

Mother Jesus: The Contribution of Maternal Imagery to the Soteriology and
Christology of First Peter

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in Religion in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

First Peter uses the metaphor of new birth as a way to communicate what happens when someone becomes Christian. While I am not the first to suggest that in this extended new birth metaphor Christ is presented as the nascent Christian's mother, I aim in this dissertation to both renew the argument for this conclusion and to explore further how this metaphor impacts the soteriology and Christology of the letter. The chief methodology employed is to examine a broad range of references to mothers (both "real" and metaphorical) in texts popular around the time of First Peter.

The introduction orients the reader to the metaphor theory that undergirds the remainder of the dissertation, provides an overview of basic *Einleitungsfragen* concerning to First Peter, and summarizes the contributions of previous scholarship to this question. The first chapter examines two aspects of the text of First Peter. Firstly, it treats basic philological and intertextual questions concerning every verse that mentions new birth directly, or mentions something closely associated with birth, such as blood, seed, or milk, also situating these verses in their immediate literary context. Secondly, it considers the broader ecosystem of metaphors that co-exist in First Peter, especially soteriological and Christological metaphors.

In the second chapter, I turn to medical literature concerning human reproduction, from the Hippocratic corpus to Soranus. The third chapter treats Greco-Roman texts featuring mothers from outside the corpus of medical writings. The fourth chapter begins by repeating the study of the previous two chapters with Jewish texts. I then treat the use of parental metaphors in Paul, whose writings I take to have been a source for First Peter. Paul uses maternal imagery for apostolic work, and I show that Peter has a general tendency to take Paul's apostolic language and use it to describe Christ. Finally in chapter four, I read First Peter comparatively with other early Christian writing roughly contemporary with First Peter that uses birth imagery. The fifth chapter continues the strategy of comparative reading, turning to much later Christian texts that employ maternal imagery for Christ in more explicit and developed ways.

Starting with chapter two, in each chapter I explore how the material treated so far can enrich a reading of First Peter. In the synthetic conclusion, I draw these threads together, gathered under four headings. Firstly, the maternal metaphor presents Christ and the Christian as being in a close, intimate relationship, in which Christ plays both a protective and a disciplinary role. Secondly, recognizing the maternal metaphor helps to give a more nuanced account of what it means to say that Christians are brought to resemble Christ. Children were seen as resembling

their mothers, but various texts put different emphases on “nature versus nurture” in terms of how this resemblance is wrought. This allows readers to understand their resemblance to Christ as more or less inchoate. Thirdly, various ways in which motherhood was viewed as a form of suffering that led to honor or health allow the maternal metaphor to communicate how Christ passed through suffering to heavenly glory. Finally, the infantilization of the readers and promise of resemblance to Christ that are part of the new birth metaphor help make sense of Peter’s ethics.

Christology and soteriology in First Peter are ultimately at the service of the letter’s paraenetic aims. The maternal metaphor is but one thread in an expansive Christological / soteriological tapestry. Paying more attention to this thread, though, has surprisingly rich pay-off for interpreting the letter.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Carol Elizabeth Booth (née Row).
Just as surely as she knew suffering in her life, untimely cut short, may she know
eternal glory.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Abbreviations (of journals, books series, and reference works).....	xiii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
1. Metaphor.....	3
2. Introductory questions concerning First Peter	11
2.1 Date.....	11
2.2 Authorship.....	14
2.3 Addressees	18
3. Previous studies.....	21
4. Chapter outline.....	29
1. Initial Examination of First Peter	32
1.1 Analysis of Key Verses	32
1.1.1 1 Pet 1:2abc.....	35
1.1.2 1 Pet 1:3.....	41
1.1.3 1 Pet 1:14	45
1.1.4 1 Pet 1:18–19.....	47
1.1.5 1 Pet 1:22c–23	53
1.1.6 1 Pet 2:2–3	58
1.1.7 1 Pet 2:9b	65

1.1.8 Summary	67
1.2 The metaphorical ecosystem of First Peter	68
1.2.1 Christ, the cornerstone (2:4-8).....	69
1.2.2 Christ, whose wound heals (2:24c).....	73
1.2.3 Christ, the chief shepherd (2:25; 5:1-4).....	75
1.2.4 Christ, the pioneer (2:21).....	79
1.2.5 Diaspora as a controlling metaphor for First Peter	85
1.2.6 Integration and comparison of these images.....	88
2. Motherhood, according to the medics.....	90
2.1 The Hippocratic Corpus.....	91
2.1.1 Conception.....	93
2.1.2 Gestation	96
2.1.3 Birth	100
2.1.4 After birth	102
2.1.5 Reading First Peter with the Hippocratics	105
2.2 Aristotle.....	108
2.2.1 Conception.....	109
2.2.2 Gestation	115
2.2.3 Birth and care of the neonate	118
2.2.4 Reading First Peter with Aristotle	119
2.3 Soranus	121

2.3.1 Conception.....	122
2.3.2 Gestation and birth	123
2.3.3 Care of the neonate	125
2.3.4 Reading First Peter with Soranus	128
2.4 Galen.....	131
2.4.1 Conception.....	133
2.4.2 Gestation	136
2.4.3 Birth and care of the neonate	139
2.4.4 Reading First Peter with Galen	142
2.5 Conclusion	144
3. Greco-Roman motherhood discourse outside of medical literature	149
3.1 Classical Greek sources	150
3.1.1 Aeschylus, Eumenides	151
3.1.2 Males as mothers in Classical Greek metaphors.....	156
3.2 Some mothers from Roman Comedy	162
3.2.1 Cleareta from Plautus' Asinaria	164
3.2.2 Artemona from Plautus' Asinaria.....	169
3.2.3 Sostrata from Terence's Hecyra.....	173
3.2.4 Summary	175
3.3 Augustan reforms, propaganda, and opposition	177
3.3.1 Legal privileges attached to motherhood	178

3.3.2 Mothers in Augustan propaganda	184
3.4 Further case studies from the first and early second centuries	190
3.4.1 Seneca.....	191
3.4.2 Thetis from Statius' Achilleid.....	198
3.4.3 Three mothers from Pliny's Epistolae.....	202
3.4.4 Plutarch's Consolatio	205
3.4.5 Faustina the Younger in the Historia Augusta	208
3.5 Conclusion	210
4. Maternal imagery in Jewish and Christian texts.....	217
4.1 Pre-Pauline scriptural texts.....	217
4.1.1 Mothers from conception till birth	219
4.1.2 The roles of mothers after a child's birth	225
4.1.3 Mother Moses	231
4.1.4 Mother God	236
4.1.5 Summary	243
4.2 Paul.....	246
4.2.1 The most pervasive kinship metaphors in Paul's letters.....	246
4.2.2 Parent Paul.....	253
4.2.3 From Paul to Peter; from apostle to Christ	264
4.3 Texts contemporary to First Peter.....	270
4.3.1 Titus	270

4.3.2 James	273
4.3.3 Odes of Solomon	277
4.3.4 John	282
4.3.5 Concluding remarks	290
5. Maternal imagery in later Christian texts	291
5.1 Fourth century Antiochene baptismal homilies	292
5.1.1 Description of the homilies	295
5.1.2 Theodore and Chrysostom in dialogue with Peter.....	302
5.2 Julian of Norwich.....	307
5.2.1 Description of Julian of Norwich’s use of maternal language for Christ .	309
5.2.2 Julian in dialogue with Peter	318
Conclusion	327
1. The mapping	329
2. Entailments	336
2.1 The quality of the relationship between Christ and Christians	337
2.2 Resemblance	341
2.3 Suffering and glory.....	344
2.4 Ethics	347
3. Implications for future work on First Peter	350
4. A pastoral postlude	351
Bibliography	354

List of Abbreviations (of journals, books series, and reference works)

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AcT</i>	<i>Acta Theologica</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
ECL	Early Christianity and its Literature
EJL	Early Judaism and its Literature
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>

HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDS</i>	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, revised and augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTG	New Testament Guides
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology

OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
SB	Sources bibliques
SP	Sacra Pagina
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>SPhilo</i>	<i>Studia Philonica</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>

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Adam Booth, C.S.C.

January 24th 2021

Sunday of the Word of God (Third of Ordinary Time)

Introduction

In First Peter, becoming a Christian is described in terms of being born anew. In recent years, several scholars have argued that in this extended new birth metaphor Christ is presented as the nascent Christian's mother.¹ In this dissertation, I seek to both renew this argument and explore further what role this presentation plays in the Christology and soteriology of the letter. By giving a thicker account of how mothers (both "real" and metaphorical) were invoked in texts popular around the time of the composition of First Peter, we will be able to appreciate more keenly the original impact of such a metaphor.

For instance, we will see pregnancy and birth portrayed as a dangerous time of suffering that led to social honor and physical health. This provides a way for the letter's audience to conceptualize Christ's journey through suffering to glory, a journey they hope will be theirs too. We will see mother-child relationships valorized when they are close and affectionate, with mothers still serving as sometimes strict

¹ Troy W. Martin, "Christians as Babies: Metaphorical Reality in 1 Peter," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 77 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 99–112; Troy W. Martin, "Tasting the Eucharistic Lord as Usable (1 Peter 2:3)," *CBQ* 78 (2016): 515–25; Thomas A. Bennett, *Labor of God: The Agony of the Cross as Birth of the Church* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017); Alicia D. Myers, *Blessed among Women? Mothers and Motherhood in the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

disciplinarians, who also acted sacrificially to protect their offspring. This allows the audience to understand something novel, their newfound relationships with Christ, in terms of something familiar, valorized mother-child relationships. We will also examine how various authors understood the claim that children resembled their mothers. Beliefs about family resemblance and how it is forged and maintained again provide a way for the audience to understand how they may grow in likeness to Christ, what God and Christ have done to begin this transformation, how they are still active, and what kind of response on their part is appropriate.

In addition, I analyze Paul's use of maternal metaphors for apostolic activity and argue that the Petrine use of Christological metaphor is explicable as an extension of this Pauline use. Finally, I read First Peter comparatively with select contemporary and later Christians texts that also use maternal imagery for Christ or God, in order to more clearly isolate what the distinctive contributions of this particular epistle are.

In this introduction, I provide the reader with an introduction to First Peter, discuss the previous work on maternal imagery in the letter, and give a brief outline of the chapters to follow. First, though, I introduce the theoretical account of metaphor that will undergird the argumentation to follow.

1. Metaphor

In this introduction, I seek to give neither a history of the study of metaphor nor an exhaustive treatment, justification, or critique of the state of the art of metaphor theory.² Rather, I introduce some terminology and discuss some insights from the metaphor theorists which will prove helpful in discussing the metaphors in First Peter. With George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, I understand metaphor primarily as something conceptual: “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.”³ The author of First Peter⁴ understands becoming Christian in terms of being born. “Being born” is referred to as the “source domain;” “becoming Christian,” the “target domain.” A metaphor can be described in terms of what

² For a good summary of the history, see Bonnie Howe, *Because You Bear This Name: Conceptual Metaphor and the Moral Meaning of 1 Peter*, BibInt 81 (Boston: Brill, 2006), 13–54. For supplements to Howe’s study concentrating on how metaphor was theorized in the first century, see Raymond F. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 5–10; Kar Yong Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), 14–17. A good summary of 20th Century metaphor theorists is R. Melvin McMillen, “Metaphor and First Peter: The Essential Role of the Minds of the Father-God’s Children in Spiritual Conflict with a Special Focus on 1:13” (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2011), 33–44. For bibliography of other recent studies on metaphor see Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah*, JSOTSup 398 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 3nn7–9; McMillen, “Metaphor and 1 Peter,” 2–3nn4–5.

³ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

⁴ I use the name “Peter” to refer to the author of First Peter, even though I regard the letter as pseudonymous. See the section below on authorship for an argument for pseudonymity.

“slots” in the source domain are mapped to what “slots” in the target domain, and what properties and relations of the source domain slots are preserved by the mapping. Such mappings are commonly represented by arrows. In this case, one would write: “Becoming Christian” ← “Being born.”⁵

Lakoff and his collaborators emphasize that metaphors are not mere textual ornaments or emotive catalysts, but are good to think with.⁶ This utility of metaphors for intellectual work is well illustrated by Janet Soskice’s study of how scientists use such cognitive metaphors (which she called “models”) as a way to think about unfamiliar phenomena in terms of familiar phenomena, such as the use of flowing water as a model for electricity, illustrated by the term “current.”⁷

Lakoff and his collaborators use the term “entailment” for the process by which someone transfers inferential structures from the source domain to the target domain. For instance, in joint work with Paul Turner, Lakoff gives the example of

⁵ For discussion of notation, see Howe, *Because You Bear This Name*, 70.

⁶ “Our ordinary conceptual thinking ... is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 3. For further argument against an “emotivist” account of metaphor, see Janet M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 26–31. Of course, metaphors do also provide ornament to text and can engage a reader deeply on an affective level. For comments from classical rhetoricians on the place of metaphor in an argument from *pathos*, see Collins, *Power of Images*, 6.

⁷ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 98–103.

describing a course of action as a “dead end.”⁸ One may then draw the entailment that one should perform whatever the metaphorical equivalent is in the target domain of a U-turn. Envisioning what a metaphorical U-turn is in a novel situation could potentially be an imaginative and creative process. As Soskice puts it, “A good metaphor may ... be ... the birth of a new understanding.”⁹ Entailment makes metaphor very useful for trying to articulate a new understanding of something, or for trying to talk about a radically new reality, as Cicero was well aware: “When something that can scarcely be conveyed by a proper term is expressed metaphorically, the meaning we desire to convey is made clear.”¹⁰

A text may describe one subject with several different metaphors. This is the case with the depiction of Christ in First Peter. Sarah Dille discusses this phenomenon in studying the appearance of both “birthing woman” and “warrior” as metaphors for God in Isa 54:1–8. She explains that “by juxtaposing these two inconsistent metaphors, the author *highlights* the entailments that they share and

⁸ George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 64.

⁹ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 57–58.

¹⁰ *De orat.*, 3.1.5.7, translation adapted from Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity*, 17. “A good metaphor may... be... the birth of a new understanding,” Soskice, *Metaphor*, 57–58. “New metaphors have the power to create new reality,” Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 145. “Metaphor’s ability to name the unnamed makes metaphor particularly helpful for Paul as he writes about the Transcendent God.” Collins, *Power of Images*, 9.

downplays aspects of the metaphors that are not shared.”¹¹ While it is not standard in the literature, I use the term “cubist metaphor” for the technique of using such series of metaphors to present diverse views of one object in a single frame.¹² For Sallie McFague, a cubist collection of metaphors is essential for faithful Christian discourse about God, as each such metaphor can be at best “partial but illuminating.”¹³

If metaphors are primarily conceptual realities, this raises the question of what a reader is to do when she encounters something that literary critics would normally term a metaphor in a text.¹⁴ In Lakoff’s terminology, what she has

¹¹ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 16. Emphasis original. See also, *ibid.*, 67–69. Metaphors always highlight some aspects of the target, downplay certain others and (sometimes) hide the rest. For formal definitions of the preceding three (reasonably self-explanatory) verbs, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 140–41.

¹² This use of the term was introduced to me by Nathan Mitchell while lecturing in his class “Liturgy and Popular Devotion” (University of Notre Dame, Spring 2011). Alain Gignac has a somewhat parallel use in that he uses the term “cubist” to describe a series of accounts of God’s justice which reveal serially different facets of the inexpressible mystery of God’s justice. Alain Gignac, “The Enunciative Device of Romans 1:18–4:25: A Succession of Discourses Attempting to Express the Multiple Dimensions of God’s Justice,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 481–502.

¹³ Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for a Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 34. Compare also these comments from Shalom Holtz: “Metaphorical language is empowering, especially in the domain of relationships between humans and the divine sphere. ... Through metaphor, the powerfully unfamiliar became something to which humans can relate.” Shalom E. Holtz, *Praying Legally*, BJS 364 (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2019), 128–29.

¹⁴ The following applies as much to the traditional literary category of simile as to that of metaphor. As Soskice puts it, “metaphor and simile, while textually different,

encountered is not a metaphor but rather the textual residue of a metaphor that resides within the author's mind. If what is encountered is the result of highly conventional metaphor (for instance, "things are looking up," meaning getting better, not orienting their eyes to the heavens), she would likely have been socialized into sharing this conceptual metaphor (good ← up) and thereby readily comprehend the text. For a more novel textual metaphor, though, the reader embarks on creative journey of her own, constructing a conceptual metaphor that seeks to make sense of the text. As Dredre Gentner and her collaborators analyze such reading, it is an inductive process, characterized by guessing and testing the guesses.¹⁵ Readers intuitively select a target domain to which to map the explicitly referenced elements of the source domain, ask what properties of the mapped slots transfer, ask if elements of the source domain not explicitly referenced are important, and start generating entailments. As they do this, they may confirm or reject and revise their initial guesses.

are functionally the same." Soskice, *Metaphor*, 59. Collins shows that Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian also recognized a functional equivalence between metaphors and similes. Collins, *Power of Images*, 7–8.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Brian Bowdle and Dredre Gentner, "The Career of Metaphor," *Psychological Review* 112 (2005): 193–216. See also the summary in McMillen, "Metaphor and 1 Peter," 66–70.

It may be helpful to illustrate the preceding theory with a brief worked example. When readers encounter Luke 13:32, they notice that Jesus tells some Pharisees to go and talk to a fox. A skilled reader will recognize that Jesus does not in fact want anybody to engage in colloquies with an actual member of the *vulpes* genus. Rather, this text arises from a metaphor with which the author is working. Reconstructing the basic mapping is straightforward once this is recognized, as the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees makes most sense if “that fox” is identified with “Herod,” referred to in the previous verse.

The reader must then determine which properties of foxes are highlighted by this metaphor. Foxes are quadrupeds, but a reader with sufficient knowledge of the target domain knows that Herod is not, so this property of the source domain is not mapped by the metaphor. Foxes are hairy. The reader is unlikely to know how hirsute Herod may have been, but a skilled reader recognizes that this is irrelevant to the narrative as a whole, and so does not map this source domain property either.¹⁶ The quadruped property is hidden, and the hairiness property is downplayed.

What then is highlighted in this metaphor? The most obvious candidate is that foxes are predators, as the Pharisees state in verse 31 that Herod wants to kill Jesus. While the word “prey” does not appear in the text, the reader can also

¹⁶ For a theoretical analysis of how readers intuitively reject irrelevant readings of open-ended parts of a text, see H. Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 22–40.

determine that the “prey” slot of the source domain should be mapped to Jesus. However, the metaphor has the power to do more than simply restate this intention of Herod’s. Foxes are also cunning and sly. Mikael Parsons has done the careful historical work needed to verify that foxes were viewed in this way in a late first-century Mediterranean context.¹⁷ In the natural world, potential prey should take measures to avoid foxes. After reading verse 32, a reader might well accept as a sensible entailment that Jesus should avoid Herod. However, after reading more of Jesus’ speech in this section, the reader realizes that Jesus refuses to shirk divine necessity in order to do this. The text seems to suggest an entailment only to see the speaker refuse it.

This example illustrates in miniature how I investigate the new birth metaphor that lies behind some of the text of First Peter. Once a reader determines that the reference to “new birth” in 1:3 is not literal, she begins the task of constructing a mapping to attempt to understand these words as arising from a metaphor. There is a fact of the matter about what was in Peter’s head when he wrote the epistle, but this is inaccessible to us. What we have is the text. There is rarely only a singular reading of a classic text. This is not to say that all readings of a text are equally good. A reading of Luke 13 that concludes that Jesus considered

¹⁷ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts: The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 67–82.

Herod a quadruped is a bad reading. It was culturally available to readers who knew what foxes looked like, but a skillful reader would reject it.

How, then, might the earliest skillful readers of First Peter have understood the metaphor in its literary context? To answer this question requires that our starting point for properties of birth source domain be the author and initial audience's cultural encyclopedia of beliefs about birth and child-rearing. These are explored in chapters 2, 3, and 4, which treat texts popular in the late first century (CE). The mapping and potential implicatures must be tested against the broader movement of the epistle, including the cubist series of textual metaphors in which Jesus is described as (variously) God's son (1:3), a lamb (1:19), a stone (2:4) and a shepherd (5:4). In the following chapters, we will observe many common beliefs about birth and child-rearing in somewhat disparate texts, in addition to points of contestation (e.g., the relative importance of nature over nurture). We are on firmer ground when resting upon a more common belief. When it comes to the contested, the conclusion must be conditional: if a reader believed *X*, reading *Y* would be available to her. This is a somewhat imprecise sociology of knowledge, but it avoids overcommitting oneself to a necessarily speculative reconstruction of the situation of the author or initial audience. To explain why the late first century is the relevant context, we must turn to an introduction to First Peter.

2. Introductory questions concerning First Peter

I regard First Peter as a late first century pseudonymous letter, likely sent from Rome to the East as a circular letter, envisioning broad circulation. Situating the letter in this way places bounds on what literature will be relevant to survey in later chapters. In this section, I briefly justify these statements and refer the reader to further discussion elsewhere.

2.1 Date

If the letter were actually to have been written by Peter the apostle, it must have been written before his death in the mid-sixties.¹⁸ However, as we will see below, there are many reasons to doubt both orthonymity¹⁹ and a date so early. For a *terminus ad quem*, we are on firmer footing with the following data. Irenaeus clearly

¹⁸ See Marcus Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter*, WUNT 262 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 90–91, 114–132. According to Karen Jobes, the nineteenth century exegete W.M. Ramsay was the only scholar to argue for a late first century date and Petrine authorship, by rejecting the “virtual unanimity that the apostle Peter died in Rome in the mid-60s during the reign of Emperor Nero.” Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 8n1. See also Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 10; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st English ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 14.

¹⁹ A work is orthonymous if the author accurately identifies himself or herself within the text.

cites First Peter around 190 CE (*Adv. Haer.* 4.9.2). Many scholars also see references or allusions to First Peter in the first half of the second century.²⁰ First Clement, which is usually dated to 95 CE, has numerous striking affinities with First Peter.²¹ A letter of Pliny's, which may be dated to 111–112 CE, reports that some Christians in Pontus had renounced their faith around 20 years earlier.²² Given that Pontus is one of the regions to which the letter is addressed, it would be surprising for there to be no sign of this in First Peter if the letter's author knew of such an event. Even allowing for some imprecision in Pliny's figure of 20 years, and for a reasonable time lag between the event occurring and the author of First Peter learning of it, this makes it very unlikely that the letter dates from much later than 95 CE. Hence, the

²⁰ For instance, in Papias, Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, and Second Peter. See Edward G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1947), 37; John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 135, 140–41, 143–4; Martin Vahrenhorst, *Der erste Brief des Petrus*, THKNT 19, 1. Auflage. ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2015), 47–50.

²¹ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 37; Davids, *1 Peter*, 9; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 135, 138–39.

²² “Alii ab indice nominati esse se Christianos dixerunt et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem sed desisse, quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos, non nemo etiam ante viginti” (*Ep.* 10.96). For the use of this text in dating First Peter, see Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 5; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: a Commentary on First Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 48; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 135; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 37–41. Its weight shouldn't be overstated, however. Pliny suggests that the numbers who defected twenty years were small compared with the more recent defections. Further, his only evidence is that the alleged defectors, upon being accused of being Christian, claim to have defected such a long time ago. Exaggeration, or flat out lying, on the part of the accused is a real possibility.

striking correspondences between First Clement and First Peter are likely evidence of the former's familiarity with the latter.

The only entirely certain *terminus a quo* is the death of Jesus around 30 CE. There are probable *termini*, though, that allow more precision in dating. As will be discussed further in chapter 4, First Peter shows dependence on Pauline writings, especially Romans.²³ The address to provinces which do not seem to have been included in the Pauline mission point to a stage in the Eastern expansion of Christianity in the fifties at the earliest, and more likely in the sixties or later.²⁴ The likely reference to Rome as "Babylon" (5:13) makes most sense after Rome's destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.²⁵ John Elliott has studied the geographical nomenclature in the list of addressees (1:1), and concludes that the names and their ordering are most explicable if the letter postdates Vespasian's reorganization of provinces in 72 CE.²⁶ Finally, Troy Martin has studied the distinctive reference to ἐμπλοκὴ τριχῶν (braiding of hairs; 3:3) and has provided good

²³ See David G. Horrell, "The Product of a Petrine Circle? A Reassessment of the Origin and Character of 1 Peter," *JSNT* 24 (2002): 29–60.

²⁴ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 5–6; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 48; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 137; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 10. Though, it is not impossible that the author is fictively imagining a larger audience than actually exists.

²⁵ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 47; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 137.

²⁶ John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1981), 60–61, 91n8.

evidence to link this to the *orbis comarum* that numismatic evidence suggests did not become popular until 79 CE.²⁷

Taken together, these data suggest a date in the eighties (or late seventies or early nineties) is most likely for First Peter. Other types of data adduced are less probative and do not tend to shift the needle too much in any regards. Greater precision than this is not needed for the current study.

2.2 Authorship

The preceding conclusion on the letter's date excludes authorship by Peter, the historical disciple of Jesus.²⁸ We can have greater confidence in such a conclusion if we can find positive reasons why someone would have created such a pseudonymous letter.²⁹ It might seem that, as Francis Beare puts it, "if the name

²⁷ Troy W. Martin, "Dating First Peter to a Hairdo (1Pet 3:3)," *Early Christianity* 9, no. 3 (2018): 298–318.

²⁸ A recent serious defense of orthonymity can be found in Jobes, *1 Peter*. The greatest strength of Jobes's argument is that she shows that the quality of the Greek of First Peter does not rule out orthonymity. Karl Schmidt contrasts First Peter with Second Peter in this regard, arguing that First Peter has a linguistic verisimilitude that Second Peter lacks. Karl M. Schmidt, "Die Stimme des Apostels erheben. Pragmatische Leistungen der Autorfiktion in den Petrusbriefen," in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen*, eds. Jörg Frey, et al., WUNT 246 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 625–45.

²⁹ Jobes, rightly, asks this question, which is often ignored, without seeing any of the answers I suggest below. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 11–12.

