁷³ On the philosophical problem of *akrasia* cf. Chappell, *Aristotle*; Gerson, *Akrasia*; Guckes, *Akrasia*; Joyce, *Akrasia*; Mele, *Irrationality; Autonomous Agents*; Stocker, *Conflicting Values*; Stroud / Tappolet, *Weakness of Will*.

⁷⁴ The language of mutuality dominates also the short section on divorce in 7:10-16.

⁷⁵ The intricacies of the whole argument in 1Cor 7 can best be seen by following the words »good« (*kalon*) and »better« (*kreittôn*):

- 1: The Corinthian proposal says: »It is good (*kalon*) for a man not to touch a

woman.«

- 8: Paul agrees that it is good (*kalon*) for unmarried and widows to stay as he himself.
- 9: But it is much better (*kreittôn*) to marry than to become the victim of the flames of passion.
- 26: Paul repeats that it is good (*kalon*) for the unmarried to stay as they are.
- 28a: But again, those who marry do not sin (cf. 7:36).
- 37: Whoever stays unmarried (even if being engaged), does well (*kalôs*).
- 38a: Whoever marries his fiancée, also does well (*kalôs*).
- 38b: But whoever refrains from marriage will do better (*kreittôn*).
- 40: In Paul's judgement the unmarried is »more blessed« (*makariôteros*).

⁷⁶ In his sharp polemic against radical Jewish Christians who operated in Galatia and in Philippi Paul can use this »topos« of circumcision as castration: »I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!« (Gal. 5:12: *apokoptô*) »Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!« (Phil. 3:2: *kata tomê*)

⁷⁷ Another negative aspect of circumcision was that in Greco-Roman society the tip of the penis (the so-called glans) was something very vulgar which should not be shown. This, basically, excluded Jewish youngsters from participating in sports events (where nakedness was compulsory), which, at the same time, left them out of an important avenue for a men's social progress.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hall, Epispasm; Dating.

⁷⁹ Leutzsch, Männlichkeit, 604f.

⁸⁰ The whole Christian message of crucified Messiah is utterly unmanly!

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