'Peter' did not stand at the head of the Epistle, it would never have occurred to anyone to suggest him as the author."³⁰

Certainly, the "identifying the author as Peter ... presents this author as someone whom the recipients can confidently trust."³¹ But why not use the name Paul or remain anonymous (as proved entirely successful for Mark, Hebrews, etc.)? David Horrell gives two reasons why Paul's name may have proved inappropriate: Acts 16:7 reports that the "Spirit of Jesus" prevented Paul from entering Bithynia, and 2 Tim 1:15 claims that everyone in Asia had deserted Paul.³² Whatever the historical authenticity of these claims, they may still have been widely believed by Christians in the late first century, thereby rendering Paul's name inapposite for a letter addressed to these two provinces.

More positively, two elements of Peter's life may have particularly recommended him, and these two elements may tell us important things about the author and his aims. Firstly, Martin views the list of provinces to which the letter is

³⁰ Francis W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 44.

³¹ Troy W. Martin, "The Rehabilitation of a Rhetorical Step-Child: First Peter and Classical Rhetorical Criticism," in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, eds. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin, LNTS 364 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 41–74, 63. Martin also points out that the identification of Peter in 1:1 as "apostle of Jesus Christ" attracts to Peter the trustworthiness of Jesus himself.

³² Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 53. Paul Achtemeier concurs in judging the letter to have originated in Rome, even though he rejects literary dependence on Paul's letter to the Romans. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 63–64.

addressed (1:1) as completing the list of areas addressed by the apostolic letter in Acts 15. First Peter can then be seen as extending the Petrine apostolic authorization that Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia had already received. The name, Peter, then provides “clear apostolic confirmation for the believers in the rest of Asia Minor [i.e., those areas not covered by the Acts 15 letter] amid their persecution and suffering.”³³

Secondly, Peter ended his life in Rome. The letter highlights this location as its putative origin (5:13), and there are reasons to suppose this may be genuine and not fictitious: the letter was known by the Roman elder Clement within a generation of its writing and evidences more reliance on Paul’s letter to the Romans than on any other early Christian writing.³⁴ These data together suggest that the author may have taken Peter as the iconic spokesman for the Roman church in particular and understood that community as having a responsibility to help form the church in the East.³⁵

³³ Troy W. Martin, "Peter and the Expansion of Early Christianity in the Letters of Acts (15:23–29)," in *Delightful Acts: New Essays on Canonical And Non-canonical Acts*, eds. Harold W. Attridge, et al., WUNT 391 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 87–100, 100.

³⁴ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 48.

³⁵ Horrell also points out that the church at Rome was known for sending missives to other churches, as referenced in Ign. *Rom.* 3.1, and exemplified by First Clement. Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 51. For an understanding of First Peter as a moment in the construction of an identity for Peter as “apostle for the whole church,” see PHEME PERKINS, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 120–22. Schmidt argues that the letter should be taken as *Fiktion* (pious homage) as opposed to (deceptive) *Täuschung*, as

Finally, Peter acquired a reputation for attempting reconciliation between various communities. The best evidence that this was true of Peter comes from Gal 2:11–13, in which Paul criticizes him for doing so poorly, acting as a hypocrite. John Meier reconstructed a history of the church in Antioch according to which Peter played a moderating role between adherents of “I belong to Paul” and “I belong to James” movements.³⁶ The letter also seems to be attempting a form of reconciliation. Horrell argues that First Peter “reflects both Jewish-Christian (Jerusalem) and Pauline traditions,” resulting in a “Roman Christian synthesis.”³⁷ Silvanus and Mark, the two named figures in the letter apart from Peter, are connected with both Peter and Paul.³⁸ Another reason for selecting Peter’s name for this epistle, then, may be

he sees the ascription of the term *μαρτύς* to Peter (5:1) as a reference to his death. Schmidt, "Die Stimme."

³⁶ Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist, 1983). For critique, see David C. Sim, "Reconstructing the Social and Religious Milieu of Matthew: Methods, Sources, and Possible Results," in *Matthew, James, and the Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Setting*, eds. Jurgen K. Zangenberg and Hubertus W.M. van de Sandt (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 13–32.

³⁷ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 50. Goppelt also judges that the letter “continuously appropriates very diverse traditions.” Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 24. See also Ceslas Spicq, O.P., *Les Épitres de Saint Pierre*, SB (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1966), 15–17. Spicq here coins the term “Épître de la Tradition” for First Peter. Joel Green also sees Peter as a “mediator among early Christian theologies.” Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 233.

³⁸ Silvanus was a leader in the Jerusalem church who was sent to go with Paul and carry a letter, according to Acts 15:22, and he later served as a co-worker of

that the author wished to draw a parallel between his integration of different strands of Christian tradition and Peter's ministry of reconciliation, moderating and bridge-building. The letter may also form part of a program to portray Peter and Paul as harmonious co-workers.³⁹

Hence, I regard the author as a member of a Christian Church in Rome. Quite possibly, he held some kind of leadership role, perhaps as an elder (a role assigned to Peter in 5:1). No further biographical information can be reconstructed concerning this author. For convenience's sake, from here on, I refer to him as "Peter."

2.3 Addressees

The above analysis has suggested that while the letter's claim to Petrine authorship is likely fictive, its Roman origin may well be genuine. Likewise, most commentators conclude that the locations in the address in 1:1 are to be taken as the

Paul's (Acts 15–18; 2 Cor 18:5; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Acts 12:12 reports that Peter went to Mark's mother's house after an escape from prison, and while Acts 15 reports a falling out between Paul and Mark, a close connection is reflected in Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 24.

³⁹ Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 16.

actual originally intended destinations of the letter.⁴⁰ It is unclear how much Peter actually knows about the situation of the churches in that region.⁴¹

The internal evidence suggests that Peter was aiming to reach a broad audience, consistent with Pliny's later report that these churches drew from "every age, every class, and both sexes."⁴² For instance, 2:18 assumes the presence of household slaves (οἰκέται).⁴³ Horrell points out that the use of the term οἰκέται "might suggest an urban context, as opposed to large gangs of slaves working on rural estates," but "[concedes] that the letter really gives us no strong indications as to the urban versus rural location of its readers."⁴⁴ The presence of married people is presupposed by 3:1–7, including wives with non-Christian husbands, and 3:3 assumes that some of them are wealthy.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 84; Green, *1 Peter*, 14; David G. Horrell, *1 Peter*, NTG (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 45.

⁴¹ This caution is also offered in David G. Horrell, *Becoming Christian: Essays on 1 Peter and the Making of Christian Identity*, Early Christianity in Context 394 (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 103.

⁴² Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.

⁴³ For an argument that οἰκέται should be understood as a vocative, see Anneli Aejmelaesus, "Pauline Heritage in 1 Peter: A Study of Literary Dependence in 1 Peter 2:13–25," in *The Early Reception of Paul*, ed. Kenneth Liljeström, Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 99 (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 125–47, 133. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 513–16; Green, *1 Peter*, 76n35.

⁴⁴ Horrell, *1 Peter*, 50. For an argument for a more rural setting, see Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 59–65.

⁴⁵ See discussion in Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 126–27. He cautions against assuming that this verse means the very wealthy elite are in view.

A more complicated question is whether the audience is presented as Jewish, Gentile or a mix of both. There certainly were Jews in Roman Anatolia.⁴⁶ The best argument that the intended audience is predominantly of Gentile extraction comes from the repeated references to their former lives: their previous lives were characterized by ignorance (1:14) and futile conduct inherited from their ancestors (1:18), two qualities said to characterize Gentile life in Eph 4:17–18; there was a time when they were “no people” (2:10); they have spent enough time doing what Gentiles like to do (4:3).⁴⁷

There are some data, though, that at first sight suggest a Jewish audience: outsiders to the community are referred to as “Gentiles” (2:12); diaspora is a Jewish term; the letter includes the frequent and wide-ranging citation of and allusion to Jewish scripture.⁴⁸ However, the latter point is consistent with an assumed audience of Gentile Christians who have developed good knowledge of scriptural traditions.⁴⁹ The letter is comprehensible to people who don’t spot the allusions. The authoring elder’s use of the Jewish geo-ethnic term “diaspora,” the attribution to the addressees of other terminology associated with Israel’s election (e.g. 2:9) and referring to

⁴⁶ Horrell cites as evidence Philo, *Legat.* 33 §245. *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁷ Green, *1 Peter*, 5; Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 120–21.

⁴⁸ Jobes has suggested that at least some of the addressees may be Jews who had been expelled from Rome under Claudius. While there is certainly nothing to exclude this possibility, its explanatory power relies on Jobes’s early dating for First Peter, which I reject. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 32–33.

⁴⁹ Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 30.

outsiders as “Gentiles” can be explained as resulting from the cognitive metaphor “Christians ← Diaspora Israelites.” This also accounts for the claim that the addressees are “aliens and sojourners” (παροίκοι και παρεπιδήμιοι, 2:11; cp. 1:1, 17). The importance of this metaphor to the letter will be treated in chapter one.⁵⁰ None of this excludes the possibility of the presence of some Jewish Christians in these communities, but it does seem that the letter is principally addressed to Christians of Gentile origin.⁵¹

3. Previous studies

To understand the blood and milk images in First Peter as disclosing a maternal Christology requires studying them in terms of ancient maternal physiology. Apparently, the first modern scholar to suggest engaging in this kind of study was Edward Englebrecht in a 1997 talk at the annual meeting of the Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature.⁵² Troy Martin mentioned Englebrecht’s

⁵⁰ See further Troy W. Martin, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter*, SBLDS 131 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Shively T. J. Smith, *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and 1 Peter's Invention of God's Household* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).

⁵¹ Concurring in this conclusion, Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 13; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 50–51; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 89; Green, *1 Peter*, 5; Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 122.

⁵² Edward Englebrecht, "God's Milk: An Orthodox Confession of the Euchairst" (paper presented at Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature, Wheaton College, Naperville, IL, 1997). See discussion in Martin, "Tasting," 517n10.

talk to Philip Tite who pursued this idea, leading to the publication of an article in 2009.⁵³ Hence, my survey of the history of scholarship on this question will begin with Tite, as he was the first to contribute in print to this line of inquiry. In this section, I review a series of works which take seriously the maternal dimension of the imagery in 1 Pet 2:1–3, whether the authors regarded this as maternal Christology or maternal theology proper. This is not the place to summarize all of these scholars' arguments, but to comment briefly on what sources they view as relevant background and what conclusions they reach.

Tite notes that 1 Pet 2:1–3 had mainly been studied against such backgrounds as the *Odes*, hymns from Qumran, and Greco-Roman mystery religions. He proposes instead studying the passage in light of “Roman practices and ideological beliefs regarding [the importance of] milk, wet nurses and the ideal mother for the moral development of the infant.”⁵⁴ Tite identifies three main properties of nursing as candidates for mapping by this metaphor: that it can occasion an intimate relationship; that it leads to character formation, with children absorbing the moral qualities of their mothers and nurses; that it is wearisome.⁵⁵ He considers the moral

⁵³ Philip L. Tite, "Nurslings, Milk and Moral Development in the Greco-Roman Context: A Reappraisal of the Paraenetic Utilization of Metaphor in 1 Peter 2.1–3," *JSNT* 31 (2009): 371–400. For Martin's role as tradent, see Martin, "Christians as Babies," 107n8.

⁵⁴ Tite, "Nurslings," 373.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 378–84.

transfer property the one most highlighted, linking this to Martin's work on paraenesis in First Peter.⁵⁶ Tite's study of the source domain is helpful, and I will return to many of his sources, mainly in chapter two. I find myself less convinced, though, by the mapping he constructs from this source domain to the target.

Tite remarks that scholars have been surprisingly silent about the fact that "the Petrine portrayal does not mention a 'mother,' but rather places the metaphor of nursing onto a 'father' figure."⁵⁷ He claims the image "places the divine source of milk into the role of the ideal mother... [conflating] maternal and paternal roles,"⁵⁸ and that "the Petrine author's use of maternal images for a male deity is very similar to the image in *Odes of Solomon* 8.13–14, where God is also presented as a mother."⁵⁹ It is God "the Father" whom Tite took to be the one lactating, not Christ.

Martin made his own assay at studying the imagery of 1 Pet 2:1–3, first in a chapter of an edited volume⁶⁰ and later in a journal article.⁶¹ These works argue for a maternal Christology and a Eucharistic reading of the passage, with ethical implications.⁶² This reading is justified by examining the treatments of embryology

⁵⁶ Ibid., 395. Tite refers here to Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 161–88.

⁵⁷ Tite, "Nurslings," 374.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 391.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 391n21.

⁶⁰ Martin, "Christians as Babies."

⁶¹ Martin, "Tasting."

⁶² "The letter exhorts them to desire the real blood of Christ in the Eucharist and to allow the word of God to shape them." Martin, "Christians as Babies," 112.

and neonatal nutrition to be found in Aristotle, some Hippocratic works, Soranus, and Galen. After having found in Aristotle the principle that the father's seed shapes the raw matter of blood provided by the mother,⁶³ Martin identifies "the word of God as the (male) active principle" and concludes that "the blood of Christ is thus the material source of the new begetting of these recipients."⁶⁴ Positioning Christ as the one who provides the material source for infant development figures him as mother and nurse. Martin argues that the milk is called λογικόν as it is logical for neonates to desire it, and ἄδολον (unadulterated, pure) to distinguish it from colostrum.⁶⁵

The common view that milk is concocted from blood led Martin to conclude that "milk" is essentially a way of saying "blood of Christ" (in the Eucharistic sense) in a way that fits the neonatal (rather than fetal) imagery of 2:1–3.⁶⁶ In his later article, he provided further justification for this Eucharistic reading by showing that

⁶³ Ibid., 108. (Citing *Gen. an.*, 2.4 [739b]).

⁶⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 109. For an argument that what the addressees had metaphorically "tasted" was colostrum, see Fika J. van Rensburg, "The referent of *Egeusasthe* (You Have Tasted) in 1 Peter 2:3," *AcT2* (2009): 103–119. Martin engages this article in Troy W. Martin, *Theology and Practice in Early Christianity: Essays New and Old with Updated Reception Histories*, WUNT 442 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 263–66.

⁶⁶ Martin, "Christians as Babies."

this was a common pre-modern reading of this passage, and that Psa 33:9 (cited in this passage) was also often interpreted eucharistically.⁶⁷

Alicia Myers has published two separate contributions to the conversation about maternal imagery in First Peter. In the first of these, a chapter in an edited volume, she, like Tite, understands the identity of the one lactating to be God the Father, with Christ only figured as elder brother.⁶⁸ She sees this as part of a ‘cubist’ redefinition of the gendering of God:

The Father is not... like a male ‘nurse’ (*nutritor* or *nutricus*) in a household who provides care but no milk. He is, instead, a *Pater Nutrix*; an identity that cannot help but combine images [of] masculinity and femininity in a single, intimate vision.⁶⁹

Reading the medics and Favorinus, and relying on Susan Dixon for a social history of motherhood, Myers highlights two aspects of the lactation source domain that she thinks the metaphor mapped. Firstly, she documents the “communication of traits” that was thought to occur through breast-feeding and that would continue as both mothers and nurses continued to exercise a formative influence over their

⁶⁷ Martin, "Tasting," 521, 24.

⁶⁸ “The milk of 1 Peter... is truly masculine and perfect because it flows from the divine Father alone, without interruption through a maternal or nurse figure or even male philosopher as conduit.” Alicia D. Myers, "Pater Nutrix: Milk Metaphors and Character Formation in Hebrews and 1 Peter," in *Making Sense of Motherhood: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Beth M. Stovell (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 81–99, 95.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

children (boys and girls alike) long after the children were weaned.⁷⁰ Secondly, she gives evidence for the capacity of breast-feeding to create an affective bond.⁷¹

The year after the edited volume was published, Myers published a full monograph on “Mothers and Motherhood in the New Testament.”⁷² Unlike in her earlier chapter, on the basis of her reading of the medics, Myers here (like Martin) sees a maternal Christology in First Peter, identifying both the blood and milk referred to in First Peter as “the blood and milk of Jesus.”⁷³ She also examines evidence that some medics understood breast milk as “infused” with the father’s seed.⁷⁴ Unlike Martin, she therefore argues that the milk is called λογικόν because it is a carrier of the Father’s seed, which she identifies with word (λόγος) mentioned in 1:23. In another disagreement with Martin, she does not view the milk as a Eucharistic image, but understands both the blood and milk as “[symbolizing Jesus’] exemplary behavior ... [which] passes on the virtues of the Father.”⁷⁵

Myers argues that the authoring elder’s use of a feminine image for Jesus has ramifications for the letter beyond the explicit invocations of blood and milk. Myers

⁷⁰ Ibid., 87–89.

⁷¹ Ibid., 87.

⁷² Myers, *Blessed Among Women*.

⁷³ Ibid., 103.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 82. We will revisit this evidence in chapter 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 105.

sees parallel submission both in the presentation of Jesus in 2:21–25 and in the instruction to wives (3:1–6), which are consecutive passages.⁷⁶

The final work I survey that claims a maternal Christology for First Peter is Thomas Bennett’s recent monograph, a revised version of a theology dissertation at Fuller.⁷⁷ The aim of this book is to “[recover] a discarded image: the cross as the labor of God.”⁷⁸ For Bennett, the cross is specifically the site of the labor of Christ, but this is a manifestation of the God who labors.⁷⁹ While the book is not primarily an exegetical study, Bennett understands his project as one of retrieval of an image that is ultimately scriptural (and which he sees as especially prominent in the Fourth Gospel).⁸⁰ The attraction of “labor of God” as a model of atonement for Bennett is that it powerfully conveys that a “fundamental change” occurs in the recipient of salvation.⁸¹ When Bennett discusses First Peter, his reading is essentially ethical; the “already” reality of their new birth means affords Christians a confidence in their new identity that allows them to endure suffering at the hands of those who hold

⁷⁶ Ibid., 132–33.

⁷⁷ Bennett, *Labor of God*.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁹ “The labor pains of the cross are a novel but thematically consistent economic manifestation of God enduring what is needful to bring about what God wants born.” Ibid., 53. “Just as God labored with the mountains [cf. Psa 90:2], so Jesus labors with the church.” Ibid., 76.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁸¹ Ibid., 61–62.

illusory power.⁸² Maternal Christology in First Peter boils down to two things for Bennett: that Christ has suffered and that this has wrought a fundamental change in each Christian.

This dissertation seeks to build on the basic insight of Martin, Myers (in her later work), and Bennett that First Peter utilizes maternal imagery for Christ. Part of this “building on” will involve picking up threads left hanging by these scholars. For instance, Tite mentions the wearisomeness attributed to breast-feeding by Favorinus, but he does not seem to seriously consider whether that property is mapped to Christ. Myers is careful to distinguish the image in First Peter from the way the image is used in 1 Cor 3 and Hebr 5 (in which the addressees are told that they should have moved beyond milk to solid food). But, is this infantilization of the addressees somehow in play in First Peter? Myers presents evidence in her monograph that overly delaying the weaning of a boy could be considered detrimental to his formation into Roman manhood, but she did not relate this to First Peter.⁸³ These scholars also rely primarily on medical literature to understand medical texts. What happens when the generic range is expanded? What about when Jewish texts featuring mothers are brought into the conversation? These are some of

⁸² Ibid., 95–99.

⁸³ Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 88.

the ways in which I hope this dissertation will advance the work begun by these scholars and try to resolve some of the disagreements between them.

4. Chapter outline

My first chapter examines more closely the contents of First Peter. In the first section, I treat every verse that mentions new birth directly, or mentions something closely associated with birth (as the previous studies outlined above have shown), such as blood, seed, and milk. In the second, I zoom out to the broader ecosystem of metaphors that co-exist in First Peter, especially Christological and soteriological metaphors. The methodology for interpreting a metaphor that I laid out in the first section of this introduction requires both of these steps: being clear about exactly what is said about elements of the source domain in the text; and examining the other metaphorical faces presented in the cubist system. To briefly switch metaphors, the allocation of the mother slot of new birth metaphor is one thread in the tapestry of this epistle. In this section, I situate it among the other threads with which it is interwoven.

The second chapter turns to medical literature that treats conception, gestation, birth, and neonatal care. In chronological sequence, I examine parts of the Hippocratic corpus, Aristotle, Galen and Soranus. In these studies, I try to find both commonalities and contested issues. After treating each source, I propose a way of

understanding the new birth metaphor in First Peter using this source alone.

Reading with each of these medics, we will see that the metaphor is best constructed with the mother slot mapped to Christ. Each of them, though, differ on other details of the mapping. In the chapter's conclusion, I synthesize these proposals.

In the third chapter, I turn to Greco-Roman texts featuring mothers from outside the corpus of medical writings. The reading is necessarily selective, but treats classical Greek texts starting with Homer, Republican Roman reception of Greek texts in New Comedy, Augustan Imperial reforms, and a variety of texts from the post-Augustan Roman Empire. These texts allow a thicker account to be developed of what kinds of relationships were valorized between mothers and children, and how resemblance was wrought through these relationships. Given that Peter describes the addressees not merely as suckling babes (2:2), but also as children capable of obedience (1:14), analyzing these post-infancy relationships enlivens our reading of the maternal metaphor.

The fourth chapter turns to Jewish and early Christian texts. Firstly, I treat the mothers ("real" and metaphorical) of Peter's scriptural sources. We will see that maternal imagery for God occurs principally in contexts of dangerous conditions that necessitate God's people to embark on some kind of journey. Secondly, I turn to Paul's self-application of maternal imagery. I will show that Peter's use of maternal imagery for Christ fits with a tendency of his to take Pauline self-descriptions and

make them into Christological. Finally, I read First Peter comparatively with contemporary Christian texts that also use developed new birth metaphors. These clarify by contrast the particular genius of Peter's metaphor.

The fifth and final chapter again reads First Peter comparatively. Unlike in chapter four, though, the *comparanda* are later Christian texts that use maternal imagery for Christ. In some fourth century Antiochene baptismal homilies, we find many of the themes I regard as implicit in First Peter developed explicitly. In Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, we find a very different development of a maternal Christology, which helps clarify First Peter by contrast. Finally, in the conclusion, I synthesize the results of the preceding chapters, describing the elements of the mapping of the new birth metaphor and commenting on entailments that a skillful reader could generate.

1. Initial Examination of First Peter

This chapter attends closely to the text of First Peter, to prepare for the investigation of understandings of motherhood beginning in chapter two. I perform a close reading of several verses that contain explicit reference to things that previous studies have identified as closely connected with birth, such as blood, seed, and milk. In this first section, I present the texts and situate them in their literary context. Presenting them involves “lower level” philological issues and questions of intertextuality. Some ambiguities I seek to resolve, while others generate questions that further investigation of the maternal metaphor can help us answer. In the next section, I examine the other images in the letter of Christ, salvation, and the Christian life with which the maternal imagery may cohere. As we saw in the introduction, one tests a putative metaphorical mapping for “fit” with a text and selects entailments by determining whether or not it helps make sense of the text as a whole. Hence, this chapter is a necessary step in the work of providing a reliable interpretation of the new birth metaphor in First Peter.

1.1 Analysis of Key Verses

Before turning to verses that refer to things related to birth, I briefly describe the contents and structure of the letter as a whole, so as to not read these verses

devoid of context. First Peter is a letter¹ whose stated purpose is “encourage (παρακαλῶν) and bear witness (ἐπιμαρτυρῶν)” (5:12). As Elliott paraphrases this verse, the purpose of First Peter is “to bear witness to the grace of God in which his addressees stand and to encourage them to stand fast in this grace.”² Leonhard Goppelt summarizes the contents of First Peter as follows: “The letter develops a unified thematic focus: the existence of Christians in a non-Christian society and overcoming that society by being prepared to bear oppression, i.e., to ‘suffer.’”³ The most important topics of the letter that are missing from Goppelt’s summary are: the role of God and Christ in preparing for (e.g. 1:10–12; 3:18–20) and initiating that existence (e.g. 1:3, 18–19; 2:21–24; 3:21), and sustaining the Christians in it (e.g. 2:2–3; 4:14); and the eschatological sequel to their current suffering (e.g. 1:5; 4:13; 5:6, 10). These topics all relate to what Goppelt identifies as the central focus of the letter.

¹ Almost all modern commentators agree that First Peter is in the form of a letter because it was indeed a letter. An older view that our text was originally a homily to which an epistolary frame has been added has been rejected. For a full history, and rebuttal, of the homily thesis, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 7–11. Goppelt also concludes that First Peter was “from its inception a letter.” Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 23. For the same conclusion, see also Davids, *1 Peter*, 13; Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 41; Green, *1 Peter*, 5; Horrell, *1 Peter*, 6–9.

² Elliott, *1 Peter*, 103.

³ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 19.

Martin has produced an analysis of the literary structure of First Peter that relies heavily (though not solely) on shifts in metaphor to delineate sections. In this dissertation, I adopt Martin's structure as a helpful tool for analysis. The macro structure of the letter on Martin's analysis is as follows:

1. The Prescript (1:1–2)
2. The Blessing Section (1:3–12)
3. The Letter-body (1:13–5:12)
 - 3.1 The Body-opening (1:13)
 - 3.2 The Body-middle (1:14–2:10)
 - 3.2.1 The Οἶκος-Cluster, The elect household of God (1:14–2:10)
 - 3.2.2 The Παρεπίδημος/πάροικος-Cluster, Aliens in this world (2:11–3:12)
 - 3.2.3 The Παθήματα-Cluster, Sufferers of the Dispersion (3:13–5:11)
 - 3.3 The Body-closing (5:12)
4. The Greeting Section (5:13–14a)
5. The Farewell (5:14b)⁴

Under this analysis, the texts that disclose the maternal metaphor occur in the prescript, blessing section, and οἶκος-cluster. Martin provides the following finer structural analysis of the οἶκος-cluster:

- 3.2.1.1 Οἶκος-metaphors arising from the new birth and consequent familial relations (1:14–25)
 - 3.2.1.1.1 Metaphor-obedient children: Be holy (1:14–16)
 - 3.2.1.1.2 Metaphor-children under a new *patria potestas*: Be reverent (1:17–21)

⁴ See Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 271–73.

- 3.2.1.1.3 Metaphor-children in a new brotherhood: Love one another (1:22–25)
- 3.2.1.2 Οἶκος-metaphors arising from the conception of growth (2:1–10)
 - 3.2.1.2.1 Metaphor-newborn babies: Desire spiritual milk (2:1–3)
 - 3.2.1.2.2 Metaphor-living stones forming a new temple: Allow yourselves to be built (2:4–10)⁵

Much of this analysis is, or has become, standard in a broad range of commentaries, especially the presence of a major caesura after 2:10.⁶ While not everyone agrees with Martin that 1:3–12 constitutes a section on the same level as 1:13–5:12, there is broad agreement that it introduces themes to be developed more fully throughout the rest of the letter, including the theme of new birth.⁷

1.1.1 1 Pet 1:2abc

...κατὰ πρόγνωσιν θεοῦ πατρὸς ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος εἰς ὑπακοὴν καὶ ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

⁵ Ibid., 271–72.

⁶ See, for instance, Davids, *1 Peter*, 28; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 20; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 73; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 82; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 56. Indeed, for C.F.D. Moule, 1 Pet 1:3–2:10 was a detachable preface which could stand in front of either 2:11–4:11 or 4:12–5:11. C. F. D. Moule, "The Nature and Purpose of I Peter," *NTS* 3 (1956): 1–11.

⁷ Though Elliott and Jobes both take 1:3–2:10 as the first major section, they concur with Martin in this judgment that 1:3–12 serves this function of the announcement of themes. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 82; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 80. For history of scholarship on this question prior to Martin's dissertation, see Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 28–32. A more recent commentary which unambiguously agrees with Martin is Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 58–59.

...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the s/Spirit, for (Christic?) obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ.⁸

This verse concludes the prescript. The three prepositional phrases refer back to the descriptor ἐκλεκτοῖς (chosen) in the previous verse, which describes the addressees.⁹ The first prepositional phrase communicates that the election occurred according to the foreknowledge of God.

The second gives the means of the election.¹⁰ This is normally understood as the sanctifying action of the Spirit, understanding πνεύματος as a subjective genitive.¹¹ The objective reading of the genitive is also possible, though. In 1 Pet 3:4, Peter is concerned with the qualities of the πνεῦμα of Christians. This would also concord with 2 Cor 7:7, in which Paul exhorts the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from every defilement of flesh or spirit (πνεύματος), and puts this in parallel with

⁸ All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

⁹ “The referent of the divine activity described in these three phrases is to be construed as ἐκλεκτοῖς rather than ἀπόστολος, since the apostolicity of Peter is not at issue in this letter, while the reality of divine election for estranged and persecuted Christians goes to the heart of the problem this epistle is addressing.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86. See also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 70; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 68; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁰ That ἐν should be taken as instrumental, not locative, is argued by Jobes, *1 Peter*, 69.

¹¹ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 119; Davids, *1 Peter*, 48; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 73n47; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 318–19; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 69–70; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 3; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 66. Elliott helpfully compares Paul’s attribution of the work of sanctification to the Spirit in Rom 15:16.

perfecting holiness (ἀγιωσύνην). Peter would probably have affirmed both that the Spirit is involved in the sanctification of the Christian and that each Christian's spirit is sanctified. In the next chapter, though, I will study the role attributed to πνεῦμα in accounts of human conception and gestation, which may shed some light on which of these senses may have been primary for Peter.

It is the third prepositional phrase that is at once the most important to my project, as it mentions Christ's blood, and the hardest to understand.¹² Two important matters to clarify are the sense of εἰς and the scope and meaning of the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Elliott, following Francis Agnew, takes εἰς to have a causal sense.¹³ There are serious reasons to doubt, though, that εἰς can have this sense.¹⁴ This is good reason to attempt to make sense of the verse take εἰς to have its normal, telic sense.¹⁵

What then, could the telic sense of εἰς mean with regards to the sprinkling of Christ's blood? Many commentators make sense of this by pointing to the

¹² "The third phrase admits of no easy understanding." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 87.

¹³ Francis H. Agnew, C.M., "1 Peter 1:2—An Alternative Translation," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 68–73; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319.

¹⁴ See discussion and further references in Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012), 90–92. The more recent *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* does not even mention the possibility. See also, Jobes, *1 Peter*, 75–76.

¹⁵ Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 42; Davids, *1 Peter*, 48; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 87; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 71; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 3; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 67.

intertextual relationship with Exod 24:3–8.¹⁶ This is a covenant ceremony in which Moses sprinkles the people with blood. The verb used in Exod 24:8 LXX is *κατεσκέδασεν* which bears no lexical relationship to First Peter’s noun *ῥαντισμός*, but the action described is the same. This leads Paul Achtemeier to the following paraphrase of the *εἰς* phrase: “to the end that they be the people of the new covenant, which like the covenant with Israel entails obedience and sacrifice, in this case the sacrifice of Christ.”¹⁷ The sprinkling with blood is subsequent to the election of the people of Israel, as is their promise of obedience at Exod 24:3, confirming the intelligibility of the telic sense of *εἰς*.

As for the genitive *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, its sense relative to *ῥαντισμὸν αἵματος* (sprinkling of blood) is straightforward enough; the blood is the blood of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The question is whether this genitive also limits the previous noun, *ὑποκοήν* (obedience). Achtemeier refers to the possibility that *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* is objective with reference to the first noun (obedience to Jesus Christ), but a genitive of origin with

¹⁶ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 121; Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 42–43; Davids, *1 Peter*, 49; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 75; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 88–89; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 72–73; Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, trans. Peter H. Davids (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 58; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 67–69.

¹⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 89.

¹⁸ On concatenated genitives, see BDF, 168.

reference to the second noun phrase, “a grammatical monstrosity.”¹⁹ He prefers to take Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as having no grammatical relationship to ὑποκοήν. However, it is also possible to take this genitive as subjective with respect to ὑποκοήν (Christ’s obedience). This is Elliott’s reading.²⁰ As Elliott takes the εἰς as causal, he understands Christ’s posture of obedience together with the shedding of his blood as having caused the election of the addressees. The telic reading of εἰς is not incompatible, though, with understanding Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as modifying ὑποκοήν in an attributive sense (Christic obedience). While God’s purpose in choosing Christians cannot be to make Christ obedient, the purpose might be to form in Christians obedience such as Christ exercised. I regard the possibility of a grammatical connection between Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and ὑποκοήν as uncertain, but it is not ruled out by reading εἰς as telic. This will be relevant to later discussion in this dissertation of a resemblance soteriology, whereby Christians are formed in the likeness of Christ.

Consideration of two further possible intertexts shows that this ceremonial application of blood was repeatable. Moses again sprinkles Aaron and his sons with blood at their priestly ordination (Lev 8:30). This is especially relevant as Peter uses sacerdotal language for his addressees in 1 Pet 2:9. To describe the sprinkling, Lev

¹⁹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 87. Concurring, (in milder language), Jobes, *1 Peter*, 71. This is also the position of Goppelt, who paraphrases the telic sense of εἰς ὑποκοήν as “election expresses itself in obedience.” Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 74n51.

²⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 319.

8:30 LXX uses the verb *προσραίνω*, which is a paronym of the noun *ῥαντισμός* (i.e., the two words share a root). Another text often brought into comparison with this verse of First Peter is the covenant renewal ceremony attested in the Community Rule.²¹ This ceremony also involves sprinkling (of water), obedience, purification, and a spirit.²² This ceremony was performed annually (2.19). While this is not stated of the ceremony in Exodus, reading the Pentateuch as a unity would show that Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood at least twice (at the covenant ceremony and at their ordination). The practice of the covenanters at Qumran shows that some Jewish interpreters understood an Exodus-like covenant ceremony as a repeatable event. As the obedience of the elect is expected to be an ongoing posture, it may well be that the application of Christ's blood to the Christians is viewed as ongoing or repeated. This possibility will prove important when I consider the role of blood in gestation and postnatal infant nourishment in my next chapter. That such a source domain may underlie this image is suggested by the following verse, which introduces the language of birth, and to which I now turn.

²¹ 1QS 3.6–9. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 71; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 89n124; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 320.

²² None of the commentators mention obedience, but one of the means of purification in the Qumran text is that the community members submit themselves to all God's statutes (ובענות נפשו לכול חוקי אל יטהר בשר) (3.8–9).

1.1.2 1 Pet 1:3

Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his great mercy, begot us anew for living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This verse opens the blessing section (1:3-12), which consists of one long sentence. The beginning of this blessing, which is also found in 2 Cor 1:3 and Eph 1:3, represents a Christianization of a standard Jewish blessing: Εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ (“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel”).²³ This has been transformed by defining God in terms not of his²⁴ relationship to Israel, but rather his relationship to Jesus Christ.²⁵ That this blessing is a conventional Christianization of a conventional Jewish blessing is important, as it is the only place in First Peter where the relationship between God and Christ is expressed in the language of paternity.²⁶

²³ 1 Sam 25:32; 1 Kings 1:48; 8:15; 1 Chr 29:10; 2 Chr 2:11; 6:4; Ps 40:14 LXX; 71:18; 105:48; Luke 1:68. Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 44; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 81.

²⁴ My pronouns for the Deity are chosen to accord with the text under discussion. Hence, when discussing texts that use fatherhood language for God, masculine pronouns are used. In chapter four, when I discuss texts that use maternal language for God, I use feminine pronouns instead.

²⁵ The Old Testament, and other Jewish sources, also witness to many other variations on this standard blessing, but no other genitive is as common as “of Israel.” Goppelt also sees Jesus’ name as having in some sense replaced that of Israel in this blessing when he writes that “this predicate for God ... expresses that God has now manifested himself as God no longer only through Israel’s election, but conclusively through the sending of his Son.” Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 80.

²⁶ Steven J. Kraftchick, “Reborn to a Living Hope: A Christology of 1 Peter,” in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Troy

While Peter is still able to use this image, he may have downplayed the resultant “big brother” image of Christ’s relationship to Christians in order to make space for other metaphors, such as the maternal metaphor. It is notable that term υἱός (“son”) is never applied to Christ in First Peter.

Peter’s distinctive contribution to this conventional blessing is to select “begetting anew” as the first action to ascribe to God.²⁷ Elliott describes this as a “dramatic metaphor for the decisive transformation of life that believers have experienced through God’s mercy ... from dead-ended existence to new life.”²⁸ For Goppelt, begetting is the “foundational ‘whence’” of Christian existence.²⁹

The term used to name God’s action is the aorist participle of ἀναγεννάω. This verb only appears in the New Testament (or Septuagint) in First Peter—in this verse and in 1:23. In the sense of “beget anew,” this compound verb may well have been coined by Peter.³⁰ The uncompounded form γεννάω occurs several times, though, in

W. Martin, *SBL Resources for Biblical Study 77* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 83–98, 88.

²⁷ As Peter Davids puts it, “the specific act for which Peter blesses God is regeneration.” Davids, *1 Peter*.

²⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 331–32.

²⁹ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 81.

³⁰ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94.

the Septuagint with God as the (sometimes implied) subject.³¹ There are other New Testament texts which may represent a similar development of the Old Testament γεννάω language.³² In chapter four, I read First Peter comparatively with John 3:3–8 and Titus 3:3–5

The choice of active voice for this verb places emphasis on God’s initiative.³³ Reinhard Feldmeier uses the aorist aspect of the participle to argue that Peter has a definite act of “siring” in mind.³⁴ He takes this to be the resurrection, because of the δι’ ἀναστάσεως phrase later in 1:3. This argument may misunderstand the structure of the blessing, though. After designating God as the re-begetter, in 1 Pet 1:3–5, Peter gives “three specific transforming benefits that believers received as a result of God’s great mercy and regenerating action: a living hope, an imperishable inheritance, and a salvation about to be revealed.”³⁵ Each of these are introduced with telic εἰς.³⁶ The διά phrase follows the first εἰς phrase, εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν (to a living hope), and is better taken to express the means by which the hope can be said to be “living.” As Karen

³¹ Deut 32:18; Ps 2:7; Prov 8:25.

³² Parallels from rabbinic literature are also often adduced which seem to show a similar development. The most relevant of these is the comparison of a proselyte to a new born child (b. Yebam. 22a). Jobes is right to point out that this is much later than First Peter. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 332; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 83.

³³ Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 68.

³⁴ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 63.

³⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 330. See also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 94-95.

³⁶ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 6.

Jobes puts it, the hope is living hope “in contrast with a hope that is dead because it is based on futile things.... [It is] everliving because Christ ... is everliving.”³⁷ The punctiliar nature of male begetting may or may not be an element of the source domain that is mapped to the target domain in this metaphor. The aspects of participles cannot answer this question for us, and neither can the mention of resurrection.³⁸

A prepositional phrase that does refer back to the participle ἀναγεννήσας is κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος (“according to his great mercy”). Elliott points out that the only other use of the ἐλε- word group in First Peter is the verb ἐλέεω in 1 Pet 2:10. As this is a reference to Hos 2:23, the first two chapters of Hosea may provide a helpful intertext for the understanding of mercy operative here. On this understanding, mercy becomes “an expression of the intimate relationship between God and Israel symbolized by fidelity and family.”³⁹ Jobes suggests a different set of intertexts: references to God’s mercy in covenant-forming passages in Exodus and parallels.⁴⁰ She lists Exod 20:6 and 34:6. The latter is an especially good candidate, as it uses the term πολυέλεος (very merciful), which is reminiscent of the modification of ἔλεος by

³⁷ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 84–85. See also Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 45; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 95; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 333.

³⁸ On the significance of aspect in aorist participles, see Evert E. Boas, et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 432, 607–609.

³⁹ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 331.

⁴⁰ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 82.

πολύς in 1 Pet 1:3. The term πολυέλεος also appears in Neh 14:18, a passage that recalls God’s post-exodus covenant formation. This suggestion helpfully links 1:3 with 1:2. Christ’s donation of blood and God’s re-begetting both bring the Christians into a covenant with God like the covenant first enjoyed by the wilderness generation. Elliott points out that later rabbis also used birth language to describe the covenant at Sinai, saying that Israel was born on Sinai. In a Midrashic passage, this claim is made to explain the interpretation of “my mother’s house” (Song 8:2) as Sinai.⁴¹

1.1.3 1 Pet 1:14

ὡς τέκνα ὑπακοῆς μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις, [(15) ἀλλά]
As obedient children, do not be conformed to the cravings you formerly held in ignorance, [but ...]

This verse opens the body of the letter, and the first metaphorical cluster, which focuses on the image of the household. It begins by comparing the addressees to children who are characterized by obedience.⁴² The participle inherits an imperatival sense from the main verb of verse 15 (“be holy”), with which it forms a

⁴¹ *Midr. Cant. Rab.* on 8:2. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 331.
⁴² Elliott and Achtemeier argue that an attributive with “child” or “son” should be understood as a Semitic expression giving “an essential quality or power by which its referent is controlled.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 357.

contrast.⁴³ Συσχηματίζω appears in a negative imperative in Rom 12:2, with a similar sense to this passage. This is but one example of a phenomenon to be further examined in chapter four, that Peter’s diction exhibits substantial dependence on Paul, especially as witnessed in the latter’s epistle to the Romans.

The reference to the addressees as children “extends the metaphor of their divine rebirth.”⁴⁴ By placing these words right at the start of the first metaphorical cluster, Peter provides a strong clue to his audience that the new birth metaphor continues to be important throughout this section. By referring to them as obedient children, he extends this image past the stage of infancy. This helps motivate the work we will do in chapters three and four, investigating the relationships between mothers and their older children.

As Joel Green puts it, “leaving no doubt but that the capacity for transformation is divine gift, Peter nonetheless addresses his audience as persons capable of choice and responsible for their behavior.”⁴⁵ The addressees must be instructed to no longer let their former ignorance shape them. Rather, they should be shaped by the holiness to be found in God (1:15). In chapter three, we will see

⁴³ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 109; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 120; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 358; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 113.

⁴⁴ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 357. See also Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 119; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 102.

⁴⁵ Green, *1 Peter*, 272. Goppelt describes Peter’s aim in this passage as “stimulating continued confirmation of baptism;” something real and powerful has been given to them, but their choices matter for this gift not to be squandered. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 110.

texts witnessing to a belief that while being a descendant of a particular set of parents granted a certain degree of resemblance, this resemblance was somewhat fragile; parents and children both needed to act and make choices to ensure the potential for virtuous resemblance was fully realized. The fact that Peter has to instruct his addressees as to what should shape them shows that some of the same dynamic may be at play here.

1.1.4 1 Pet 1:18–19

...εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ,⁴⁶ ἐλυτρώθητε ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου (19) ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ

...because you know that you were ransomed from your futile ancestral way of life, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a spotless unblemished lamb.⁴⁷

These verses introduce to the body of the letter the talk of Christ's blood from the prescript.⁴⁸ The opening participle, εἰδότες, is causal, giving the grounds for the

⁴⁶ \aleph^* has genitives (presumably of price) in place of these three datives. This is a singular reading that spoils the parallelism with τιμίῳ αἵματι in the next verse, so is unlikely to be the original circulating reading. This reading may have arisen from a scribe taking seriously the economic metaphor here, though not so consistently as to alter also the subsequent verse.

⁴⁷ "These two verses are so closely intertwined with their discussion of the contrasting means of redemption (18a, 19) that they must be treated as a unit" Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 126.

⁴⁸ Elliott describes this as an "echo" of 1:2. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 373.

imperative ἀναστράφητε (“live [reverently]”) in 1:17.⁴⁹ The participle προεγνωσμένου (foreknown) in 1:20 refers back to the Χριστοῦ of 1:19 and the description of Christ continues through 1:21. Thus, 1:17–21 is a single sentence that enjoins reverential living and gives grounds for this both in the Christians’ practice of calling God Father (1:17) and in the Christological and soteriological statements in the verses under discussion.

These verses remind the addressees that they have been redeemed or ransomed⁵⁰ from their former way of life, which, though passed on to them by their ancestors, was futile. Achtemeier points out that when Peter calls their prior way of life “futile” (μάταιος), he is echoing Septuagintal language for the gods of the nations.⁵¹ The other adjective applied to their former way of life, πατροπαράδοτος, is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament and occurs nowhere in the Septuagint. It was not a rare word, though, outside these corpora and was generally used positively to refer to ancestral tradition.⁵² This description of what the addressees have been

⁴⁹ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 114; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 126; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 31.

⁵⁰ See below for discussion of this verb. Goppelt says that λυτρόω remains “ambivalent” between “ransom” and “redeem.” Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 115.

⁵¹ Lev 17:17; Jer 18:19; 10:15. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 127. See also Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 90.

⁵² Jobes suggests that First Peter may be the first text to use it negatively. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 118. For further discussion, and examples of positive use, see also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 370.

redeemed from portrays their biological ancestry as worthless, increasing their reliance on their new fictive kinship.

Various backgrounds for the verb *λυτρόω*, especially when joined with blood and a lamb, have been proposed. Feldmeier posits a “multiplicity of allusions that [do] not exclude one another.”⁵³ Jobes also offers various options, which she does not see as mutually exclusive. The first source domain she suggests is an aspect of contemporary slavery culture according to which an enslaved person might be manumitted by depositing a sum of money in a temple. This money would be restored to that person’s former owner, minus a commission, and the enslaved person would now be free of their former human owner, but known as a slave of the temple’s deity.⁵⁴ This would fit well with the reference to the addressees as “slaves of God” (*θεοῦ δούλοι*; 1 Pet 2:16).

Peter Davids points out that this sense of *λυτρόω* as manumission is also found in the Septuagint and suggests that this may be the basic meaning which is then extended to other forms of divine aid starting with “the great redemption of slaves that God accomplished in the Exodus.”⁵⁵ Elliott points out the pervasive use of

⁵³ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 117. See also, concurring, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 375.

⁵⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 116.

⁵⁵ Lev 25:48–49. Davids, *1 Peter*, 71. Jobes claims that *λυτρόω* in the sense of manumission also stands behind Ps 34:23a LXX, a psalm that is employed elsewhere in First Peter (*λυτρώσεται κύριος ψυχὰς δούλων αὐτοῦ*; The Lord will redeem the souls of his slaves). Jobes, *1 Peter*, 117. There does not appear to be any sense of

λυτρόω and its paronyms in the Septuagint to name what God did for the people of Israel in the Exodus.⁵⁶ These are plausible intertexts, especially as the mention of Christ's blood in 1:2 can be connected with post-exodus covenant ceremonies. Goppelt also thinks that mention of the lamb is a reference to the paschal lamb.⁵⁷ While the equation of Christ with the paschal lamb is made by Paul in 1 Cor 5:7, this parallel does not explain 1 Pet 1:19 as well. Achtemeier points out two problems with reading the lamb in this verse as the paschal lamb: the lamb's blood in the exodus narrative is apotropaic rather than redemptive; the term ἄμωμος is nowhere used in the exodus narrative, but is frequent in cult legislation.⁵⁸ This does not mean that the exodus is not part of Feldmeier's "multiplicity of allusions," but it does fail to explain all of the elements in this image.

manumission in this verse, though, but rather of generic help, as in Dan 3:88 LXX, where the three Jewish men are "saved (ἐλυτρώσατο) from the fire."

⁵⁶ Exod 6:6; 15:13; Deut 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 2 Kgdms 7:23. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369. See also Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 66; Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 144–45; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 117; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 90.

⁵⁷ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 116. Jakob Alumkal also assumes such a connection in his recent study of 1 Cor 5:7. Jakob P. Alumkal, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ Implied in the Image of the Pascal Lamb in 1 Cor 5:7: An Intertextual, Exegetical and Theological Study*, European University Studies 948 (Bern: Lang, 2015).

⁵⁸ Especially Lev 3–5; Num 28–29. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128–29. See also Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 68.

Before treating Achtemeier's suggestion of cultic imagery, I consider the possibility of allusion to the "second exodus," the return from exile in Babylon. Second and Third Isaiah both use λυτρόω and paronyms to name what God did in bringing the exile to an end.⁵⁹ An especially relevant parallel is Isa 52:3.⁶⁰ In that verse, the prophet proclaims to the exiles "not with silver will you be redeemed" (οὐ μετὰ ἀργυρίου λυτρωθήσεσθε), providing a parallel to the denial in 1 Pet 1:18 that the addressees were redeemed with silver or gold. This verse is also reasonably proximate to the description of the servant as a lamb led to slaughter in Isa 53:7, a chapter with which Peter will heavily interact in the second chapter of his epistle. While there is no blood mentioned in Isa 53:7, the reference to slaughter implicitly involves the shedding of blood. That Peter describes slaughter in terms of blood may confirm the importance to him of Christ's blood, which would make good sense if a maternal Christology underlies these images. This parallel cannot, though, explain the use of the adjective ἄμωμος which occurs nowhere in the book of Isaiah.

It is chiefly because of the use of the adjective ἄμωμος that Achtemeier prefers to understand this image in terms of the "general sacrificial cult."⁶¹ Elliott points

⁵⁹ Pace Elliott, Isa 45:13 LXX is not an example of this, as in this verse the prophet denies that God paid a ransom (λύτρον). However, there are plenty of other examples that work: 41:14; 43:1; 43:14; 44:22, 23, 24; 51:11; 52:3; 62:12; 63:4, 9. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 369.

⁶⁰ Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 66.

⁶¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 129.

more particularly to the blood of the sin-offering, for instance, in the ritual of Lev 1:3–5. This account uses the adjective *ἄμωμος* to describe the victim (1:3) and talks of the animal’s blood (1:5). While the victim is described in the Hebrew *Vorlage* as a bull (זכר, 1:3; בן הבקר, 1:5), the Septuagint translates בן הבקר as *μόσχος*, a term which generally means a young bovine but which can, according to *LSJ*, also refer to the young of any animal.

Attentiveness to the importance of birth imagery in this passage may point to some even more apposite parallels from cultic legislation. According to Num 18:16, the redemption price (*λύτρωσις*) for a first-born son was five (silver) shekels (*πέντε σίγλων*, translating כסף חמשת שכלים).⁶² This would make sense of the use of *λυτρόω* and the reference to silver in 1 Pet 1:18; the addressees’ new birth was redeemed with something more precious than silver. The slaughter of unblemished lambs was also associated with birth, as, according to Lev 12:6, this is part of what a postpartum woman must bring for sacrifice to be purified.⁶³ I don’t want to reduce Feldmeier’s correct observation of a “multiplicity of allusions” to something singular, but the redemption of the firstborn provides the only parallel that explains every

⁶² Perhaps the lack of explicit mention of silver in the Septuagint may explain why we have “silver or gold” in First Peter, if Peter is unsure quite what a shekel is made of.

⁶³ *προσείσει ἀμνὸν ἐνιαύσιον ἄμωμον*. “She shall offer an unblemished lamb in its first year.”

element of this two-verse unit. The addressees are called to remember not just that they have been reborn, but they have been redeemed (even though not firstborn), with something more precious than the former offering of silver. The blood of the lamb is all that is needed when that lamb is understood as Christ. Redemption of the first born occurs subsequent to birth, so if this is the correct sense of *λυτρόω*, this verse would point to some access that the addressees have to Christ's blood after their new birth, possibly in the Eucharist.⁶⁴

1.1.5 1 Pet 1:22c–23

*ἀλλήλους ἀγαπήσατε ἐκτενῶς (23) ἀναγεγεννημένοι οὐκ ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος.*⁶⁵

love one another zealously, as you have been reborn not from perishable seed but from imperishable [seed], through the living and abiding word of God.

These verses, like those just considered, form part of the new birth and family section of the *οἶκος* cluster of metaphors. They use the language of rebirth, introduced in the blessing section, to ground a love command. Commentators agree that the relationship between the participle *ἀναγεγεννημένοι* and the preceding

⁶⁴ This would agree with Martin's reading of 2:1-3. Martin, "Tasting."

⁶⁵ Some ninth century uncials (K, L, P) and versions add *μένοντος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. This variant, likely expansionistic, harmonizes with 1:25 and does not substantially alter the meaning.

imperative ἀγαπήσατε should be termed “causal,”⁶⁶ but disagree on what exactly is meant by “causal.” Davids gives two possible readings without choosing between them, wondering “whether a new life results in a new love or whether a common generation from one Father places demands of familial fidelity on Christians (1 John 5:1).”⁶⁷ Does the Christians’ new birth equip them for love, or create the need for it? The latter interpretation would fit poorly with the early Christian command to love enemies (Matt 5:44 // Luke 6:27; Luke 6:35), but it is not clear that Peter is aware of this command. In 1 Pet 2:17, as in this verse, while other benign stances are enjoined more generally, love is limited to the family of believers. However, with the exception of Martin Vahrenhorst,⁶⁸ most commentators who ask Davids’s question conclude that the participle seeks to explain how it is possible for the command to be followed. Goppelt argues for this on the basis of a parallel with the perfect participle ἡγνικότες in verse 22, which precedes the imperative (“having purified your souls by obedience to the truth”). He sees this as the human action which enables love, cooperatively paired with the divine action which is described as re-begetting.⁶⁹ Jobes argues for the equipping reading on the basis of the logic of genetic resemblance

⁶⁶ Davids, *1 Peter*, 78; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 126; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 138; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 388; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 38.

⁶⁷ Davids, *1 Peter*, 78.

⁶⁸ Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 96.

⁶⁹ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 126. For the same judgment, see also Dubis, *1 Peter*, 38.

between fathers and children.⁷⁰ As we turn to examine the language of perishability, we will confirm that this aspect of the source domain of the metaphor is indeed mapped to the target domain.

The re-begetting is described as having been accomplished ἐκ σπορᾶς (from a seed) and διὰ λόγου (through a word). The mention of seed extends the metaphor of re-begetting by introducing a new element of the source domain.⁷¹ That Peter extends the birth metaphor in this way supports claims that other elements of his text (such as the references to Christ's blood) may also be understood as elements of the source domain of this extended metaphor. Many commentators understand σπορά as here identified with λόγος.⁷² These commentators may have been misled by the identification between word and seed which is made in the synoptic parable of the sower (cp. Mark 4:14 // Luke 8:11). Eugene LaVerdiere's caution remains relevant: "As the difference in prepositions indicates ... the relationship of the two

⁷⁰ "Those reborn from God's seed will have God's character." Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125. For God as an agent of love in the Septuagint, see, for instance, Hos 13:5; Prov 3:12. See also Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 75–76.

⁷¹ Σπορά could relate to human, animal or plant seed, or to the act of sowing. Achtemeier correctly concludes that the divine initiative is being understood in terms of human seed, in-keeping with the metaphor of new birth in which the father is mapped to God. See chapter two for discussion of whether this is paternal or maternal seed. The reference to plants in the subsequent quotation from Isa 40 develops from the discussion of perishability and does not mean that plant seed is in view in the verse currently under discussion. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 139.

⁷² Ibid., 140; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 389; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 123n85; Green, *1 Peter*, 52; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 36.

terms to the regeneration is not identical.”⁷³ The seed is a source of regeneration and the word is a means. We do not have here a ‘decoding’ of the metaphorical mapping, but two descriptions of the action to which “re-beget” maps. This leads to two questions: what is the relationship between the seed and the word; and what does Peter mean by “word”?

The seed and the word are linked by their imperishability. The imperishability of the seed is stated pleonastically, as Peter modifies it both with the adjective ἀφθαρτος and with φθαρτός, negated by οὐ. The imperishability of the word is communicated by modifying it with the adjectival participles ζῶν and μενῶν.⁷⁴ The seed and the word are not the only things described as imperishable in First Peter. In 1:4, the Christians’ inheritance has already been described as imperishable, as has Christ’s blood in 1:18–19. In 3:4, the recipients will be urged to develop a humble and quiet spirit, to which is also ascribed imperishability. Hence, imperishability is a

⁷³ Eugene A. LaVerdiere, S.S.S., "A Grammatical Ambiguity in 1 Pet 1:23," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 89–94, 92. See also Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 150–51.

⁷⁴ While it is grammatically possible for these participles to modify θεός, Davids argues that they must modify “word” for the following quotation from Isaiah, which concerns the imperishable nature of God’s word, to be relevant. Davids, *1 Peter*, 78. Concurring, often without explicit argument: Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 151; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 140; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 389; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 123n84; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 96. Dubis points out that the Vulgate read the participles as agreeing with “God” (*per verbum Dei vivi et permanentis*). Dubis, *1 Peter*, 38. This was not the universal patristic reading, though; the Peshitta applies at least “living” to the word: ܢܘܨܬܐ ܕܘܫܘܒܐ ܕܘܨܬܐ ܕܘܨܬܐ ܕܘܨܬܐ.

property of both the source and means of God's re-begetting of the Christians and thereby is shared with them. This confirms Jobes's insight that re-begetting, as First Peter understands it, involves a transfer of properties; the new life has a permanent quality, unlike the transitory quality of natural life.⁷⁵

Most commentators judge the word *λόγος* to refer to the gospel message, as in 1 Thess 2:13, or possibly the words of the prophets.⁷⁶ Achtemeier contemplates the possibility that it is instead a "Johannine" reference to Christ.⁷⁷ On the basis of his reading of Aristotle's embryology, Martin proposes that we instead take *λόγος* as the plan or pattern of fetal formation, functionally equivalent to DNA in more modern parlance.⁷⁸ In chapter two, we will see similar use of this word in Galen's works. I will return to the question of the proper interpretation of *λόγος* in the conclusion to the section on Galen in chapter two (2.4.4).

⁷⁵ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125.

⁷⁶ Dubis, *1 Peter*, 38.

⁷⁷ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 140. This usage is not only found in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, but also in Rev 19:13 and possibly 1 John 1:1.

⁷⁸ Troy W. Martin, "Translating *λόγος* as DNA in First Peter 1:22–25," in *Listening Again to the Text: New Testament Studies in Honor of George Lyons*, ed. Richard P. Thompson, Claremont Studies in New Testament and Christian Origins 5 (Claremont, CA: Laremont, 2020), 133–150. For Martin, *ῥῆμα* in 1:25 does refer to preaching; *ῥῆμα* being an individual instantiation of the whole *λόγος*.

1.1.6 1 Pet 2:2–3

ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῆτε εἰς σωτηρίαν, (3) εἰ ἐγεύσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος.

Like newborn infants, crave⁷⁹ the logical guileless milk, that through this you might grow into salvation, as ‘you have tasted that the Lord is good.’

As with the previous few verses discussed, these verses are part of the οἶκος-cluster of metaphors. They are part of the second half of this cluster (2:1–10), which focuses on growth. They conclude a sentence begun in 2:1, which is a participle clause beginning with Ἀποθέμενοι (“[after] putting away”). A list of vices supplies the objects of this participle. This list includes δόλος (“deceit” or “guile”), which will prove an important detail as we analyze the adjective ἄδολον in 2:2. Some commentators understand this participle as having imperatival force (inherited from the imperative ἐπιποθήσατε in 2:2).⁸⁰ Achtemeier, however, argues that the participle should be understood as describing what the addressees have already done, with the aorist aspect here signaling time prior to the main verb.⁸¹ Martin understands the participle in a similar way to Achtemeier, but in addition argues that it forms part of

⁷⁹ “Crave” for ἐπιποθήσατε is a suggestion of Jobes, *1 Peter*, 122.

⁸⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 395; Dubis, *1 Peter*, 42.

⁸¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 144. See also, concurring Davids, *1 Peter*, 77–78. This fits well with the statement in 1 Pet 4:4 that the addressees are already surprising their neighbors by no longer participating in their antisalvific practices (εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας). However, in 3:9, (at least some of) the addressees do need to be told not to render evil (μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν; supposing that this participle does have imperatival force).

an extended nutritional metaphor according to which vices, which are not in-keeping with the addressees' reborn state, must be egested before the salvific milk can be ingested.⁸² That this verse admits of a nutritional reading helps motivate the reading strategy of taking Peter's body language seriously throughout his letter and, especially, in the two verses which complete this sentence.

The addressees are likened to "newborn babes." Though Augustine took this to mean that they were only recently baptized (*Serm.* 353), most modern commentators do not accept this.⁸³ The address in 5:1 to elders in the community, contrasted with "juniors" in 5:5, certainly suggests that not all of the addressees were newly baptized. For Achtemeier, the salient property of newborn infants that is being mapped is that it is in this "early stage of the human being where the single-minded desire for nourishment is most readily apparent."⁸⁴ Certainly, the main verb of this sentence draws attention to this property of neonates. However, this need not

⁸² Martin, "Tasting," 518–20. A parallel that could be adduced in support of this reading is Origen's use of the metaphor of vomiting out vices for salvation through purgation, for instance at *Princ.* 2.4.6. See Taylor Ross, "The Severity of Universal Salvation," *Church Life Journal*, 4 June, <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/the-severity-of-universal-salvation/>.

⁸³ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 154; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 130; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 399; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 132.

⁸⁴ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 146. Concurring, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 399.

exhaust the relevance of this metaphor. Both the innocence and vulnerability of neonates may also be in view.⁸⁵

Like newborn babes, the addressees are instructed to eagerly desire (ἐπιποθήσατε)⁸⁶ milk. The milk is modified by two adjectives: λογικός and ἄδολος. Jobes states that “modern interpreters almost unanimously understand the referent of the ‘pure spiritual milk’ metaphor to be the word of God, whether in the form of apostolic preaching or inscripturated in the Bible.”⁸⁷ Jobes, rightly, opposes this consensus. The Pauline usage in 1 Cor 3:1 (echoed in Heb 5:13) is of no help as it gives a negative valence to milk as rudimentary instruction, which is entirely lacking here (and strongly contra-indicated by the verb).⁸⁸ Neither does the use of the

⁸⁵ For background on these properties as frequently applied to infants, see Jennifer H. McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother: Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5–8*, ECL 12 (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2014), 99–100. Selwyn and Spicq both see innocence as the primary property mapped. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 156; Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 79.

⁸⁶ The ἐπι- prefix is intensive. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 156; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 399.

⁸⁷ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 132. She gives a very full bibliography of this view to support this claim, though, strangely, she does not cite Elliott, who is an important additional representative of this view. See, for instance, Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 79; J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 69; Davids, *1 Peter*, 83; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 145; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 400–401; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 126; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 98. Alicia Myers does not take the milk to represent the word *simpliciter*, but she does think that it is called λογικός because it is word-like. Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 82.

⁸⁸ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 132. Other commentators distinguish from this Pauline usage to deny any negative valence in First Peter, but still understand the milk as instruction. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 129; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 399; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 126; Vahrenhorst, *1 Petrus*, 98.

adjective λογικός necessitate this conclusion. Jobes points out that if Peter had intended λογικός to mean “of the word,”⁸⁹ it would have been much clearer to use the exegetical genitive τοῦ λόγου.⁹⁰ To be preferred is the well-attested meaning “logical” or “rational” for λογικός.⁹¹ Martin has argued for this reading on the basis that it is logical for neonates to desire milk.⁹² The translation in the Vulgate probably arises from a similar interpretation, using *rationale* rather than a paronym of *verbum*. Myers has a more subtle argument that the referent of milk is word. She argues that the milk is word-like because it carries the Father’s seed which is the word.⁹³ However, in the previous section, I rejected this identification of the Father’s seed with the word (or Word), and Myers’s argument is dependent on this identification. As final confirmation, Jobes points out that if Peter did intend milk to map to word, he could have picked a better psalm to cite in the next verse, such as Ps 118:103 LXX, which talks of the sweet taste of God’s words.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ As, for instance, Elliott translates it. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 400. See also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 129; Tite, “Nurslings,” 390.

⁹⁰ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 133.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 135. Elliott acknowledges the solid attestation for this meaning, but rejects it in the present context. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 400.

⁹² Martin, “Christians as Babies,” 109.

⁹³ Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 82.

⁹⁴ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 139. We should not, in general, expect an author to always have made the choices we consider most apposite, but this argument can help confirm the weakness of the identification of milk with word.

If the milk is not to be identified with words, to what does it point? Jobes, following Calvin, takes that to be “that way of living which is suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy.”⁹⁵ Also for Myers, the milk represents a way of life, but specifically Jesus’ “exemplary behavior ..., [which] passes on the virtues of the Father.”⁹⁶ Davids does not attempt to define a precise referent for the milk, beyond saying that it is “spiritual nourishment.”⁹⁷ For Martin, though, “milk” is essentially a way of saying “blood of Christ” (in the Eucharistic sense) in a way that fits the neonatal (rather than fetal) imagery of 2:1–3.⁹⁸ While there are genuine disagreements between these scholars, these suggestions are not necessarily incompatible, for blood and milk were viewed as means of passing on traits (virtuous or vicious as the case may be). The description of the milk as ἄδολος illustrates how rich in meaning this image is, capable of sustaining both of these interpretations. Martin argues that the milk is described as ἄδολος to distinguish it from colostrum.⁹⁹ This means that, in the target domain, the craving is not merely enjoined as a one-off attitude at the moment of new birth, but is meant to sustain the addressees

⁹⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁹⁶ Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 105.

⁹⁷ Davids, *1 Peter*, 82.

⁹⁸ Martin, "Christians as Babies." For breastmilk as a form of blood, see chapter two.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 109.

throughout their growth into salvation.¹⁰⁰ Following so quickly after the vice list of 2:1, the contrast with δόλος (“deceit” or “guile”), which is to be rejected, must also be noted. In 2:22, we learn that Christ lacked δόλος. The privation of vice can also be predicated of the milk; it does transmit a way of life.

The main clause of this sentence is followed by a ἵνα clause, which explains that the purpose of inculcating this desire is to grow into health/salvation, and (in verse 3) an εἰ clause, consisting of a paraphrase of Ps 33:9 LXX.¹⁰¹ As most commentators note, εἰ is used here in the *sensum reale*; the addressees have tasted the goodness of the Lord and this experience should motivate their inculcation of desire for milk.¹⁰² In reminding his addressees that the Lord is χρηστός (good), Peter likely took advantage of a pun that was quite accidental in the Septuagint between χρηστός and Χριστός (Christ).¹⁰³ Indeed, these words are sufficiently similar that at

¹⁰⁰ That growth into salvation is the aim here is made clear by the ἵνα clause. Elliott sees in 1:23–2:3 a two stage process of “regeneration through the word (1:23) ... and continued nourishment on the word-milk.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 401. The aorist aspect of the imperative does not exclude this. See also Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 126. “Becoming new can only happen when the believers are continuously ‘nourished’ by God.”

¹⁰¹ Peter transforms the imperative γεύσαθε into the indicative ἐγεύσαθε, and deletes the verb ἴδετε (see). The Peshitta restores the deleted verb (transforming it into the perfect, as it does with the former verb).

¹⁰² Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 157; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 132n50; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 148; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 402; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 139.

¹⁰³ Davids, *1 Peter*, 83; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 148; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 404; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 137; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 131.

least one scribe replaced the former with the latter.¹⁰⁴ Depending on how advanced itacism is at this point, a hearer of the text may have had no way of knowing whether or not the *Vorleser* declared the Lord to be good or to be Christ. That they taste Christ's Lordship in this milk is good reason to see the milk as Christ's milk.

Using what Jobes calls "the most intimate ... of sensory metaphors,"¹⁰⁵ Peter reminds the addressees that they have tasted at once God's goodness and Christ's Lordship. The choice of tasting as the sensory verb, especially marked given the omission of 'seeing' from the psalm, speaks both of an intimate form of knowing and keeps the focus on ingestion, which is appropriate if a Eucharistic context is in view here.¹⁰⁶ Elliott denies a Eucharistic context to these verses, as "it is the inception of renewed life that is in view and thus the experience of baptism, not of the Eucharist."¹⁰⁷ Here, he seems to forget his own point, made in his comments on 2:2, that the milk is a source of "continued nourishment."¹⁰⁸ Even if the addressees are

¹⁰⁴ Thomas S. Caulley, "The Chrestos/Christos Pun (1 Pet 2:3) in P72 and P125," *NovT* 53, no. 4 (2011): 376–87.

¹⁰⁵ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 139.

¹⁰⁶ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 133; Martin, "Tasting."

¹⁰⁷ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 403.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 401.

meant to think of their baptism, it is quite possible that this led directly to their first reception of Eucharist.¹⁰⁹

1.1.7 1 Pet 2:9b

... ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε τοῦ ἐκ σκότους ὑμᾶς καλέσαντος εἰς τὸ θαυμαστὸν αὐτοῦ φῶς·

... so that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The final verse I will analyze in this section also comes from the οἶκος-cluster, from the second part which focuses on growth, and the second half of that part (2:4-10) in which “plerophoric epithets of the Old Testament people of God”¹¹⁰ are applied to the addressees. On its own, there is nothing in this verse to cause a reader to see birth imagery, especially as darkness is so often used for sin and light for godliness in relevant *comparanda*.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, following the previous five instances of birth imagery in the previous thirty-three verses of the epistle, talk of movement from darkness to light might be seen as continuing the birth imagery.

¹⁰⁹ Our evidence for a single initiation service that involved baptism, anointing, and communion is all much later, but the practice may be earlier. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 157.

¹¹⁰ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 140.

¹¹¹ For instance, in Isaiah alone, 9:2; 42:16; 58:10; 60:1–2. For fuller lists of possible allusions, see Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 168; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 440. Spicq suggests Ps 33:6 LXX (“Come to the Lord and be enlightened”), which is certainly a psalm our author is fond of quoting. Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 93.

At the most basic level, birth does involve the movement of a baby from a dark place to a light place. This movement is basic to the way birth is spoken of in modern Spanish, both in the phrase *dar a luz a un bebe* (“to give a baby to the light,” meaning “to give birth”) and in the dual meaning of the verb *alumbrar* (“to illuminate” and “to give birth to”). Similarly, David Leitao notes in the context of classical texts that “the Greeks very frequently described childbirth with the otiose formula, ‘gave birth and brought into the light.’”¹¹² For instance, in his *Theogony*, Hesiod contrasts the birth of the cyclopes with normal births by stating that their father so hated them that he would not allow them to come into light (157). Plato talks of the final stage of the creation of living things as “when they were about to bring them to light” (*Prot.*, 320d; see also *Tim.* 91d). We see similar phraseology in Hellenistic Jewish literature. Job 3:16 LXX places in parallel the “stillborn” (ἔκτρωμα) and “infants who have not seen the light.” Bar 3:20 may also refer to being born as seeing light. One of Aseneth’s prayers in *Joseph and Aseneth*, describes God as the one who gave life to all things and who called them from darkness into light (8.10).

¹¹² David. D. Leitao, *The Pregnant Male in Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 210.

1.1.8 Summary

In the verses surveyed above, we have seen how Peter uses language of begetting and birth to vividly call to mind the “foundational ‘whence’”¹¹³ of Christian life. This language highlights God’s initiative. Possible aspects of the source domain that may be mapped are familial intimacy and genetic resemblance. The way the begetting language is used is associated with bringing people into elect status, especially in 1:3, which coheres well with the source property of familial connection and with the promises and assurances that go along with election. Begetting language is also used to ground ethical imperatives and is associated with the transmission of the property of imperishability in 1:23 (recall that imperishability is given as an aspiration for the human spirit in 3:4). This coheres well with the source domain property of genetic resemblance.

The application to Christians of Christ’s blood is the purpose of election and subsequent to it. It is also linked to covenant and priesthood and may be repeated (1:2). In 1:19, it is a means of redemption, which may be linked to the Exodus, or a superlative form of full incorporation of a newborn into God’s family. In this verse, it also serves as a source of imperishability, as does God’s seed in 1:23. Milk is another bodily substance which transmits properties, in this case, the privation of δόλος (deceit). Discussion of blood occurs in First Peter in ways that are tightly connected

¹¹³ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 81.

to the begetting language, and to the milk and seed language, which is more obviously connected with begetting. This helps motivate the attempt to test the hypothesis that the blood fits into the same source domain as the begetting. This will occupy us in chapter two.

1.2 The metaphorical ecosystem of First Peter

I now provide an overview of some other important metaphors that Peter uses to talk about who Christ is and how he saves. Peter's talk of salvation always involves Christ. As Green puts it, "in First Peter, all roads lead to and through Christ."¹¹⁴ Conversely, as Steven Kraftchick notes, "the letter's portraits of Jesus as the Christ reveal God and the church."¹¹⁵ As inconsistent yet coherent metaphors, these other "portraits" are mutually interpretive with each other and any other Christological or soteriological imagery. My subsequent interpretation of the maternal imagery will norm, modify, and guide interpretation of these images, just as their interpretation norms, modifies, and guides interpretation of the maternal imagery.

Fika van Rensburg identifies three main soteriological images in First Peter: "the saved as family, with God as father; the saved as a flock of sheep having been returned to Christ as (chief) shepherd; the saved as having been healed by Christ's

¹¹⁴ Green, *1 Peter*, 210.

¹¹⁵ Kraftchick, "Reborn," 83.

wound.”¹¹⁶ Along with the latter two of these, we consider here two additional images: the saved as stones in a temple with Christ as the cornerstone; the saved on a journey with Christ as the pioneer. Van Rensburg explicitly rejects the former as a soteriological image,¹¹⁷ and does not consider the latter. While he gives no reasons, I conjecture that the omission is because van Rensburg is concerned with images of the end of salvation, not the process. I am concerned with salvation in progress and as completed. I treat the stones, wound, and shepherd images in the order they occur in the letter, and then treat the journey image, which recurs throughout the letter. Finally, I consider the question of whether one metaphor serves as a “root metaphor” for metaphorical ecosystem of First Peter considered as a whole. Unlike in the previous section, we are not aiming at a thorough philological or intertextual study of each verse which discloses these metaphors, but simply at outlining what some of the possible entailments (from which a reader must select) may be.

1.2.1 Christ, the cornerstone (2:4-8)

(4) πρὸς ὃν προσερχόμενοι λίθον ζῶντα ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀποδοκιμασμένον, παρὰ δὲ θεῶν ἐκλεκτὸν ἔντιμον, (5) καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος

¹¹⁶ Fika J. van Rensburg, "Metaphors in the Soteriology of 1 Peter: Identifying and Interpreting the Salvific Imageries," in *Salvation in the New Testament : Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. J. G. Van der Watt, NovTSup 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 409–35, 418.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 419.

πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Keep on coming¹¹⁸ to him, a living stone, rejected by mortals, but chosen by God and precious to him, and continue letting yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be¹¹⁹ a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This image is contained in 1 Pet 2:4–8, part of which is reproduced above. It presents Jesus as simultaneously rejected and chosen; rejected by humans, and chosen by God. In verse 4, the rejection and positive valuation seem to co-exist simultaneously. The perfect participle ἀποδοκιμασμένον has stative aspect. As Goppelt puts it, “he is and remains ... the stone rejected by humankind, not only by Israel.”¹²⁰ In addition to the rejection that led to Jesus’ crucifixion, Jesus’ continuing rejection may also be in view here, especially by the neighbors of both Peter and his addressees. The description in verse 7,¹²¹ though, suggests a narrative sequence.

¹¹⁸ Οἰκοδομεῖσθε is ambiguous and could be either an indicative or an imperative. Προσερχόμενοι could give attendant circumstances, or, if the finite noun is imperative, could inherit imperative meaning from it. Commentators are divided on how to read these verbs. For a full record of who takes which position, see Jobes, *1 Peter*, 156. Goppelt argues that it fits with Peter’s pattern of interweaving indicative and imperative to understand verses 6–8 as indicative justification for imperative in 4–5. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 140n28. I also adopt Elliott’s suggestion to translate both verbs in a way that draws out explicitly the continuous aspect. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 409.

¹¹⁹ Achtemeier demonstrates that the εἰς here is telic. The addressees are not being built into a priesthood, but built into a spiritual house in order that they may be a priesthood.

¹²⁰ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 137. See also Kraftchick, “Reborn,” 95.

¹²¹ A citation of Ps 117:22 LXX.

Using two aorist indicative verbs, it is first said that Jesus the stone was rejected, and then that he has been put in a place of honor, as the cornerstone of the spiritual house, likely a reference to the temple.¹²²

This image communicates a strong continuity between Christ and Christians, although not an identity: both parties are described as stones; both are being built together into one house; both know rejection and election. Achtemeier identifies the parallel between Christ and Christians as the “theological thrust” of 2:4–10.¹²³ The parallels are profound, but do not reach the point of equality. While the Christians are all thought of as stones in the temple, Christ is the cornerstone which “firmly fixed the site of the building and determined its direction.”¹²⁴ The experience of Christ and Christians are not simply “interconnected;”¹²⁵ rather, Christ’s identity and experience form the “basis”¹²⁶ for that of Christians. Additionally, Green points out that the Christians’ sacrifices are only acceptable through Jesus Christ.¹²⁷ In a double title, probably coined by Augustine, Christ, for First Peter, is *exemplum et*

¹²² The phrase οἶκος θεοῦ is a common Septuagintism for the temple (e.g. 1 Chron 6:48). As Goppelt points out, the mention of priesthood commends understanding this house to be the temple. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 141. Also, compare 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16.

¹²³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 152. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 407; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 146; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 135; Kraftchick, "Reborn," 94.

¹²⁴ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 429.

¹²⁵ Kraftchick, "Reborn," 94.

¹²⁶ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 135.

¹²⁷ Green, *1 Peter*, 60.

sacramentum.¹²⁸ In some ways, Christ is imitable. In others, however, he has an unrepeatable role of making possible such conformity.

The image also has various potential entailments in terms of what kinds of actions Peter wants his addressees to commit to. However *προσερχόμενοι* is read, the addressees still have travel to undertake in the source domain of the metaphor. Journey is being used here as an image for how Christians are to occupy themselves as they await the parousia. The telic nature of *εἰς ἱεράτευμα* (2:5) means that Christians also either have or will have something to offer, which is described in the source domain of a second, related, metaphor as priestly service.¹²⁹ The image depicts the Christians as still needing to undergo a certain transformation, which God will affect (and possibly has already begun to affect). Change is called for on the level of community. As Feldmeier puts it, “only as a ‘building,’ as a collective, can the ‘living stones’ fulfill their intended purpose.”¹³⁰ The image may also entail

¹²⁸ See discussion in Andreas Merkt, “1 Peter in Patristic Literature,” in *Reading 1-2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 77 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 167–180, 177. Elliott employs the more prosaic “example and enabler.” Elliott, *1 Peter*, 110.

¹²⁹ Commentators have offered a range of opinions of quite what it is that these Christians may be being called to offer. See overview in Jobes, *1 Peter*, 145.

¹³⁰ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 135. See also Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 139.

transformation on the individual level. A λίθος is a “dressed stone,”¹³¹ which has been cut and shaped to fit into a building.

To summarize the entailments of these two related yet strictly inconsistent metaphors (stones are not priests), Christ is presented as having known and, possibly still undergoing, rejection, while now occupying a space of glory and honor. Christians are presented as already likened to Christ, but in need of further transformation, which is variously presented as change they effect (through a journey image) and as change God will continue to effect in them (through building).

1.2.2 Christ, whose wound heals (2:24c)

οὗ τῷ μύλωπι ἰάθητε.

[Christ,] by whose wound you were healed.

This relative clause is the only passage in First Peter to employ the image of a healing wound. It stands as the climax to a series of extracts from Isaiah 53,¹³² which Peter uses to describe how Christ approached suffering and the effects that has had.

¹³¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 154.

¹³² For analysis of which verses from this chapter of Isaiah are in play, see Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 214; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 197. Jobes points out that the most prominent change from the Isaianic source is from a first person plural subject to a second person plural (ἰάθητε). She speculates that this may be to stress to the addressees that they are included in the benefits of Christ’s suffering. *Ibid.*, 198.

The following verse continues the theme, but turns to the language of sheep and shepherd to do so. This image presents Christ as having suffered and does not present an image of his glorification. The suffering being brought to mind is likely specifically the crucifixion, as, earlier in the verse, there is a reference to Christ's body having been put upon "the tree" (τὸ ξύλον).¹³³ It presents Christians as having already received healing.

While there is no component of this metaphor that maps to the addressees' present experience of suffering, the addressees would come to this text with their own experiences of suffering fully alive for them, and would understand this image to communicate a certain solidarity between them and Christ.¹³⁴ Attending to contemporary medical understandings of wounds and sores, one can see how this image may entail an even profounder sense of solidarity. Martin has documented the common medical view around the time of First Peter that a sore is a body's healing response to trauma, which draws bad matter away from other parts of the body. Hence, sores are healing. What is remarkable in this image is that the sore heals not

¹³³ Ξύλον is also used to mean cross in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal 3:13. This was not merely a piece of Christian terminology; Elliott points to references to crucifixion crosses as trees in Qumran literature and Cicero. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 534. Elliott also takes the term μώλωψ as a metonymy for all the damage inflicted by crucifixion, along with the pre-crucifixion beating. Ibid., 536.

¹³⁴ Some commentators see a particular solidarity with the enslaved members of the community, given both their recent mention in the letter, and the greater likelihood that they would be subject to regular beatings. Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 181; Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 113; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 536. Against this, see Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 214.

merely the body it afflicts, but other bodies too.¹³⁵ This shows both the superlative power of Christ's sore, and the closeness of Christ to Christians, in that their bodies to some extent function as one. This may be a development of the Pauline body and members image from 1 Cor 12:12–27.

1.2.3 Christ, the chief shepherd (2:25; 5:1–4)

(2:25) ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλ' ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.

For you used to wander like sheep, but now you have been returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

(5:2) ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ ἀναγκαστῶς ἀλλ' ἐκουσίως κατὰ θεόν, μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως,

Shepherd the flock of God that is in your midst, watching over it not under compulsion, but willingly (as God wills),¹³⁶ and not for sordid gain, but eagerly.

(5:4) καὶ φανερωθέντος τοῦ ἀρχιποίμενος κομιεῖσθε τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

In this series of images, Christ is presented as a shepherd. While there is pervasive Old Testament precedent for using the language of shepherd both for God

¹³⁵ Troy W. Martin, "Christ's Healing Sore: A Medical Reading of 1 Petri 2,24," *Vetera Christianorum* 54 (2017): 143-154.

¹³⁶ That κατὰ θεόν is missing from many manuscripts and patristic citations supports reading it as parenthetical.

and for human leaders,¹³⁷ the use of the verb φανερώ (“to appear,” as in the parousia) in 5:4 makes clear that the reference is to Christ.¹³⁸ The most basic entailment of this metaphor is that Christ cares for Christians.¹³⁹ The specific phrasing of 2:25 is likely directly lifted from Ezekiel, which results in this verse portraying Christ as performing actions previously ascribed to God. In Ezek 34:16, a passage which uses flock and shepherd imagery, God declares “I will bring back that which has wandered” (τὸ πλανώμενον ἐπιστρέψω); both these latter two Greek words appear in 1 Pet 2:25. An earlier verse in the same passage, Ezek 34:11, may also be in play in 1 Pet 2:25, as in that verse of Ezekiel the verb ἐπισκέπτομαι (“watch over”) is predicated of God, and Peter applies the nominal paronym ἐπίσκοπος to Christ.¹⁴⁰ This image presents Christ as engaged in ongoing care for Christians and having a close connection with divine activity.

In 1 Pet 2:25, the passive voice of ἐπεστράφητε emphasizes divine activity over Christian activity (as in Ezek 34:16). The addressees’ pre-Christian life is characterized by wandering. This image on its own downplays any sense of Christian

¹³⁷ See, for instance, lists of verses in Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 325nn60–62.

¹³⁸ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 348–49n30; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 329; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 537; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 306. Elliott points out that this would not be apparent on a first reading of the text. For Christ as shepherd elsewhere in the New Testament, see John 10; Heb 13:2; Rev 7:17.

¹³⁹ The image conveys “un aspect de la pastoration, la vigilance active, la sollicitude du Berger qui pourvoit a tout.” Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 113.

¹⁴⁰ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 537. The noun is applied to God in Job 20:29 and Wis 1:6.

action or journeying post-conversion, without denying it. For van Rensburg, the relevant property of wandering sheep which is mapped to the addressees is that such sheep are in grave danger.¹⁴¹ This fits well with the previous verse, in which their pre-Christian state was characterized as illness from which they needed to be healed. It may be important, though, that wandering is not merely a generic source of danger, but is futile movement. Wandering stresses agency in a way that being sick does not. Additionally, Feldmeier has characterized salvation in First Peter as “the overcoming of impermanence.”¹⁴² Decay and perishability are forms of change with negative valence. Change ← Movement is a common conceptual metaphor, and wandering may be a creative extension of this that vividly portrays the futile activity from which God’s imperishable seed (1:23) has saved the addressees.

In chapter five, Peter presents Christ’s role as shepherd as being shared with some Christians. This image presents the possibility for Christian action to serve as an extension of Christ’s activity, or possibly as a means through which Christ acts. As Achtemeier puts it, “the elders who shepherd God’s flock are continuing, in part

¹⁴¹ van Rensburg, "Soteriology," 429.

¹⁴² Reinhard Feldmeier, "Salvation and Anthropology in First Peter," in *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition*, eds. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert W. Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 203–13, 211. He speaks also of “the conviction that the conditions of this inane, perishable, and dark world do not limit this life since God’s life-giving act in Christ ... opened up a new horizon in the middle of the perishable world.” Ibid.

at least, Christ's ministry."¹⁴³ Applying shepherd language to human leaders is already common in the Old Testament (e.g. Num 27:16–17; 2 Sam 5:2). In fact, in Pauline literature, it is only applied to human leaders other than Christ (1 Cor 9:7; Eph 4:11).

This cooperation in ministry is another form of union and closeness between Christ and at least some Christians, while preserving an inimitable role for Christ as chief shepherd (*ἀρχιποίμην*).¹⁴⁴ These shepherds are meant to serve as examples (*τύποι*) for the rest of the flock, though, so whatever closeness they have to Christ through this cooperation is not their exclusive preserve, but is imitable. The people who will exercise this ministry seem to be selected by the community, as Peter warns that they shouldn't be coerced (5:2).¹⁴⁵ This passage concludes with a mention of the future glory in store for these shepherds, a glory which is imperishable and, presumably, derivative of Christ's.

This shepherding image, then, may entail Christ's ongoing care of Christians (in which at least some Christians cooperate, post-conversion and pre-parousia), the

¹⁴³ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 329.

¹⁴⁴ For Feldmeier, not just "chief of shepherds" but "the epitome, 'archetype' of every office of shepherd." Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 236. Note, though, that *ἀρχιποίμην* was not a special religious term, but was used in literal pastoral contexts, including as a label for the mummy of a peasant youth in Egypt. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 833.

¹⁴⁵ For Goppelt, this is a warning for the community not to force people to take up this ministry; for Achtemeier, an encouragement for people to volunteer so as coercion is not necessary. Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 345; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 326.

cessation of human decay upon becoming Christian, and the promise of future imperishability and glory.

1.2.4 Christ, the pioneer (2:21)

(2:21) εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμόν, ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἵχνεσιν αὐτοῦ,

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow his footsteps.¹⁴⁶

(5:12b) δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα παρακαλῶν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρῶν ταύτην εἶναι ἀληθῆ χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἣν στήτε

I have written to you briefly, encouraging [you] and bearing witness that this is the true grace of God. Stand¹⁴⁷ in it.

The final image to be treated here is one in which Christ is presented as a pioneer on a journey, with Christians following him. While this is most explicit in 2:21, many interpreters see journey as a basic image for the Christian life in First Peter.¹⁴⁸ Melvin McMillen, however, opposes this understanding of the place of

¹⁴⁶ Τοῖς ἵχνεσιν is understood as the object of ἐπακολουθέω, which regularly takes an object in the dative. Dubis, *1 Peter*, 77.

¹⁴⁷ Understanding στήτε as an imperative and turning the Greek relative clause into an independent sentence to avoid the awkwardness in English of a relative imperatival clause to an indicative sentence. The versional evidence for ἐστήκατε is likely secondary.

¹⁴⁸ For instance: “La vie chrétienne est comme une pérégrination.” Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 27. See also Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, esp. 150–55, 274.

journey in the letter's imagery.¹⁴⁹ Hence, 5:12b will also be treated in this subsection as the strongest possible evidence for a counter-motif of Christian staticity.

In 2:21, Christ's walking in the source domain maps to his suffering in the target domain. The potentially arduous nature of travel makes it an appropriate source domain for this metaphor. Christ's walking supplies a *ὕπογραμμός* for Christians, which can mean either a model to be copied (as in a pedagogical technique for teaching writing) or an outline to be filled in.¹⁵⁰ This entails a call for Christians to live what Edward Selwyn terms a "dying life,"¹⁵¹ comparing Mark 8:34. Jobes extends this image, commenting: "The Christian life is very much the way of the cross [but] ... the footsteps of Christ do not end at the tomb."¹⁵²

A pioneer does more than simply tolerate imitation, though. Since Augustine, 2:21 has been used to justify ascribing the two-fold status *exemplum et sacramentum* for Christ;¹⁵³ Christian walking would not be possible without Christ's walking. Feldmeier describes this as the "interleaving of the soteriological singularity and ethical exemplarity of Christ's suffering."¹⁵⁴ Elliott paints a vivid picture of Christ as

¹⁴⁹ McMillen, "Metaphor and 1 Peter."

¹⁵⁰ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 179; Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 111; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 204; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 199; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 506; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 173.

¹⁵¹ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 98.

¹⁵² Jobes, *1 Peter*, 47.

¹⁵³ See Merkt, "Patristic," 172–76.

¹⁵⁴ Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 174.

pioneer, imagining a child following a father through deep snow. The child can only step because the father's stepping has cleared a path through the snow.¹⁵⁵

Another important aspect of the "walking" source domain is that the activity of walking moves the walker from one place to another. As such, it may also represent change. In contemporary English, think of a director exclaiming to a struggling choir, "we have a long way to go before the performance." As J. de Waal Dryden concludes, "character formation is a central concern [of First Peter.]"¹⁵⁶ In his reading of 1:13, Christoph Müller also concludes: "Mit der hier ergehenden Aufforderung stellt der Autor des 1 Petr auch klar, dass die von ihm angesprochenen Adressaten, die im Glauben Neugeborene geworden sind, wieterhin mancherlei Entwicklung zu durchlaufen haben."¹⁵⁷ Journey, as an image for the ongoing change required of Christians post-conversion, coheres well with the image of them as

¹⁵⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 528.

¹⁵⁶ J. de Waal Dryden, *Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter: Paraenetic Strategies for Christian Character Formation*, WUNT 209 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 193.

¹⁵⁷ Christoph G. Müller, "'Umgürtet die Hüften eurer Gesinnung!' (1 Petr 1,13): Das Zusammenspiel von metaphorischer Rede und nicht-metaphorischer Begrifflichkeit im Ersten Petrusbrief," in *Bedrängnis und Identität: Studien zu Situation, Kommunikation und Theologie des 1. Petrusbriefes*, ed. David S. Du Toit, BZNW 200 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 143–66, 150. McMillen has argued that the image of girding loins in 1:13 is better understood in terms of combat than preparation for travel. McMillen, "Metaphor and 1 Peter," 120. Combat language is indeed present in other parts of First Peter, notably in 2:11 and 4:1. At best, 1:13 may be ambiguous between travel and combat. Müller's conclusions, then, apply with greater force to 2:21 than to 1:13.

infants, in need of maturation and growth, with the nourishment needed for that growth available.¹⁵⁸

Walking is a form of movement that requires action on the part of the one walking. Arguing from within a virtue ethics framework, Green sees First Peter's frequent injunctions to "do good" (*ἀγαθοποιέω*; 2:15, 20; 3:6, 17) as part of that character formation; virtue is inculcated through practices that habituate a godly *habitus*.¹⁵⁹ This image of walking, then, may highlight the contribution of the Christians' own practices to their ongoing transformation. The ineliminable role for Christ is not ignored by this image, as his role as pioneer shows.

McMillen prefers to read 2:21 as referring to a past journey, that the addressees have walked in Christ's footsteps and that has made them part of the new family of God; instead of moving now, they should stay put.¹⁶⁰ This reading makes little sense of the verse in the context of 2:18–25. In 2:21a, Peter gives the reason (using an explanatory *γάρ*) for the previous recommendation of doing right even when suffering. This reason is the example of Christ who suffered (v. 21) despite being sinless (v. 22), yet did not retaliate (v. 23). The purpose of the example (*ἵνα* clause in v. 21) is for Christians to walk in Christ's footsteps, which means to do the

¹⁵⁸ See Paul B. Decock, "Towards Maturity in 1 Peter: Freedom, Holiness, Immortality," *IDS* 50 (2016): a2307, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i2.2037>.

¹⁵⁹ Green, *1 Peter*, 265–68.

¹⁶⁰ McMillen, "Metaphor and 1 Peter," 210.

things Christ did. These things at least include the virtuous endurance of unjust suffering, which is not how they got to be Christian, but what they are to keep doing now that they are Christian. McMillen's argument for seeing this as a past journey stems from his commitment to reading all of the spatial imagery in First Peter as not merely coherent, but consistent. Faced with some apparent journey imagery and some apparent static imagery, he prioritizes the static imagery to describe Christians' pre-parousia posture. However, some of McMillen's best evidence for Christian staticity admits of different readings. Hence, we briefly give a reading of the conclusion of 5:12.

The referent of the relative pronoun ἣν is either ταυτήν or χάρις. While the referent of the demonstrative ταύτην is not immediately clear, a good option is the feminine noun χάρις in 5:10.¹⁶¹ One might paraphrase, then, as “this grace (that is, the grace that characterizes God) is grace of God indeed.” Either way, the addressees are then instructed to stand (στῆτε) either in grace, or in something which has been equated with grace. This certainly at first sight appears to be a static image, but this initial impression is not confirmed by examining actual pragmatic uses of ἵστημι.

In Deut 31:14, the Lord tells Moses to call Joshua and then that they are both to stand (στῆτε) beside the entrance to the tent of meeting. At this point in the

¹⁶¹ Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 242; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 878; Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 254. Another option is that it refers to the contents of the letter, and is feminine to agree with ἐπιστολή. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 353; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 324.

narrative, Moses is not in the tent of meeting, and there is nothing to suggest that Joshua is either. Both of them must move to the tent of meeting in order to comply with the command. As paradoxical as it may seem, *στῆτε* as a command can enjoin motion. In Jer 6:16, the people of Jerusalem are commanded to stand (*στῆτε*) by the roads and then walk in them. In this instance, the command again enjoins any who are not currently standing by a road to move to a road. Once at the road, they only stand long enough to see which road is good before beginning to walk along the road. *Στῆτε* here enjoins motion and does not preclude further motion upon reaching the destination.

In 1 Pet 1:13, grace is described as still on its way to the addressees (*τὴν φερομένην ὑμῖν χάριν*). Like Moses and Aaron who are not at the tent of meeting, and those Jerusalemites who are not at a road, the addressees are not “at” grace,¹⁶² and a command to stand there is a command to move. If the preposition *εἰς* has directive force, this reading is strengthened, though the preposition does not demand this reading, as it could be an instance of the common Hellenistic substitution of *εἰς* for *ἐν*.¹⁶³ In addition to grace being on a journey, so is the end (*τὸ τέλος*; 4:7). Not only is the Christians’ journey impossible without Christ’s initiative, it is incomplete on its

¹⁶² 1 Pet 4:10 states that the addressees have received *χάρισμα*, but refers to them as stewards (*οἰκονόμοι*) rather than recipients or possessors of grace.

¹⁶³ Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 373; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 352.

own. As a popular aphorism puts it, if the Christian life is a race, the finish line is running faster towards the competitors than they ever could towards it.

To sum up, the pioneer image presents Christians as undergoing continual transformation through their own activity, with Christ's initiative still serving as both a necessary prerequisite and as providing a model for that activity. While Christian activity is highlighted by this image, when compared with other journey imagery in the letter, it is also shown to reach its goal only in concert with ongoing divine activity.

1.2.5 Diaspora as a controlling metaphor for First Peter

Different metaphors within one literary work have different priorities. Two scholars, Troy Martin and Shively Smith, have both argued that the dominant metaphor of First Peter is of First Peter is "the Christian addressees ← Diaspora Israelites."¹⁶⁴ This metaphor is introduced in the letter opening (1:1) and is also clearly referenced in the letter closing, when Peter refers to Rome as Babylon (5:13).¹⁶⁵ This 'bracketing' suggests that the diaspora metaphor plays an important

¹⁶⁴ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 144; Smith, *Strangers to Family*, 2.

¹⁶⁵ It is also possible that the feminine substantive adjective *συνεκλεκτή* (co-elect one) is feminine because it is understood as modifying an unexpressed *διασπορά*. See discussion in Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 144-46.

role in the letter's conceptual framework. In addition, many other metaphors important to the epistle can be explained as extensions of this metaphor.

Consider, for instance, the claim that the addressees are “aliens and sojourners” (*παροίκοι και παρεπιδήμοι*, 2:11; cp. 1:1, 17).¹⁶⁶ In Roman law, *παροίκοι* or *παρεπιδήμοι* were distinct legal categories.¹⁶⁷ That Peter can use the terms interchangeably (making 2:11 pleonastic) suggests that these terms are not literal descriptions of the addressees.¹⁶⁸ Instead, Horrell suggests that Peter is here being guided by Septuagintal uses of the terms, especially Gen 23:4 LXX, in which Abraham describes himself as *πάροικος και παρεπίδημος*.¹⁶⁹ This metaphorical description of the addressees extends the diaspora metaphor. Green conveys well the negative sense of the metaphorical descriptions: “their commitments to the lordship of Jesus Christ have led to transformed attitudes and behaviors that place them on the fringes of their communities.”¹⁷⁰ But, there is a positive side to the metaphor as well. As Feldmeier puts it: “die Fremdlingschaft hat ... ihren eigentlichen Grund in

¹⁶⁶ In 1:1, the addressees are described as *παρεπιδήμοι*; in 1:17, they are experiencing *παροιμία* (and, thus, are *παροίκοι*); in 2:11, they are the conjunction of the two terms.

¹⁶⁷ Elliott, *Home for the Homeless*, 24–48.

¹⁶⁸ Pace Elliott.

¹⁶⁹ Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 117.

¹⁷⁰ Green, *1 Peter*, 6. Compare Selwyn's gloss of “sojourners” as “uprooted from their old securities.” Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 57.

der eschatologischen Existenz der christlichen Gemeinde.”¹⁷¹ They have become estranged from their physical neighbors because they have been given a new citizenship; being a diaspora people is an “upgrade” compared to being “no people” (2:10).

When Martin generates entailments from the diaspora metaphor, he concentrates on the negative side. Relying heavily on the work of John Collins, he selects two properties of the diaspora source domain as important parts of the mapping: “the temporal aspect of Diaspora as a road to be traveled or a journey to be undertaken and the threatening aspect of the Diaspora as a dangerous place pressuring the faithful to assimilate and defect.”¹⁷² Martin views First Peter’s language of new birth (1:23; 2:2) as denoting the start of this journey, which is also referred to as God calling them (1:15; 2:21; 3:9; 5:10) and as their redemption (1:18).¹⁷³ Smith seeks to complement this by drawing attention to some of the positive aspects of the diaspora metaphor, as Feldmeier has also done. While she acknowledges that suffering was an “unavoidable feature of diaspora life,”¹⁷⁴ the dominant entailment of the diaspora metaphor in First Peter for Smith is the sense

¹⁷¹ Reinhard Feldmeier, *Die Christen als Fremde: Die Metapher der Fremde in der antiken Welt, im Urchristentum und im 1. Petrusbrief*, WUNT 64 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 178–79.

¹⁷² Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 274.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 154–55.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *Strangers to Family*, 42.

of solidarity among Christians who are geographically separated and living amongst outsiders:

The image of diaspora expresses a core belief that [each local community addressed is] not merely a group of isolated strangers striving to make it on their own in a world known for responding with great cruelty, disregard, and violence for the unrecognizable 'other.' Diaspora in I Peter reminds readers they are members of a diverse and vast kinship requiring only acknowledgement and embrace.¹⁷⁵

1.2.6 Integration and comparison of these images

Reading these images together, certain common entailments can be observed. Christ is often depicted as having suffered. At the same time, he is elect and is now in a place of glory. Especially as shepherd, he continues to care for Christians. Christians are presented in a relationship of likeness to Christ, even though an inimitable dimension to Christ's role remains (e.g., as cornerstone to their identity as stone in a building). That likeness still stands in need of being increased. The agency driving this change is cooperatively distributed between different actors. Christian action is necessary, and this is communicated through images such as the various calls to walk. God is still active in changing them, forming them into a temple, bringing them back from wandering, bringing grace to them. Christ's

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 19.

suffering also has a causative role in the ongoing transformation of Christians (as is expressed via the image of his “wound”).

In the following chapter, we will examine the evidence from ancient medical literature. This will confirm that the analysis of the blood, seed, milk, and birth language above is consistent with an understanding of Peter’s new birth metaphor in which the mother slot is mapped to Christ. We will then be able to see how this maternal Christology fits into and modifies the above results.

2. Motherhood, according to the medics

This chapter investigates how four major medical authors (or schools) understand conception, gestation, birth, neonatal care, and the effects of these processes on women's bodies. At the end of each section, we will examine how a reader who subscribed to each of these schools of thought might have understood the birth, blood, seed, and milk language in First Peter. A skillful sympathetic reader of a metaphorical text must select which aspects of a source domain to map to the target domain so as to make the best sense of the text.¹ Finally, then, we will ask how one of the original readers with eclectic, even if non-specialist, medical knowledge might have found meaning in the textual metaphors studied in the previous chapter.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it shows that, according to the understanding of each of the medical sources, the references to blood in First Peter can be understood as part of the source domain of the new birth metaphor and that understanding them in this way necessitates mapping the "mother" slot in the source domain to Christ in the target domain. Secondly, we seek to investigate what some of the entailments of this mapping might be for the understanding of Christ's saving

¹ See the section on metaphor theory in the Introduction for definition of these terms.

work communicated by First Peter. We investigate these entailments for two reasons. Firstly, as we outlined in the introduction, finding the right mapping for a given textual metaphor is an inductive process of trial and error. Given a putative mapping, readers test this mapping to see if it generates entailments that help them make good sense of the text. The second reason is that, if this mapping is accepted, then these entailments constitute the interpretative payoff of the work.

2.1 The Hippocratic Corpus

The Hippocratic Corpus is a diverse collection of medical texts, the oldest of which date from the fifth century BCE, likely assembled in the third or second century BCE.² While this is substantially earlier than the composition of First Peter, the corpus had by time of the epistle attained the status of a classic.³ As Vivian

² For recent general introductions to the Hippocratic corpus, see Jacques Jouanna, *Hippocrates* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 53–103; Elizabeth M. Craik, *The "Hippocratic" Corpus: Content and Context* (New York: Routledge, 2015). For more on dating specifically the gynecological treatises, see Lesley Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 5–6; Lesley Dean-Jones, "Female Patients," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates*, ed. Peter E. Pormann, Cambridge Companions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 246–62, 247–48.

³ For the importance of the Hippocratic Corpus for medicine in general and gynecology in particular in the Roman Empire, see Rebecca Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 114–22.

Nutton puts it, “from the early third century BC onwards, the Hippocratic Corpus came to be seen as a standard against which other types of healing might be measured.”⁴

Determining the authorship of the various treatises which comprise this corpus is fraught with difficulty.⁵ While Helen King admits that “diversity is key to the corpus,” she still considers there to be “sufficient points of agreement”⁶ on gynecological issues that one can speak of recognizably “Hippocratic” gynecology. Much of the corpus is devoted to specifically gynecological and embryological topics.⁷ Below, we will use this material to construct a plausibly Hippocratic story of what happens in and to bodies, from conception through birth and beyond.

⁴ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 71.

⁵ For an introduction to the so-called “Hippocratic problem” of determining which treatises share a common author, see Elizabeth Craik, “The ‘Hippocratic Question’ and the Nature of the Hippocratic Corpus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates*, ed. Peter E. Pormann, Cambridge Companions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25–37.

⁶ Helen King, *Hippocrates’ Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 11, 21. “Although there is a good deal of inconsistency between these several works, ... the gynecological material of the Hippocratic Corpus presents several consistent themes.” Monica H. Green, “The Transmission of Ancient Theories of Female Physiology and Disease Through the Early Middle Ages” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1985), 13.

⁷ Green estimates one fifth of the corpus treats these themes; King, a quarter. Green, “Transmission,” 13; King, *Hippocrates’ Woman*, 1. Anna Rebecca Solevåg comments that the “gynecological treatises ... form the largest body of homogeneous subject matter within the corpus.” Anna Rebecca Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse*, BibInt 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 66.

2.1.1 Conception

The Hippocratic treatise *Generation*⁸ defines conception as the uterine postcoital retention of seed: “if [the woman] is to conceive (λήψεσθαι), the seed (ἡ γονή)⁹ does not flow out but remains inside the uterus” (*Genit.* 5 LCL 14).¹⁰ While this sentence refers to the seed remaining, later in the same chapter, the uterus is

⁸ Craik dates this text to 430–420 BCE. For general introduction and fuller bibliography, see Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 113–18. The Greek text of this work may be found with facing English translation in Hippocrates, *Generation. Nature of the Child. Diseases 4. Nature of Women and Barrenness*, LCL 520, trans. Paul Potter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1–24. Citations will be given in the form *Genit.* *n* LCL *p*, where *n* is the section number, as in the Loeb text, and *p* is the page number in the same edition. Many scholars refer to sections in this and many other Hippocratic works with “L *p*” to reference the page number in the Littré editions. However, the Loeb editions are likely more accessible to more readers and, in many instances, present a superior text.

⁹ This term, γονή, refers to both seed and to the result of conception, at least in the early stages of gestation. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of ancient literature in this chapter are my own. Rather than imposing modern medical categories on our Hippocratic authors, both in translation and paraphrase, I consistently render γονή as “seed,” ἔμβρυον as “embryo,” and παῖδιον as “child.”

¹⁰ See also *Nat. puer.* 1 LCL 31. This text, *Nature of the Child*, is identified by Craik as a continuation of *Generation*. On their titles, she comments: “Such titles as ‘On Conception’ and ‘On Embryology’ would better represent their content separately; overall perhaps ‘On Intercourse and Pregnancy’ or simply ‘On Reproduction.’” Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 115. Citations are to the section divisions and page numbers in Potter’s edition of Hippocrates, *Generation and other works*, 24–95.

portrayed as playing an active part in holding on to the seed.¹¹ While “seed” here is used in the singular, this Hippocratic author believed that seed was produced by both the man and the woman.¹² If these seeds are both retained inside the uterus, the next step is for them to mix (μίγνυμι; *Genit.* 5 LCL 14; *Nat. puer.* 1 LCL 31).

The seed is moisture (ύγρόν) which is heated and therefore foams up (*Genit.* 1 LCL 6). As blood and seed are both important sources for metaphors in First Peter, it is worth pointing out that, at least for this Hippocratic author, seed and blood are distinguishable. For instance, he can point out that blood may be carried along with seed (αἷμα ξυμφέρεται; *Genit.* 1 LCL 8). This author identifies four types of moisture: blood, bile, water, and phlegm (*Genit.* 3 LCL 10). All of these are involved in the production of seed, which “comes from all the moisture in the body” (*Genit.* 1 LCL 6).¹³

¹¹ See discussion in Iain M. Lonie, *The Hippocratic Treatises "On Generation," "On the Nature of the Child," "Diseases IV: A Commentary,"* Ars Medica 7 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 124.

¹² Reference to male seed (ή δὲ γονή τοῦ ἀνδρός) begins at *Genit.* 1 LCL 6, in the opening sentence of the work. Female seed is first introduced in *Genit.* 5 LCL 14, where it is stated that “the woman too releases [seed] (μεθίει δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνή).” While this passage does not use the term γονή, this author does identify what the woman releases at this stage as seed, as can be observed in *Nature of the Child* 1 LCL 31 (“the seed from both;” ἡ γονή ... ἀπ’ ἀμφοῖν).

¹³ Lonie points out that here our author is disagreeing with Diogenes of Apollonia, who “called sperm a foam (ἀφρός) of blood and derived the word ἀφροδίσια from it.” Lonie, *Hippocratic Treatises*, 106.

Both male and female seed play a role in explaining hereditary resemblance between parents and their offspring.¹⁴ Both men and women produce androgenic and gynecogenic seed.¹⁵ The difference is simply that androgenic is stronger (ισχυρότερος) and gynecogenic, weaker (ἀσθενέστερος; *Genit.* 6 LCL 14).¹⁶ The sex of the offspring is determined by whether weaker or stronger seed is present in more abundance (*Nat. puer.* 6 LCL 16). As for other features: “From whatever part of the body more of the man has entered into the seed, the child resembles the father more in that part; from whatever part of the body more of the woman has entered, that part resembles more closely the mother” (*Genit.* 8 LCL 18). According to the Hippocratic author of *Airs, Waters, and Places*,¹⁷ unlike in modern genetic theory, physical characteristics acquired during one’s lifetime can be passed on via this mechanism. The example given is of the “Longheads” (Μακροκέφαλοι), who used to stretch out their children’s heads when they were born; by the author’s time, they simply pass on “longheadedness” via their seed (*Aer.* 14 LCL 110).

¹⁴ For a fuller discussion of resemblance and sex-selection across the Hippocratic Corpus, see Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 163–70.

¹⁵ Lonie refers to this as “sexual bi-potence” and argues that it is “the most original point in the author’s theory.” Lonie, *Hippocratic Treatises*, 126–27, 137.

¹⁶ *Nature of the Child* adds that gynecogenic seed is more fluid (ὕγροτέρη; 7 LCL 50).

¹⁷ Who may well be the same as the author of *Generation and Nature of the Child*. See Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 11. The text with facing English translation may be found in Hippocrates, *Ancient Medicine. Airs, Waters, Places. Epidemics 1 and 3. The Oath. Precepts. Nutriment*, LCL 147, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 65–138.

This theory assumes so-called pangenesis of seed; seed must come from each part of the body. However, the Hippocratic author also states that “most of it comes from the head” (*Genit.* 2 LCL 8).¹⁸ Studying a range of Hippocratic texts, Jessica Wright finds a variety of views on the functions of the brain but concludes that “there is one important convergence: The brain is responsible both for maintaining humoral balance and for producing or enabling consciousness and thought.”¹⁹ This may mean that seed carries cognitive data as well as a map of each parent’s physical characteristics.

2.1.2 Gestation

According to *Nature of the Child*, after the seed has been retained and mixed, it is warmed, which results in it foaming still more (*ἀθροίζεται*) and becoming thicker and stronger (*παχύνεται*). It then begins taking in breath (*πνεῦμα*) from the mother. The breath forms a pathway (*ὁδός*) to facilitate the exchange of breath (*Nat. puer.* 1

¹⁸ As evidence for this, he claims that people who have been incised behind their ears produce sterile seed.

¹⁹ She continues, “the manifestation of consciousness depends on humoral stability, such that the role of the brain as humoral regulator is a necessary component of its role as ‘messenger to consciousness’ or ‘interpreter of the air.’” Jessica L. Wright, “Brain and Soul in Late Antiquity” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2016), 59.

LCL 31). The breath is also responsible for differentiating the parts of the growing flesh (ἡ δὲ σὰρξ ἀύξομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἀρθροῦται; *Nat. puer.* 6 LCL 42).²⁰

As we saw in the previous subsection, the pattern of generation is contained in the parents' seed, but it is the mother's breath that performs the work of forming the parts. While the shaping of the growing flesh is accomplished by the breath, the raw material for growth is provided by the mother's blood.²¹ The author of *Nature of the Child* attributes the cessation of menstruation during pregnancy to this alternative destination for a woman's blood. This author's pangenetic theory of seed is mirrored in his understanding of blood, which, he states, comes from the woman's whole body (*Nat. puer.* 3 LCL 36). Only a little blood comes into the uterus in the first few days after conception, with a greater amount coming later into gestation (*Nat. puer.* 7 LCL 50). The author of another Hippocratic text, *Fleshes*,²² attributes agency in the attraction of this blood to the seed, or, as he puts it, "the child (παιδίον) in the womb sucks the edges (χείλεα) of the mother's womb and draws

²⁰ See examples in *Nat. puer.* 6 LCL 44; 8 LCL 52. According to Lonie, this is "the first coherent theory in Western science of the articulation and development of the embryo." Lonie, *Hippocratic Treatises*, 176.

²¹ For further comment and documentation of this doctrine in other Hippocratic texts, see Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 62–63, 203–204.

²² The text with facing English translation is available in Hippocrates, *Places in Man. Glands. Fleshes. Prorrhetic 1–2. Physician. Use of Liquids. Ulcers. Haemorrhoids and Fistulas.*, LCL 482, trans. Paul Potter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 125–64. Craik dates this text to the latter half of the fifth century BCE and finds some concord with *Nature of the Child*, without suggesting common authorship. Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 47–48.

nourishment (τροφήν) and breath (πνεῦμα) inside to its heart” (*Carn.* 6 LCL 140).

This text also states that women feel a chill when they become pregnant, presumably because the child is sucking in some of their heat. (*Carn.* 15 LCL 156).

When the embryo begins to move (three months after conception for a male; four for a female), the production of milk begins (*Nat. puer.* 10 LCL 58). The explanation given in this text is that the increased size of the uterus at this stage of pregnancy heats and puts pressure upon the stomach which pushes out the richest part (πίοτατον) of the food and drink the woman consumes. Some of this is directed to the uterus, where the child feeds itself with it (τὸ παιδίον ἐπαυρῖσκειται),²³ but the greater part is stored in the breasts (*Nat. puer.* 10 LCL 58–60). The treatise *Female Diseases*, compiled by the author of *Nature of the Child*,²⁴ gives the same account of the onset of milk production and gives this as a cause (using an explanatory γάρ) for the cessation of menstruation during pregnancy (*Mul.* 73 LCL 160). The same text explains why it is that women menstruate and men do not, as follows: women draw more of the moisture from the stomach (πλέον ἀπὸ τῆς κοιλίης τῆς ἰκμάδος) into their bodies than men do, resulting in an excess of blood (*Mul.* 1 LCL 12). As Iain Lonie

²³ The self-benefactive middle is to be preferred over the passive voice in reading this verb, as in *Nat. puer.* 19 LCL 85 the active voice is used to describe the child drawing (ἔλκει) milk to itself.

²⁴ Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 205. The text of *Female Diseases* with facing English translation is available in Hippocrates, *Diseases of Women 1–2*, LCL 538, trans. Paul Potter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

concludes, “the nutriment of the embryo during articulation, menstrual fluid and milk, are all forms of the same substance, which is drawn from the stomach.”²⁵

The Hippocratic authors recognize pregnancy as a dangerous time for mother and child alike. In general, the child will be healthy so long as its mother is (*Nat. puer.* 16 LCL 78). In *Generation*, this author explains why a sickly child can be born to two apparently robust parents. A healthy woman might consistently give birth to weak undersized children if her uterus is too narrow (ἦν δὲ πάντα τὰ γεγόμενα παῖδια ἀσθενέα ἔη, αἱ μῆτραι αἰτιαί εἰσι; *Genit.* 9 LCL 20). This author compares the situation to a cucumber growing in a cup, in that the cucumber grows into the shape of the cup. A single child may also be weakened, or even suffer miscarriage, if some of the nutrition it needed during gestation was instead discharged through an opening in the uterus (*Genit.* 9 LCL 20).

Female Diseases gives further examples of the latter issue (*Mul.* 21 LCL 62; 28 LCL 74). The former of these two passages also states adverse consequences for the pregnant woman if this occurs: “upset stomach, weakness, strong fever, and lack of appetite.” This treatise gives many more examples of the dangers of pregnancy for

²⁵ Lonie, *Hippocratic Treatises*, 205. For arguments that the Hippocratic treatise *Aphorisms* shares this understanding, see Green, “Transmission,” 16–17; King, *Hippocrates’ Woman*, 148. The later text, *Glands*, has a slight variant, according to which glands draw nourishment to themselves and turn it into milk (*Gland.* 16 LCL 120). The text can be found in Potter’s edition of Hippocrates, *Places in Man and other works*, 101–24. For dating of *Glands*, see Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 124.

women. A general principle is that pregnancy renders more severe the impact of even an “indifferent state” (τὸ σῶμα φλαύρως ἔχει; *Mul.* 26 LCL 70–72).²⁶ If the embryo should push in the wrong direction, the pregnant woman can experience a sudden strong suffocation (πνίγα ἰσχυρὴν ἐξαπίνης), which, if untreated, will lead to death (*Mul.* 32 LCL 78–80). Even without such misadventure, as the embryo accepts more and more of the woman’s blood, the gravid woman is left with insufficient blood, causing green discoloration, desires for unnatural (ἀτόπων) foods, and weakness (*Mul.* 34 LCL 80).

2.1.3 Birth

According to the author of *Nature of the Child*, it is the child who initiates birth by stirring up and warming the pregnant woman’s blood to a high degree (θερμαίνεται πάνυ) through forceful movement (ὑπο τῆς κινήσεως τοῦ παιδίου σθεναρῆς; *Nat. puer.* 7 LCL 46). Myers describes this as a violent, or “combative,” action on the

²⁶ See also *Aph* 5.30 LCL 166. This text, *Aphorisms*, can be found with facing English translation in Hippocrates, *Nature of Man. Regimen in Health. Humours. Aphorisms. Regimen 1–3. Hercleitus: On the Universe*, LCL 150, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), 97–222. Craik dates *Aphorisms* to around 400 BCE and finds evidence of extensive dependence on earlier Hippocratic works, including parts of *Epidemics*. Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 34.

part of the child.²⁷ While *σθεναρός* can mean “violent,” it can also simply mean strong or forceful (see *LSJ*, *s.v.*). Do the Hippocratic authors consider the child at this stage of maturation to have enough intentionality to be capable of violence? A positive indication, even if not decisive, can be found later in *Nature of the Child*, when the Hippocratic author describes the child at ten months of gestation as “longing for” (*ποθέον*) more nourishment than is available and then moving (*ἀσκαρίζει*; jumping or shivering?)²⁸ and breaking the membranes (*Nat. puer.* 19 LCL 84). The use of a form of *ποθέω* may suggest that the child deliberately breaks the membranes to go in search of more food, as opposed to experiencing hunger-induced tremors which result in damage to the membranes. *Female Diseases*, though, shifts agency to the uterus, describing it contracting around the embryo during birth (*Mul.* 34 LCL 82).²⁹

²⁷ Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 52–53. Myers also surveys a range of texts, from Euripides through second century CE funerary inscriptions, that use the language of battle to describe birth. For a much later popular ascription of violence to the child being born, see the following Latin funerary inscription for a woman who died in childbirth: “The unstoppable fury of the newborn infant took me, bitter, from my happy life.” Cited in Maureen Carroll, “Archeological and Epigraph Evidence for Infancy in the Roman World,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archeology of Childhood*, eds. S. Crawford, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 148–64, 153. See also Nancy Demand, *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 17.

²⁸ Lonie’s paraphrase is “restlessness because of hunger.” Lonie, *Hippocratic Treatises*, 248.

²⁹ It is possible that the shift in language from “child” (*παιδίον*) to “embryo” (*ἔμβρυον*) is correlated with a diminished sense of agency. A consistent distinction between these terms in the Hippocratic corpus should not be pressed, though.

Whether or not a violent intentionality is posited by these authors, they certainly recognize birth as a process which necessarily involves injury to the parturient woman. In addition to the tearing of the membranes, *Female Diseases* discusses the external lesions (to the “mouth” of the genitals) that can be caused by the forcefulness of the child’s egress (βιηθέν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐξόδου τοῦ παιδίου; *Mul.* 40 LCL 100). This treatise also discusses the possibility of damage to a woman’s liver during birth, causing hematemesis, stomach pain, and heart palpitations (*Mul.* 43 LCL 104). *Nature of the Child* states that many women die when giving birth to breach babies (*Nat. puer.* 19 LCL 88–90). Reviewing the Hippocratic text *Epidemics*, Lesley Ann Dean-Jones counts thirty-eight case histories of pregnant women, fifteen of whom die either during the pregnancy or during childbirth.³⁰

2.1.4 After birth

The Hippocratics comment on postpartum discharge, or lochia. *Nature of the Child* describes this as a flow of blood “as from a sacrificed animal (ἱερείου)” (*Nat. puer.* 7 LCL 48). Dean-Jones has shown that this author only compares flows of blood to those from sacrifices in two contexts: lochia and menstruation.³¹ King points out further connections between vocabulary used in sacrificial contexts and

³⁰ Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 212.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 214. See *Mul.* 6 LCL 30.

that used to describe pregnancy, including the use of *ἀμνίον* for both the fetal sac in the pre-Hippocratic philosopher-scientist Empedocles and for the bowl used to collect sacrificial blood.³² The use of a sacrificial simile here represents an important connection in the classical Greek consciousness between sacrifice and procreation.

As Dean-Jones puts it:

A woman's healthy blood had wider, civic significance; it affirmed that she could replenish the citizen body as well as her own.... They likened the blood of a woman after a healthy childbirth to that of a propitious sacrifice because, just as a woman's menarchal blood was an auspicious sign indicating she was ready to assume her allotted role in the service of the *oikos* and therefore of the *polis*, so the wound of successful parturition was the culmination of this role and beneficial to society in general.³³

The Hippocratic text *Epidemics* gives two case histories of women who experienced complications while breastfeeding.³⁴ One patient experienced a rash which cleared up when she finished nursing (*Epid.* 2.2.16–17 LCL 34). Another had a fever while nursing (*Epid.* 4.10 LCL 92). *Epidemics* also states that each breast contains a thick vein which holds “the greater part of consciousness (*συνέσιος*)” (*Epid.* 2.6.19 LCL 82). This connection between breasts and consciousness is also

³² King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 94–97.

³³ Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 103, 215.

³⁴ *Epidemics* is a collection of books of disparate origins. Craik dates books 2, 4, and 6 to around 400 BCE and books 5 and 7 to the middle of the fourth century. Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 91. Books 2, 4–7 have been printed together by editors from the Second Sophistic through to modern editions. The text with facing English translation can be found in Hippocrates, *Epidemics 2, 4–7*, LCL 477, trans. Wesley D. Smith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

reflected in *Aphorisms*, which states that the collection of blood in the breasts indicates madness (*Aph.* 5.40 LCL 168).

Though we saw above that the Hippocratics recognize the dangers involved in pregnancy and childbirth, they also consider this process, when survived, to be salubrious for the woman. *Nature of the Child* teaches that successful pregnancy and childbirth strengthens the woman such that, the more children a woman has already had, the easier a pregnancy would be (*Nat. puer.* 7 LCL 47). *Female Diseases* opens with the statement that a nulliparous woman is more likely to become ill due to suppressed flow of menses, and such an illness is also more severe in the nulliparous (*Mul.* 1 LCL 8).³⁵ Even if the flow is not suppressed, it is more painful for the nulliparous (*Mul.* 1 LCL 10). The case histories in *Epidemics* also provide examples of the salubrious nature of pregnancy and childbirth. According to one such history, giving birth caused a patient a temporary relief of strangury (*Epid.* 2.2.16–17 LCL 34). Another tells of a patient whose menstrual flow had been suppressed for four years. After pregnancy culminating in a difficult delivery, she became healthy (*Epid.* 5.11 LCL 150). The treatise *Diseases of Girls*, which may have been written by the

³⁵ For symptoms of this disease, including suffocation, fever, pain, and, ultimately, death, see *Mul.* 2 LCL 14–18. For a summary of the symptoms that a broader range of Hippocratic texts claim can arise from suppression of menstruation, see Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 131.

author of *Generation and Nature of the Child*,³⁶ gives the following prescription for unmarried women who suffer from suppression of menses: “I urge young women, when they suffer from such a condition, to live with men as soon as possible, for if they become pregnant, they will become healthy” (*Virg.* LCL 362).

2.1.5 Reading First Peter with the Hippocratics

According to the Hippocratic Corpus, a mother is her child’s blood donor, both during gestation and after birth, if she breastfeeds, in the form of milk. This confirms that the references to blood in First Peter can be read as part of the source domain of the extended birth metaphor and that in this extension Jesus would be positioned in the maternal role. There are also several reasons to think that such a construction of the metaphor’s mapping makes good sense of the metaphor.

In 1 Pet 1:2, the blood is extended after election, and the donation of blood may be repeated, as I argued in section 1.2.1. This corresponds to the Hippocratic understanding that a pregnant woman only starts supplying blood to the seed a few days after conception, and that she continues to supply this blood over an extended period. This might invite us to understand God’s act of election as corresponding to

³⁶ See discussion in Craik, *Hippocratic Corpus*, 278–79. The text with facing English translation can be found in Hippocrates, *Coan Prenotions. Anatomical and Minor Clinical Writings*, LCL 509, trans. Paul Potter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 355–64.

conception in the birth source domain. The role of breath (*πνεῦμα*) in shaping the seed may also help us understand the ambiguous genitive phrase (*ἀγιασμός πνεύματος*) in 1 Pet 1:2, clarifying that this should be understood as a subjective genitive. The breath that shapes the seed is the mother's breath, which fits well with fact that the Spirit is said to be Christ's Spirit in 1 Pet 1:11.³⁷

The Hippocratic Corpus would cohere with the understanding in First Peter that seed passes on qualities from parent to child, though it is not clear that the Hippocratics understood blood (or milk) as doing this. The seed in 1 Pet 1:23 can be understood as referring to both the maternal and paternal seed. The link that the Hippocratics claim between breasts and consciousness could help account for the way in which First Peter understands milk as passing on cognitive content in 2:2–3. The Hippocratics also state that a substantial amount of the potency of seed derived from that portion which came from the parents' heads, which they also linked with mind. As Paul put it, “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:6).³⁸

³⁷ Later in the epistle, we hear of the “Spirit of God” (4:14). This is part of a different major section (the third metaphorical cluster) than any of the references to new birth.

³⁸ Throughout chapters 2 and 3, I will point out connections with the Pauline corpus in preparation for a fuller discussion of the connection between Paul and First Peter in chapter 4. As we investigate more entailments of the maternal metaphor, we will see that they often cohere well with elements of Paul's Christology and soteriology which may have influenced Peter, even if he does not explicitly refer to them otherwise.

Understanding Christ as playing a maternal role in the new birth process also helps the birth metaphor cohere well with other Christological and soteriological metaphors in the letter. The Hippocratic understand mothers as subject to dangerous suffering through pregnancy, even possibly violence during birth, and they see that suffering as possibly perduring through breastfeeding. They also perceive a tight link between birth and sacrifice. However, they also understand pregnancy and birth as ultimately leading to greater health for the mother. This coheres well with the focus throughout First Peter on Jesus' suffering and glorification (where physical health in the source domain is mapped to glorification in the target).

This raises the question of just what event in the target domain corresponds to the event of birth itself in the source domain. The association with violence, danger, and sacrifice makes Christ's crucifixion an attractive candidate,³⁹ at least when we think about birth as the mother's act of labor. When we think about birth as the child's experience of being born, that mapping makes less intuitive sense. If Peter, though, accepts the Pauline notion of being baptized into Christ's death (Rom 6:3), this could give us the following timeline. At some, unstated, point, the addressees were chosen by God, corresponding to their conception. Christ somehow

³⁹ Note that Christ's suffering must be in the past relative to the composition of the letter, as Peter states that Christ suffered (aorist) once (3:18).

contributed to this process and helped shape them from then on. The Incarnation as a whole could be the self-emptying weakness of pregnancy in Christ's life, culminating in the violence and sacrifice of the cross, which corresponds to labor. The addressees receive this new birth at their baptism, which constitutes a participation in Christ's death-labor. They then transition to the life of continuing growth and transformation, supported, in part, through their eucharistic consumption of the blood of Christ, referred to as milk. Their hope in the fruitfulness of this process can be as sure, or lively, as the resurrection is (1 Pet 1:3).

2.2 Aristotle

Aristotle, the fourth century BCE scientist-philosopher, composed three major biological works (in likely order, at least, of inception): *History of Animals*, *Parts of Animals*, and *Generation of Animals*.⁴⁰ The latter work studies animal reproduction in general, but with special attention to human reproduction. It is this treatise which will principally concern us here. Aristotle was familiar with Hippocratic understandings of reproduction and frequently critiqued them.⁴¹ While

⁴⁰ See discussion in Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 14–15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

he is still substantially earlier than the composition of First Peter, his views remained influential throughout the Hellenistic period and beyond.⁴²

2.2.1 Conception

Sophia Connell summarizes a common contrast often drawn between the accounts of conception given by Aristotle and his Hippocratic predecessors:

According to a well-worn narrative, Hippocratic doctors, and other ancient natural scientists, congregated around the idea that women produce semen (*sperma*).⁴³ Aristotle, meanwhile, categorically denies, on several famous occasions, that females are capable of doing so.... In many accounts of the history of reproductive theory, Aristotle's view that, in a sense, women do not contribute semen invites suggestions that this robbed them of a more positive generative influence.⁴⁴

Connell's monograph convincingly argues that this narrative needs to be retired.

Aristotle did believe in female seed, as will be documented below. Unlike the

⁴² Ibid., 20. Dean-Jones in fact sees Aristotle as the dominant influence on Hellenistic theories of human reproduction. For an argument that, while Aristotle was still influential, contestation and eclecticism better characterize the period, see Flemming, *Medicine*, 114–22.

⁴³ Connell and many other scholars translate σπέρμα as “semen.” However, as contemporary English uses the term “semen” exclusively for a substance produced by males, it is clearer to use “seed.” I will use “seed” in my translations and paraphrases throughout this chapter. The reader will have to tolerate inconsistency between my translations and certain citations of secondary literature.

⁴⁴ Sophia M. Connell, *Aristotle on Female Animals: A Study of the Generation of Animals*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 93. In addition to the representatives of this view that Connell cites, see also Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 149; Maryanne C. Horowitz, “Aristotle and Woman,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 9, no. 2 (1976): 183–213.

Hippocratics, Aristotle regarded male and female seed as having fundamentally different roles in reproduction and, additionally, saw male seed as superior in several respects. His apparent denials of female seed are best explained as denials that women have the superior male seed; Aristotle's androcentrism frequently leads him to say "seed" *simpliciter* when he means male seed. Connell's study does not seek to render invisible the androcentrism, or antifeminism as Maryann Horowitz terms it,⁴⁵ of Aristotle's thought. Rather, her work makes space for a more nuanced appreciation of the contribution to reproduction which Aristotle did attribute to women, precisely by attending more closely to the ways in which Aristotle's androcentrism requires the reader to work harder to find Aristotle's acknowledgements of women's contributions.

The argument that Aristotle believed women produced seed has a simple starting point: he tells us that they do. Near the beginning of *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle states that seed (σπέρμα) comes to be "from the female and from the male" (ἀπὸ τοῦ θήλειος καὶ τοῦ ἄρρενος; 716a13). The following example is typical of Aristotle's references to female seed: "Menses (καταμήνια) are seed (σπέρμα), but not pure (καθαρόν) [seed]. They lack only one thing: the principle of soul (ψυχῆς ἀρχήν)"

⁴⁵ Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," 184.

(737a28–29).⁴⁶ As in this example, Aristotle’s descriptions of female seed, which he identifies with menses, are often accompanied by some reason why they are inferior to male seed. The impurity that Aristotle ascribes to menses seems to mean that menses are a mixture of female seed and other substances; he elsewhere says that “seed is in (ἐν) menses” (728b23).⁴⁷ Another deficiency, Aristotle claims, is that “menses are unconcocted seed (σπέρμα ἄπεπτον)” (774a2).

These differences lead to differences in the functions these two types of seed can play. In another passage that clearly affirms the existence of female seed, Aristotle states that “the seed of the male differs” (διαφέρει δὲ τὸ τοῦ ἄρρενος σπέρμα) from that of the female in that it has the power (ἀρχή) to induce movement and to thoroughly concoct (διαπέττειν), whereas “that of the female is only material (τὸ δὲ τοῦ θήλεος ὕλην μόνον)” (766b12–14).⁴⁸ This power of male seed is at least in part connected with the fact that it is emitted along with πνεῦμα (728a10–15), which is responsible for differentiating the parts in all animal gestation (741b37). That female seed provides matter rather than these powers is not necessarily a deficiency, but simply a difference;⁴⁹ the male seed contributes no matter, as can be seen from the

⁴⁶ At 741b6, Aristotle clarifies that the male (directly in some species; via seed in others) imparts the sentient soul (αἰσθητικὴ ψυχὴ).

⁴⁷ See also 739a6–10: it is the purest part which is involved in conception.

⁴⁸ See also 716a6.

⁴⁹ Though this is not a value-neutral difference for Aristotle, who states that the role of male seed is “better and more divine (θειότερον)” (732a8).

analogy Aristotle draws between male seed acting on female seed and fig-juice acting on milk so as to curdle it without remaining in the curdled product (737a10–19). As well as the image of fig-juice curdling milk, Aristotle also compares female seed to a mechanical amusement automaton (*αὐτόματον τῶν θαυμάτων*; 734b9–17). These are intricate artifacts which present a series of motions in response to a singular stimulus.⁵⁰ This suggests that the movement provided by the male seed may be quite simple, compared to the complex series of responses that the female seed has been formed to be able to make.

Finally, it should also be noted that Aristotle does not always feel the need to stress inferiority whenever he mentions female seed. For instance, when discussing hens and lionesses (750a20–b1), Aristotle states that some hens die after laying large numbers of eggs, as all of their food (*τροφή*) was used for seed (*σπέρμα*). Lionesses have progressively smaller litters of cubs as they age, Aristotle claims, because their seed diminishes (*φθίνοντος τοῦ σπέρματος*).⁵¹ When discussing tests for infertility (747a1–15), Aristotle first gives a test for “the seed of men” (*τὸ σπέρμα ... τῶν ἀνδρῶν*; it is infertile if it floats in water) before explaining how to test women. The test for women involves seeing if a colored substance rubbed on their eyes transfers to the

⁵⁰ For discussion in antiquity of the skill required to construct one of these automata, see Connell, *Female Animals*, 160n106.

⁵¹ While Aristotle uses the grammatically masculine noun *λέων* here, the context suggests that he is probably speaking about lionesses here, as does the fact that this claim is paired with a similar claim about hens (using the feminine, *ἀλεκτορίς*).

saliva. Aristotle explains this test by stating that the eyes are the most seminal (σπερματικώτατος) part of the head. Aristotle links the onset of seed production in both males and females with the deepening of the voice (776b15–18). Aristotle also lists three storage spaces for seed: the uterus, genitalia, and breasts (725b3).

If the argument that Aristotle believed in female seed gets its start from the fact that he says precisely this, it must be admitted that the contrary argument can also produce apparent proof texts.⁵² Some of these, however, are rejections not of female σπέρμα, but rather of female γονή (e.g. 729a20–35). Elsewhere Aristotle denies not the existence of female seed, but rather states that any fluid (ύγρασία) emitted by a woman during intercourse is not seed (727b35–a1). Hence, when Aristotle states that the male is distinguished from the female by the ability to discharge seed (ἐκκρίνειν σπέρμα; 765b11), the discriminant is the ability to discharge, rather than the mere production and possession of seed.⁵³ Most problematic are texts such as

⁵² Michael Boylan's conclusion is that "Aristotle was deeply confused." Michael Boylan, "The Galenic and Hippocratic Challenges to Aristotle's Conception Theory," *Journal of the History of Biology* 17 (1984): 83–112, 105. We should not assume that our ancient sources can always be pressed into our modern standards of consistency. However, a reading of a source that renders it consistent, as Connell gives, is generally preferable to settling for an *aporia*, or to positing ineliminable confusion.

⁵³ Compare also Aristotle's question in 72ba30–35, where he asks not whether women have seed, but if they "deliver" (προΐεται) it like males. Similar also is 727b7, which states not that women do not produce seed, but they do not produce seed like men do, and that conception is not the result of mixing in the way that others (Hippocratics) claim. This passage is cited to argue that Aristotle had a one seed theory in King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 10.

727a25–30. Here, Aristotle states that menses are seminal (σπερματικός) but then denies that they are seed (σπέρμα). The best way to make sense of passages like this, in a way that is compatible with Aristotle’s previous professions that menses are female seed, is to understand his use of the term “seed” here to mean “male seed.” A modern parallel may help: comparing search data with the tool *trends.google.com* reveals that every four years, people search for “women’s world cup” in reasonably large numbers. Almost nobody, however, ever searches for “men’s world cup,” searching instead for “world cup” *simpliciter*. Even in this passage, Aristotle allows menses the adjective “seminal” while denying the noun “seed” and provides no clarity about what it means for something that is not seed to be seminal.⁵⁴

Connell’s summary is helpful:

In what I call ‘the parallel seed theory’ (found mainly in the Hippocratic writings and taken up later by Galen) the female has (1) menstrual discharge (which may serve as ‘food’) and (2) a white fluid emitted at sexual climax. The male has (2); (2) is ‘seed’ or ‘semen.’ In Aristotle’s theory (which I will call ‘the differentiated seed theory’) the female has (1) and the male has (2) exclusively. (1) counts as a type of ‘semen’... The female contribution is not emitted at the point of sexual climax but is released internally in the healthy female in preparation for receiving the male semen with which it will mingle.... Both theories are two-seed theories.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ A modern parallel of a (grammatically) similar distinction without clear difference might be the contrast between “genocide” and “acts of genocide” that was drawn in discussions of the killings in Rwanda. See Douglas Jehl, “Officials Told to Avoid Calling Rwanda Killings ‘Genocide’,” *New York Times*, 10 June 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/10/world/officials-told-to-avoid-calling-rwanda-killings-genocide.html>.

⁵⁵ Connell, *Female Animals*, 95–96.

2.2.2 Gestation

Aristotle states that, during pregnancy, the embryo continues to receive blood from the mother (776b29). For Aristotle, the *umbilicus* is either a single blood vessel (φλέψ) or a braid of blood vessels (740a30). Aristotle denies the claim of those (including some Hippocratics) that children suckle (βδάλλειν) *in utero* (746a20). Indeed, they could not, for they are asleep (καθεύδειν; 778b23). In fact, Aristotle often stresses the neediness of the begotten (γινόμενον)⁵⁶ *in utero*, writing, for instance, of its need for “guarding (φυλακῆς), shelter (σκέπη), and concoction (πέψεως)” (719a34), all services provided by the mother.⁵⁷

As we saw above, Aristotle states that one of the chief discriminants between male and female seed is that the latter is unconcocted (774a2). It may be best to take this as negative for comparative, i.e., that female seed is not as fully concocted as male seed, as the mother is responsible for concocting food to produce blood capable

⁵⁶ While Aristotle sometimes uses *παῖς* or *ἔμβρυον* for animals still *in utero*, *γινόμενον*, which I shall translate “begotten,” is a favored term for him.

⁵⁷ See also 740a5–10, which emphasizes the begotten’s independence from the father at this point. While Aristotle states in 766b12–14 that female seed, unlike male seed, cannot concoct, he does not deny that female bodies can concoct. The context of 719a30–35 means that he must be referring to female concoction here.

of nourishing the begotten *in utero* (719a34).⁵⁸ She also continues to do this postpartum through lactation. Aristotle states that the nature (φύσις) of milk and menses is the same (739b26; 777a4) and that the production of milk begins towards the end of pregnancy (776a15). The woman's body produces milk by concocting blood (777a9).

Aristotle perceived a strong degree of resemblance between parents and children, believing that even acquired characteristics, including tattoos, could be passed on from parent to child (721b30–35). Indeed, for Aristotle, not resembling one's parents is a marvel or monstrosity (τέρας; 767b6). He was concerned to explain why children may resemble their mothers or their fathers (721b29; 767a36–b5).⁵⁹ This seems to cause a problem for Aristotle's belief that the male provided the form while the female provided the matter (730b10–31; 765b8–15). However, while Aristotle often speaks of the male seed acting on the female seed (as in the fig juice analogy; 737a10–19), he did not treat the agent-patient dichotomy as absolute. Instead, he recognizes that patients also act on agents, as when a piece of wood dulls a blade (768b16–20), an analogy he offers as a conclusion to his account of how the

⁵⁸ Boylan argues that the what is at stake is whether or not menses undergo a fourth *pepsis* (heating), as (male) seed does. Boylan, "Aristotle's Conception Theory," 98.

⁵⁹ The assumption that children will resemble both their father and their mother is implicit in the eugenics program that Aristotle promotes in his *Politics*. Connell, *Female Animals*, 140. See, for instance, *Pol.* 1335a12–b19.

interaction of male and female seed produce familial resemblance. According to this account, if menses are well concocted (εὐπέπτου), movement from the male seed will shape them, so as the begotten will resemble the father (767b16). This provides further evidence that when he states that the female seed is unconcocted (774a2), this should be understood as meaning that it is less thoroughly concocted than the male. Elsewhere he states that, female seed may be more or less concocted, and the better concocted, i.e., the more closely it approximates male seed, the more pliable (even docile) it is to the formative movements of the male seed (767b16). However, Aristotle reports that, just as saws often dull and wood remains uncut, so often male seed fails to “master” (ἐκράτησε) the female seed, and the begotten instead resembles the mother.

Connell describes Aristotle’s account of the way in which these resemblances are wrought *in utero* as “a complementary or reciprocal model of the interaction of the male and female contributions in which they oppose one another’s powers.”⁶⁰ For Aristotle, both male and female seed have “movements” (κινήσεις; cf. 768a10–21) that can induce resemblance. Aristotle does not “deny maternity,”⁶¹ but can refer to the mother as a γεννώσα, or begetter, using an active participle. While, for instance,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 54.

⁶¹ Pace Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," 186n9. I.e., deny any active role to mothers.

it is the father's *πνεῦμα* that differentiates parts in the begotten (741a26–30), it is the mother's heat that forms sinews and bones (743b35–a1).

Aristotle devotes but little attention to the dangers of pregnancy for women. In his *History of Animals*, he does speak of suffering during pregnancy, including nausea, vomiting, and headaches (584a15–25). However, he also states that women who are accustomed to hard work don't find pregnancy taxing (775a30–35). In *Politics*, Aristotle recommends that women rest their bodies and their minds during pregnancy (1335b17–19).⁶²

2.2.3 Birth and care of the neonate

Aristotle does not deal with birth or with the nurture of neonates in great detail in *Generation of Animals*, but we do find some themes from the Hippocratics elsewhere in his corpus. For instance, he also seems to understand birth as a process of struggle.⁶³ He notes the dangers involved in childbirth, especially for young mothers.⁶⁴ He also writes about the dangers of nursing, including the claim that, if a woman swallows a hair while nursing, she would painfully pass it through a nipple (*Hist. an.* 787b25–27).

⁶² See discussion in *ibid.*, 194.

⁶³ See *Hist. Anim.* 584a26–30, and discussion in Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 212.

⁶⁴ *Pol.* 1335a13–23. See discussion in Demand, *Birth*, 18, 102, 193n93.

2.2.4 Reading First Peter with Aristotle

Despite their disagreements, many of the resources with which the Hippocratics provided us are still available for reading First Peter with Aristotle. For instance, like the Hippocratics, Aristotle saw child-bearing (including breastfeeding) as involving danger and suffering, seed as associated with the head and cognitive content, and *πνεῦμα* as involved in shaping the begotten.⁶⁵

The mother is still characterized as her child's blood donor, during pregnancy and postpartum, via lactation. This again justifies understanding blood language in First Peter as part of the rebirth imagery, with the mother mapped to Christ. For Aristotle, the woman's contribution to conception is also blood. If conception is still to be mapped to election, there is no reference to this blood in First Peter. The identity of female seed and blood, though, would allow a reader to identify the seed in 1 Pet 1:23 as Christ's blood, which shares the property of imperishability with the seed (cf. 1 Pet 1:18–19). The intricate assembly of seminal blood, like an automaton, is an aspect of the source domain which is capable of enlivening the account of soteriology in First Peter. It invites reflection on the manner in which the blood

⁶⁵ On this last point, it should be noted that, unlike in the Hippocratics, for Aristotle this is the father's *πνεῦμα*. This makes Aristotle's framework less helpful for understanding 1 Pet 1:11.

Christ offered and continues to offer to Christians is expertly prepared, so as to promote optimal growth. Part of the purpose of an elaborate metaphor, such as the one I suggest Peter employs here, is not simply to communicate factual content that could also have been conveyed in more prosaic terms. Metaphor also does affective work. Understood in this way, this metaphor may be designed to move the reader to marvel at the greatness of the gift Christ offers.⁶⁶ The description of the begotten *in utero* as sleeping and vulnerable provides interesting background to the characterization of the lives of the addressees before conversion as “futile” (1:18), which may inform how readers reflect on and renarrate their past.

Like the Hippocratics, Aristotle recognized that children resemble their parents, both mothers and fathers. Aristotle is much more explicit about how blood and seed effect this resemblance. His view coheres well with the communication of properties through the substances that we see reflected in First Peter. Aristotle speaks less about the role of breastmilk in the ongoing formation of a neonate, but this may be implicit in his statement that breastmilk has the same nature as menses. The description of the mechanisms for the formation of such resemblance may also do work for Peter’s Christology. For Aristotle, optimal female seed is docile and pliable. In First Peter, Christ is described in similar ways, especially with respect to

⁶⁶ As Charles Wesley would later put it, to be “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

his practice of nonretaliation, a practice which the addressees are told to imitate (e.g. 1 Pet 2:21–23).

2.3 Soranus

Soranus is the author of the only surviving Hellenistic gynecology, i.e., a single medical treatise concerning women.⁶⁷ He was a member of the Methodist school, which originated in the first century BCE and enjoyed popularity during the first century CE and into the second.⁶⁸ We know that Soranus served under the emperors Trajan and Hadrian. If he wrote his *Gynecology* early in his professional life, it may only postdate First Peter by a short period of time. Even if this work dates to the second century, Soranus' views may well reflect those of his Methodist precursors, whose works only survive in fragmentary form.⁶⁹ Soranus' treatment of conception, gestation, birth, and the care of neonates demonstrates ways of understanding these realities much closer in time to First Peter than the Hippocratic Corpus or Aristotle and may, at least, help to broaden our sense of the possibilities for how Peter may have imagined rebirth.

⁶⁷ Flemming, *Medicine*, 115.

⁶⁸ Green, "Transmission," 24; Flemming, *Medicine*, 86. For a brief exposition of the celebrity of the Methodist physician Thessalus of Tralles during the reign of Nero, see *ibid.*, 228–229.

⁶⁹ See Manuela Tecuşan, *The Fragments of the Methodists. Methodism Outside Soranus*, Studies in Ancient Medicine 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

2.3.1 Conception

While Soranus asserts the existence of female seed (τὸ τοῦ θήλεος σπέρμα), he does not believe that it contributes anything to reproduction (ζωογονία), but is rather expelled (ἐκχεῖσθαι; I 12).⁷⁰ This does not mean, though, that Soranus envisages a woman as having no impact on a child she bears. Soranus affirms that there is a likeness (ὁμοιότης) between mother and begotten not only in body (κατὰ σῶμα) but also in soul (κατὰ ψύχην; I 39).

Firstly, a woman's body plays an active role in conception. Indeed, Soranus states that "it is not possible for the seed to be accepted (ἀναληφθῆναι) or for the woman to become pregnant with what was grasped (κρατηθὲν κυοφορηθῆναι) unless there is present in her impulse (ὀρμήν) and appetite (ῥεξιν)" (I 37).⁷¹ There are also practical things under a woman's mental control that she can do to make conception more or less likely, such as holding her breath (πνεῦμα) during male ejaculation if she does not want to conceive (I 61).

⁷⁰ For the Greek text of Soranus' *Gynecology* with facing French translation, see Soranus, *Maladies Des Femmes*, trans. Paul Burgière, et al., 4 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1988–2000). I have also consulted the English translation of Soranus, *Gynecology*, trans. Owsei Temkin (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1956).

⁷¹ Soranus is aware that survivors of rape sometimes become pregnant. In the same section, he attempts to explain this by stating that such a bodily appetite can be present even without any mental desire.

Secondly, a woman's cognitive state during both conception and pregnancy has a direct impact on her children. As Soranus puts it, the state (*κατάστημα*) of the soul (*ψυχή*) brings about a change to the "form of the *conceptus*" (*τοὺς τύπους τῶν συλλαμβανομένων*; I 39). In this same section, Soranus gives examples which all concern the vision of a woman at the point of conception: a woman who could see monkeys during conception gave birth to children who looked like monkeys; a king had his wife look at beautiful statues during sex, so that their children would be beautiful. Soranus also believes that the cognitive state of a woman was important throughout a pregnancy, stating, for instance, that a grieved or angry soul might lead to a disturbance of the *pneuma* which could cause miscarriage (I 34).

2.3.2 Gestation and birth

In *Gyn.* I 57, Soranus describes the events which occur shortly after conception. After the male seed has been retained in the uterus, it grows a membrane (*ὕμην*) in which it will be contained during gestation. This membrane connects to the distal area (*πυθμὴν*) of the uterus.⁷² A narrow body (*σῶμα λεπτόν*) then emerges from the distal area of the uterus to the abdomen of the embryo (*τὸ*

⁷² This is the part furthest from the opening, or mouth (the word also means the base of a cup or jar).

τῶν ἐμβρύων ἐπιγάστριον).⁷³ Through this channel flow both blood and *pneuma*, which both serve as food (θρέψις) for the embryo.⁷⁴ There is also a reference to a woman providing blood as food for her child *in utero* in *Gyn* I 19, where Soranus shows awareness of the traditional nature of this view, using it as the basis of an etymology for one of the terms for menses (ἐπιμήνιον).

While there is no mention of the embryo sleeping, as in Aristotle, Soranus does seek to refute the idea that the embryo suckles from teat-like protrusions in the uterus (I 14). He does this by citing the results of dissections.⁷⁵ An additional argument against this notion could have been made from the claim he later makes that the embryo's mouth is fixed shut during gestation (I 58).

Unlike the Hippocratics,⁷⁶ Soranus did not believe pregnancy to improve a woman's health. While acknowledging the existence of case histories in which a disease concluded upon conception, Soranus does not regard pregnancy to have been the cure, writing instead, "While both menstruation and conception are useful

⁷³ Soranus' use of the term ἔμβρυον here, as opposed to σπέρμα earlier in the paragraph, indicates that he believes the *conceptus* to be already ensouled at this point. See I 43.

⁷⁴ See also I 38.

⁷⁵ For Soranus' access to information from Alexandrian dissections that would have been unavailable to the Hippocratics or to Aristotle, see Green, "Transmission," 23–25.

⁷⁶ Whom Soranus does not name at this point, though at other times he names Hippocrates as the author of a view he will show to be erroneous (e.g., I 45). This may suggest that the belief that pregnancy was salubrious was so widespread, it would seem strange to name any one particular authority.

for the reproduction of humanity, it [i.e., conception] is not salubrious (ὕγιεινόν) for the pregnant women” (I 42). He goes on to state many onerous symptoms that accompany pregnancy: malaise (δυσανεσθήσεις), vomiting (ἔμετος), pallor (ὠχρότης), stomach tension (διάτασις στομάχου), and chest pain (θώρακος ἄλγημα; I 48). Soranus states that all parturition is accompanied by pain (ἄλγημα), including a burning sensation (πύρωσις; II 1). He devotes several sections of his work (IV 1–16) to “difficult labor” (δυστοκία), for which he expects a physician to be present, and to postpartum complications.⁷⁷ For Soranus, the healthiest state (though not the most useful) is permanent virginity. This is true for both men and women and is confirmed by observation of horses, swine, and Vestal Virgins (I 15, 30–32).

2.3.3 Care of the neonate

Soranus devotes a considerable amount of space in his *Gynecology* to the care of the neonate (II 9–57). Soranus recommends washing and applying salt immediately after birth (II 14, 30–35, 42), followed by a detailed program of washing, swaddling, and massage (II 14–16). The aspect of neonate care that most

⁷⁷ For an argument that such complications include postpartum depression, see Konstantinos Laios, et al., "Soranus of Ephesus (98–138) on Postpartum Depression," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 12 (2014): 153–56. For the role of a midwife, and the lack of role for a physician, in ordinary birth for Soranus, see Flemming, *Medicine*, 239.

concerned Soranus, though, may be the diet of the newborn (II 15–29, 36–40, 46–48, 56–57).

Soranus never quite explicitly states that breastmilk is produced from the same blood that nourished the neonate prior to birth. However, this seems to be implicit at times throughout his work, and Soranus admits that he often skips theoretical explanations that are not useful to the practitioner (I 2).⁷⁸ For instance, twice, he states that a woman cannot lactate and menstruate at the same time (I 15; II 19). Additionally, when recommending, all things being equal, feeding a neonate with its own mother’s milk, he states that it is “more natural (*φυσικώτερον*) to be fed (*τρέφεσθαι*) in the same way from the mother before birth and after birth” (II 18).

All things rarely are equal, though, and Soranus gives detailed instructions for selecting a wet-nurse (II 19) and managing her regimen while breastfeeding (II 24–27).⁷⁹ The criteria for a good wet nurse include some physical characteristics and aspects of her medical history, such as being 20–40 years old, large, and having already born at least two children. Many new mothers would not meet these criteria, and, in such cases, a wet nurse would be recommended by Soranus. He also

⁷⁸ “Soranus’ methodist disdain for speculative physiology means that the processes of basic bodily functioning are not revealed.” Flemming, *Medicine*, 236.

⁷⁹ While Soranus is the first author we treat in this chapter to show concern over the selection of a good wet nurse, such anxiety was prevalent long before his time. For instance, in Menander’s *Samia*, the titular character, a courtesan name Chrysis (not a professional wet nurse) nurses her client’s son’s child, saying that she would never allow the child to go to a tenement nurse (85).

recommends testing the milk, to ensure that it is “smooth (λείον), uniform (όμαλόν), homogeneous (συνεχές έαυτῶ), ... and sweet (γλυκύ) and good tasting (στομαῶδες)” (II 22). Soranus also recommends certain characteristics for a nurse that are less clearly physical: self-control (σωφρών), lack of anger (άόργιστος), integrity (καθάριος), and Greek ethnicity (Έλληνίς). These qualities are not merely of instrumental benefit, but matter as the nurse will transmit her character to the one being nursed: “with respect to nature (φύσει), those being nursed are brought to resemble (συνεξομοιοῦται) the nurses,” a principle which Soranus illustrates by the transmission of the privation of anger (άόργιστον; II 19).⁸⁰

Even if a mother does produce superior milk to a wet nurse, Soranus also recognizes other reasons why she might prefer to hire a wet nurse. While he did believe the breastfeeding increased affection between mother and child, Soranus also

⁸⁰ Other, nonmedical, authors contemporary to Soranus also exhibit belief in the transmission of character through breastmilk. Often cited in this context is Aulus Gellius, who, in his *Attic Nights*, has the philosopher Favorinus express concern that, if he selects a poor wet nurse, his newborn son will “draw spirit into its mind and body from a body and mind of the worst character (*ex corpore et animo deterrimo*)” (12.1.18). He blames the use of wet nurses for children who resemble neither parent (12.1.19). See discussion in Tite, “Nurslings,” 383–84; Myers, “*Pater Nutrix*,” 86–89; John D. Penniman, *Raised on Christian Milk: Food and the Formation of the Soul in Early Christianity*, Synkrisis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 47–49.

thought that it caused bruising (περίθλασις; II 14), premature aging (προγηράσαι), and atony (ἀτονεί; II 18).⁸¹

Soranus also has recommendations for when to wean. Weaning too late, after the body has already become more solid, would be injurious to a child, as it would leave the body moist (πλαδαρός) and delicate, possibly susceptible to disease (εὐπαθής; II 46). The ascription of moistness, a characteristic of women in many ancient physiologies, may be understood as a feminization of young boys.⁸²

2.3.4 Reading First Peter with Soranus

As with the Hippocratic corpus and the works of Aristotle, Soranus' *Gynecology* identifies blood as a mother's contribution to the growth of her child *in utero*. It also likely associates breastmilk with blood. Hence, reading with Soranus, we may again understand the references to Christ as blood donor in First Peter as forming part of the extended rebirth metaphor, placing Christ in the maternal role. The precise contours of Soranus' account, though, allow differing emphases to emerge in the resultant Christology and soteriology.

⁸¹ Both of these beliefs are also attested by Aulus Gellius. He has Favorinus state that nursing increases affection between mother and child (12.1.22). The onerous nature of breastfeeding is stated by Favorinus' mother-in-law (12.1.5).

⁸² Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 88.

Unlike Aristotle, Soranus does not identify female seed with blood. He views female seed as existing, but as contributing nothing to generation. Hence, reading with Soranus, we would have to conclude that the reference to seed in 1:22–23 is to the contribution of God the Father to salvation. Soranus does see an active role for the mother’s *pneuma* during gestation, which would fit well with the mention of Christ’s *pneuma* in 1 Pet 1:11 and permits the possibility that the *pneuma* in 1:2 is also to be understood as Christ’s. Soranus sees *pneuma* as part of the food with which a mother supplies her child *in utero*. Given the character-forming potential Soranus ascribes to breastmilk, it seems likely that this *pneuma*-food is also formative of character. This could suggest reading ἀγιασμός πνεύματος as “sanctification by means of Christ’s spirit.”

Soranus stresses in a new way the agency of a woman in choosing conception. Transferring this to the target domain entails Christ willing the election of Christians. The influence of the mother’s mental state on the formation of the embryo gives a new way of imagining the (re)formation of the Christian in the image of Christ. The potential of breastmilk to form a child, in both body and character, is a particularly strong emphasis in Soranus, which has the potential to color any reading of 1 Pet 2:1–3. Soranus’ belief that breast feeding strengthened the affective bond between mother and child adds an additional overtone to this image. Certain details about the characteristics of high-quality milk that Soranus mentions are also

relevant to this passage. Firstly, Soranus states that the taste of milk is important in assessing its quality.⁸³ Secondly, his preference for homogeneous milk would give positive valence to the unadulterated (*ἄδολον*) nature of the milk in Peter's image. This reading understands *ἄδολον* as a word which bears a heavy load in this text; it both describes a physical characteristic of high-quality milk (befitting the superlative quality of Christ's gift) and describes a moral quality that Christ transfers to Christians through his post-conversion care of them (possibly specifically through his eucharistic nourishment of them).⁸⁴

Soranus also puts a heavy emphasis on the suffering involved in pregnancy, birth, and lactation. Unlike for the Hippocratics, according to Soranus, this suffering is without any direct health benefit for the woman. This means that, reading with Soranus, we cannot see a pattern of suffering followed by glorification reflected in a pattern of suffering followed by improved physical health. However, by characterizing the suffering of childbearing as a selfless sacrifice, reading with

⁸³ While Aristotle does not make this comment in relation to breastmilk specifically, he does state that the primary function of the sense of taste in general is to differentiate between useful and useless food. See discussion in Martin, "Tasting," 523.

⁸⁴ See discussion in section 1.2.5. In a suitable variety of senses, privation of *δύλος* is a property of the milk (2:2) and of Christ (2:22), and is something to which the addressees are called (2:1; 3:10).

Soranus could help to illustrate and make vivid the sheer gratuity of Christ's gift of self.⁸⁵

Soranus' concern about the potential danger of delayed weaning may also be relevant for understanding 1 Pet 2:1–3. Unlike Paul in 1 Cor 3:1–3 or the *Auctor* of Heb 5:12, Peter does not suggest that his addressees should “move on” from milk (at least, until the parousia). This image infantilizes the addressees. According to Soranus, children who continue to consume milk for too long become moist and delicate. This may map to a certain vulnerability that is made more explicit in Christ's nonretaliation, and Peter's call for his addressees to do likewise.

2.4 Galen

Galen of Pergamon was born in 129 CE.⁸⁶ Hence, he is writing much later than the composition of First Peter. However, Monica Green judges Galen to be “more a synthesizer of received opinion than an innovator.”⁸⁷ Hence, Galen provides one example of Hellenistic reception of classical Greek medical doctrine, as we surveyed above from the Hippocratic corpus and Aristotle. These two corpora are

⁸⁵ In John Barclay's taxonomy, this would highlight the singularity of the grace. John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

⁸⁶ See discussion in Flemming, *Medicine*, 257.

⁸⁷ Green, "Transmission," 37.

indeed Galen's two chief written sources.⁸⁸ Galen is eclectic, willing to agree with whichever of these sources he judges correct on a particular issue and attempting synthesis where possible.⁸⁹ He states that his arguments will improve upon both Hippocrates' and Aristotle's.⁹⁰ However, Galen principally identified himself as Hippocrates' true heir, often providing arguments to justify Hippocratic bald assertions and, occasionally, even retaining Hippocratic therapies whose basis his novel theorizing had undercut.⁹¹

Galen wrote no specifically gynecological treatise and does not include many female case histories of his own (although he does comment on Hippocrates').⁹² He

⁸⁸ See *Sem.* I.1.1. For the Greek text of this work, with facing English translation, see Galen, *On Semen*, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 3.1, trans. Phillip De Lacy (Berlin: Akademie, 1992). See also Michael Boylan, "Galen's Conception Theory," *Journal of the History of Biology* 19 (1986): 47–77, 59. The Greek title of this work is ΠΙΕΠΙ ΣΠΙΕΡΜΑΤΟΣ, hence "on seed" may be a better title. I preserve, though the English title for this work that is standard in the literature.

⁸⁹ Anthony Preus, "Galen's Criticism of Aristotle's Conception Theory," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (1977): 65–85, 80; Boylan, "Galen's Conception Theory," 69, 75.

⁹⁰ *De usu part.* 14.5 H II.296. For a Greek text of this work, see Georg Helmreich, ed., *Galen De Usu Partium*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907–1909). References are to book and section, followed by page number in Helmreich's edition (H). For an English translation, see Galen, *On the Usefulness of Parts of the Body*, Cornell Publications in the History of Science, trans. Margaret T. May, 2 vols. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968).

⁹¹ See Green, "Transmission," 50; Flemming, *Medicine*, 277; Rebecca Flemming, "The Pathology of Pregnancy in Galen's Commentaries on the *Epidemics*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 45 (2002): 101–12, 101.

⁹² Flemming, *Medicine*, 253; Flemming, "Pathology of Pregnancy," 104.

also changes his mind on various issues over the course of his career.⁹³ This means that providing the singular Galenic viewpoint on any question is often impossible. What follows is a selective presentation of what occurs from conception through gestation, birth, and neonatal care, drawing on various Galenic works, but prioritizing *Semen*.

2.4.1 Conception

For Galen, conception occurs when the uterus actively undertakes a kind of movement (*κίνησις*) in order to grasp the male seed subsequent to coitus. He suggests that women coined the Greek term *σύλληψις* (grasping) for conception, because they can feel this action (*Sem.* I.2.6–7).⁹⁴ Once retained, some of the male seed becomes a membrane (*ὕμην*), surrounding the rest and linking it to part of the wall of the uterus (*Semen* I.6.1–2).

At this point, according to Galen, the female emits seed directly into the uterus. This mixes with the membrane created by the male seed and connects it to

⁹³ See, for instance, *Foet. form.* 3 K 663–64. For the Greek text with facing German translation, see Galen, *De Foetuum Formatione*, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* 3.1, trans. Diethard Nickel (Berlin: Akademie, 2001). For discussion of this change of opinion, see Christopher Gill, *Naturalistic Psychology in Galen and Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 126–27.

⁹⁴ See also *De usu part.* 14.3 H II.288, where Galen remarks on the impressive alacrity with which the uterus undertakes this grasping.

the entirety of the uterine wall (*Sem.* I.7.2–4, 7). As well as providing this service, Galen says that female seed functions as food (τροφή) for the male seed (*Sem.* I.7.5).⁹⁵ Later in *Semen*, Galen says that this mixing of male and female seed produces one perfect (τέλειος) seed (*Sem.* II.1.32).⁹⁶ Galen claims that this is what Hippocrates taught in *Nature of the Child* (*Sem.* II.1.13). While the mixing of male and female seed is indeed Hippocratic, characterizing the mixing as the consumption of the female seed by the male is Galen’s innovation.

Male and female seed both play a role, in Galen’s view, in the communication of likeness. Galen affirms that seed, whether male or female, is full of “lively *pneuma*” (πνεῦμα ζωτικόν; *Sem.* I.5.18).⁹⁷ In *Semen*, Galen first argues that the motherly contribution of blood during gestation could not on its own explain how children sometimes resemble their mothers. He gives a somewhat curious analogy, stating that, if a plant is transported from Persia to Egypt, different soil does not

⁹⁵ Galen repeats this in *De usu part.* 14.11 H II.320, where he also explains that female seed makes better food for male seed than blood would, as seed is better nourished by that which is more like it.

⁹⁶ See also *De usu part.* 14.7 H II.302–303, for the claim that male and female seed mix immediately after conception and, thereafter, function as one.

⁹⁷ See also *De usu part.* 14.3 H 288; 14.10 H 316. In these passages from *Usefulness of Parts*, Galen is speaking specifically of female seed, whereas the discussion at this point in *Semen* is general. In the second passage, he identifies the components of seed as blood and *pneuma*. Galen states that seed is made from blood in *Semen* II.2.16. Regarding *pneuma*: “Galen conceives *pneuma* in (purely) material terms, either as brain fluid or fire-and-air. In neither case does Galen envisage *pneuma* in Stoic mode, as a (unified or holistic) combination of a material entity and an active or substantial principle.” Gill, *Psychology in Galen*, 158–59.

make it a different plant, though it may start producing good fruit even if it hadn't before (*Sem.* II.1.42). The soil in this analogy corresponds to maternal blood. Galen admits that blood can make real changes (whatever human changes might correspond to a change in the yield of a fruit-bearing plant), but cannot effect maternal likeness in more fundamental respects.

Galen then goes on to state that both blood and seed make a formative (ποιητικός) and material (ύλικός) contribution to fetal development, though the contribution of the blood is mainly material, and that of the seed is mainly formative (*Sem.* II.2.20). He argues that the maternal blood must have some formative role on the basis that, if seed alone possessed such a role, infants would resemble their fathers alone (*Sem.* II.2.22). An unstated assumption in this argument must be that female seed is weaker than male. That is indeed Galen's conclusion in his earlier work, *Usefulness of Parts*, in which he states that female seed is "lesser, colder, and runnier" (ἐλαττόν τε καὶ ψυχρότερον καὶ ὑγρότερον).⁹⁸ However, the combination of formative power of the maternal seed and of the maternal blood combine to balance

⁹⁸ *De usu part.* 14.6 H II.301. Elsewhere in *Semen*, Galen refers his reader to this earlier work, such as at II.20.14. Flemming points out that while Galen discusses the growth in male testicles and female breasts at puberty, he has no discussion of any corresponding growth in female testicles, despite the fact that he does describe female testicles (what modern science calls ovaries) as, variously, the location of storage or production of seed. Flemming, *Medicine*, 313.

the formative power of the paternal seed (*Sem.*, II.2.23).⁹⁹ For Galen, it is not that the maternal seed and blood separately exercise influence directed towards the same end, but rather that the maternal blood serves as a better catalyst for the maternal seed's formative power than for the paternal seed's, as the two maternal fluids are "connatural" (*οικειός*; *Sem.*, II.2.24).

2.4.2 Gestation

During gestation, Galen states that an embryo "draws" (*ἐλκει*) blood and *pneuma* to itself (*Sem.* I.8.1). As we saw above, along with the seed retained at conception, this blood provides the material of the embryo: "For all parts whose form is fleshly (*σαρκώδη τὴν ιδέαν*) are made from blood; all that are membranous (*ύμενώδη*) are stretched out (*ἐτάθη*) from seed" (*Sem.* I.11.1).¹⁰⁰ Anthony Preus asks why Galen posits any role for maternal blood and concludes that, for Galen, seed could not be the source of fetal blood, "because it [seed] does not have the characteristics of blood (any more)."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ As Boylan puts it, "together the two female principles are a match for the single male principle." Boylan, "Galen's Conception Theory," 68.

¹⁰⁰ Later rabbinic thought would also see male seed as a material source, providing the substance from which white bodily parts (such as bone and the whites of the eyes) are formed, whereas maternal blood provides the material for red and black parts. See b. Nid. 31a. See Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 63–64.

¹⁰¹ Preus, "Galen's Criticism," 83.

When Galen places the embryo as the subject of the verb ἔλκει, he likely does not intend to ascribe any agency to the embryo. In his later work, *Construction of the Embryo*, Galen argues that the brain develops late in gestation as “the *conceptus* (κυούμενον) has no need of a brain” (*Foet. form.* 3 K 672). Often, Galen attributes the true agency in fetal formation to Nature (φύσις).¹⁰² Galen explicitly rejects the following claim, that he attributes to unnamed opponents: “that the gods, after having constructed (κατασκευασθέντα) the seeds (σπέρματα) of plants and of animals so that they are sufficiently able to pass on the motions, no longer act” (*Foet. form.* 6 K 688).¹⁰³ For Galen, while the gods (or, simply, Nature) are actively involved in fetal formation, seed is an important tool in this process, for it carries the “principle of the Demiurge” (τὸν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ λόγον; *Foet. form.* 5 K 682).¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Galen

¹⁰² For instance, “when Nature has made outlines of everything” (*Sem.* I.10.12). For Nature’s role as designer of humanity, see *De usu part.* 14.1–2 H II.284–86. See also discussion in Flemming, *Medicine*, 305–306. For further discussion of Nature, or the Demiurge, in Galen, and the originality of Galen’s views relative to the Hippocratic corpus, see Rebecca Flemming, “Demiurge and Emperor in Galen’s World of Knowledge,” in *Galen and the World of Knowledge*, eds. Christopher Gill, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59–84. For Galen’s rejection of the idea that the fetal heart directs the formation of other organs, see Gill, *Psychology in Galen*, 131. For Stoic belief in the active involvement of Nature in fetal formation, see *ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰³ This is consistent with what Myers describes as Galen’s “reject[ion of] the mechanist outlook of the Hippocratics.” Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 19.

¹⁰⁴ Nickel translates this as “die Rolle des Schöpfers.” Galen, *De Foetuum Formatione*, 87. Peter Singer translates this as “the scheme of the Craftsman.” Galen, *Selected Works*, World’s Classics, trans. Peter N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 192.

states that the *conceptus* is formed not by the power of the seed, but by that power that is in accordance with the seed (ὑπὸ τῆς κατὰ τὸ σπέρμα δυνάμεως; *Foet. form.* 3 K 660).

In *Semen*, Galen speaks of heat as another tool of Nature's, which can sometimes have a greater formative impact than seed.¹⁰⁵ He rejects the view, which he ascribes to Strato, that the sex of the child is determined by the relative strength of the maternal and paternal seed, pointing out that girls may resemble their fathers and boys, their mothers. Instead, he explains that males are developed in a hotter part of the womb. This greater heat pushes the genitalia out of their bodies, so that the uterus becomes the scrotum, and the uterine neck, the penis (Galen gives a detailed account of the correspondance of every component of the male and female generative parts).

Galen had no consistent position on whether pregnancy was medically neutral or harmful for a pregnant woman. In *Affected Places*, he claims that pregnancy quickens a woman's breathing, but otherwise has no ill effects.¹⁰⁶ In *Usefulness of Parts*, Galen states that women do not use all of the blood they

¹⁰⁵ The following account is drawn from *Sem.* II.5.15–60. The same account is given in *De usu part.* 14.6 H 296–99. See also the discussion in Green, "Transmission," 42; Boylan, "Galen's Conception Theory," 61.

¹⁰⁶ *Loc. aff.* 6.5 K 426–27. There is no modern critical edition of the complete Greek text of this work. The following Spanish translation is available: Galen, *De Locis Affectis (Sobre la Localización de las enfermedades)*, Biblioteca Clásica Gredos, trans. Andrés Aparicio Salud (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1997).

concoct, so are able to spare blood during pregnancy without harm (*De usu part.* 14.6 H II.300). However, in his commentaries on Hippocrates' *Epidemics*, Galen states that the embryo draws the best blood to itself, thereby causing cacochymy (i.e., a humoral disorder) in pregnant women, which Nature only resolves after birth.¹⁰⁷ Rebecca Flemming comments that, compared with the Hippocratic view that pregnancy is salubrious, "the pathological potential of pregnancy is thus heightened, but Galen stops short of putting health and reproduction in direct opposition, as some Methodist physicians did."¹⁰⁸

2.4.3 Birth and care of the neonate

Unlike his Hippocratic predecessors, Galen did not view birth as the infant's struggle to free itself from the mother. Drawing this same contrast with the Hippocratics, Flemming points out that, for Galen, "the baby itself makes absolutely no contribution to the process."¹⁰⁹ By studying birth amulets from shortly after the time of Galen's career that call upon the infant to act and come out, Ann Hanson

¹⁰⁷ *Hipp. Epid.* 3.3.77. Greek text cited, with translation, in Flemming, *Medicine*, 340–41.

¹⁰⁸ Flemming, "Pathology of Pregnancy," 106. While Galen did not believe that pregnancy and childbirth were salubrious, he did believe that the antecedent sex would be, as it prevented the illnesses that could be caused by the retention of seed. See *Loc. aff.* 6.5 K 417, cited and discussed in Flemming, *Medicine*, 334–35.

¹⁰⁹ Flemming, "Pathology of Pregnancy," 108. Flemming draws on a range of Galenic texts to make her point, including *Usefulness of Parts* and *Natural Faculties*.

shows that, despite Galen's attempted revision, the Hippocratic view did not lose popularity.¹¹⁰

Further evidence that Galen had a surprisingly benign view of birth can be found in his discussion of breech births. Galen claims that breech presentation only occurs once in ten thousand births and that this is a reason to marvel at the wisdom of the Craftsman (*De usu part.*, 15.7 H II.364). Even allowing for the fact that the Greek term *μυριάς* does not always mean precisely ten thousand,¹¹¹ this is much lower than the 3–5% frequency that modern medics have observed.¹¹² This is not an isolated error on Galen's part, but rather illustrative of a tendency to minimize the associations between birth and suffering, highlighting instead Nature's careful provision of effective mechanisms for human reproduction.

Galen viewed human milk as a highly elaborated nutriment, whose perfection for neonate nutrition was made possible by the proximity of the breast to the blood and heat of the heart (whereas other mammals can mature adequately from less well

¹¹⁰ Ann Ellis Hanson, "The Gradualist View of Fetal Development," in *L'Embryon: Formation et Animation*, eds. Luc Brisson, et al., *Histoire des Doctrines de l'Antiquité Classique* 38 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2008), 95–108, 106.

¹¹¹ May translates this as "many thousands." Galen, *UP*, II.672.

¹¹² See for instance, G. Justus Hofmyer, et al., "Planned Caesarean Section for Term Breech Delivery," *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 7 (2015): CD000166, <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD000166.pub2>. The magnitude of Galen's misestimate is magnified by the fact that male physicians were only called to difficult births; see Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies*, 34–35.

concocted milk).¹¹³ As with the authors surveyed above, Galen draws a close connection between breastmilk and the blood supplied to the child by the mother *in utero* (*De usu part.* 14.5 H II.292). He states his agreement with Hippocrates in this matter and explains the connection by describing a special set of blood vessels connecting the uterus to the breasts which can serve as a reservoir of nutriment, accessible from either end (*De usu part.* 14.8 H II.310–11).¹¹⁴

While in the more theoretical *Usefulness of Parts*, Galen is full of praise for Nature's design of human milk, in the more practical *Hygiene*,¹¹⁵ he explains that not all human milk is created equal. Galen tells a woman who is nursing to control her food, drink, sexual activity, and exercise to produce the best quality milk. Good milk can be identified by taste and should be sweet (εὐώδεις).¹¹⁶ It should also be pure, not mixed (συμμιγές).¹¹⁷

¹¹³ *De usu part.* 7.22 H I.438. See also discussion in Flemming, *Medicine*, 313.

¹¹⁴ As we saw above, in the Hippocratic text *Nature of the Child*, milk is supplied to both the uterus and the breasts by the stomach. The Hippocratic text *Glands*, though, does describe milk as passing from the uterus to the breasts. See discussion in Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 80–81. As Helen King has established, the primary pathway (ὁδός) leading from the uterus for the Hippocratics leads to the mouth and nostrils. King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 27–28.

¹¹⁵ Greek text, with a facing English translation, can be found in Galen, *Hygiene, Volume I: Books 1–4*, LCL 535, trans. Ian Johnston (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

¹¹⁶ That taste is a good guide to the usefulness of food is true in general for Galen, not merely in the specific case of breastmilk. See discussion in Martin, "Tasting," 523. While etymologically εὐώδεις means sweet-smelling, smell and taste

2.4.4 Reading First Peter with Galen

As with the previous medical writers we surveyed, Galen sees the mother as her child's blood donor, both during gestation and, if she breastfeeds, after birth. This again means that, reading with Galen, we can understand the references to blood in First Peter as part of an extended birth metaphor, in which Jesus is placed in the maternal role.

As in the Hippocratic texts, for Galen the motherly provision of blood begins after conception, which corresponds well to Christ's post-election blood donation in 1 Pet 1:2. According to some Galenic texts, this donation of blood is sacrificial for the mother (even though Galen does not highlight danger in his accounts of birth itself), which may remind a reader of Christ's sacrifice. For Galen, the blood plays a role in the formation of maternal likeness in the child. This aspect of the source domain provides one way of making sense of how the shedding of Christ's blood could be to the addressees' benefit; it forms in them likeness to Christ.

are strongly related senses, and creating something that is εὐώδεις can be used to describe a goal of cooking food, as in Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 290e.

¹¹⁷ *Hyg.* 1.9 L 66–68.

A unique feature of Galen's account, compared to the other medical writers we have surveyed in this chapter, is the role he ascribes to a deity in the process of fetal formation. This may serve, in the target domain, to highlight God's role in the formation of the Christian. Like Aristotle and unlike the Hippocratics, Galen attributes a complete passivity to offspring before and during birth. This would fit with those images in First Peter that highlight divine action.

For Galen, Nature uses seed as a tool. This seed contains *pneuma*, conveys likeness, and carries the *λόγος* (plan, or ground) of fetal formation.¹¹⁸ This tightly connects seed, *pneuma*, and "word," which are all concepts that Peter employs in his description of how God brings about the addressees' new birth (1 Pet 1:2, 23) and gives further reason to understand *λόγος* in 1:23 as referring to the ground or plan of fetal formation, rather than to the preached or prophetic word. That the seed conveys paternal and maternal likeness also fits well with the way First Peter views the seed as imparting imperishability to Christians. Galen has a differentiated account of the roles of male and female seed, in which female seed is subordinate to male and serves as either food or catalyst for it. This may fit well with Christ's docility and submission to the Father's will.

¹¹⁸ Recall, from chapter one, that a similar use of the word *λόγος* has already been observed in Aristotle. See Martin, "Translating *λόγος*."

Galen proposes a continuity between the gestational nutrition a mother provides her child and lactation, which again supports taking the milk in 1 Pet 2:2–3 as Christ’s milk. It is important to Galen that milk be unadulterated, or pure, which speaks to the quality of the ἄδολος milk of which Peter speaks (1 Pet 2:2). Galen also affirms that the quality of milk can be judged by its taste. Anyone among the addressees who has engaged in such a taste test would have a concrete experience to connect to Peter’s metaphorical reference to their having tasted of Christ’s milk and thereby having learned of the Lord’s goodness.

2.5 Conclusion

As we have seen, medical understandings of human reproduction contemporary to the authorship of First Peter varied on many important details. Indeed, to talk of “Ancient Medicine” *simpliciter* obscures the reality of diversity, eclecticism, and contestation. However, we have also seen some important areas of agreement between the medical sources surveyed above, which are all the more striking given the disagreements. The medics agree that conception requires seed, that gestation requires maternal donation of blood, that such donation can continue postnatally via lactation, and that mother-child resemblance needs to be accounted for somehow.

Novel metaphors emerge when people try to find ways to conceptualize of and speak of fundamentally new experiences and realities. We may have lost sight of the radical novelty of the conviction that Peter is attempting to conceptualize and communicate: that Christ's suffering has brought Christians benefits. One way of making sense of this is via a metaphor in which Christ is understood in terms of a sacrificial victim. The blood references in First Peter can be understood this way. This chapter, however, has shown that they we do not need to see Peter as flipping rapidly between new birth and sacrifice metaphors. Rather, the blood imagery can also be understood as part of the new birth metaphor. The addressees are encouraged to understand "Christ suffered for you" (1 Pet 2:21) in terms of the ways in which a mother, through pregnancy, birth, and neonatal care, suffers for her children. The associations, at least for the Hippocratics, between birth and sacrifice may help explain why allusions to cultic passages from the Old Testament may also validly be observed.

The role of *pneuma* in gestational development means that references to the Spirit in First Peter can also be understood as part of the new birth imagery. The Spirit was active in bringing the addressees to their conversion and baptism and forging this Christic resemblance. As many of these medics emphasize the role of maternal *pneuma*, it makes sense to understand this Spirit as the Spirit of Christ (as

in 1:11). This clarifies a question I left open in chapter one and supports reading the genitive *πνεύματος* in 1 Pet 1:2 as subjective.

While viewing the blood and spirit references as part of the new birth metaphor has some attraction in terms of parsimony, the chief pay-off lies in the richness of the entailments generated. Many of these have been described in the final subsection of each section above. Here, I try to draw some commonalities and make some synthetic comments. While some of these entailments add propositional content to the letter, others serve to excite the readers' imaginations, to give them new ways not merely to understand, but to celebrate and marvel at Christ's saving work in their lives, thereby deepening their subjective awareness of their new identity and modifying their behavior appropriately. The affective potential of these entailments is important to describe.

One set of entailments concerns the relationship between Christ and Christians. The image of mother and child is tightly linked to the notion of resemblance. As we saw in chapter one, a number of other images in the letter convey a resemblance soteriology: Christians are stones, like Christ the corner-stone; Christians follow in Christ's footsteps. Mother-child resemblance, though, communicates something somewhat different from these images. It is a human image, unlike the image of stones. Unlike the footstep image, it does not highlight Christian action. It highlights instead the ways in which God's initiative, the Spirit's

action, and Christ's action and passion have wrought resemblance in the Christians, as well as how Christ's continued proffer of milk (including, if not solely, in the eucharistic blood) continues to form such resemblance.

There are also entailments for how the addressees are to view themselves and their prior lives. If their medical understanding emphasizes the child's violent role in causing birth (as in the Hippocratic corpus), this might encourage reflection on their own history of sin, and even a self-understanding as having in some sense caused Christ's suffering, a theme which comes close to explicit expression in 1 Pet 3:18. On the other hand if, like most later medics, they emphasize the passivity, vulnerability and neediness of children *in utero*, then the metaphor might instead lead to reflection on the futility of their previous life (as in 1 Pet 1:18) and the radical gratuity of God's saving act. The presentation of the addressees as newborns in need of milk with no moment of weaning in view may also attribute weakness to them.

There are also entailments for the image of Christ in the letter. The image of Christ as mother highlights Christ's physical suffering as one weakened by self-gift and even as a victim of violence. According to the majority (even if not unanimous) medical opinion that childbearing was ultimately salubrious for women, this suffering has brought benefit to Christ as well as to Christians. This can provide a vivid way for the addressees to understand Christ's exaltation or glorification and, hence, to better understand the glory in store for them (1 Pet 1:7). As good maternal

seed was thought to be malleable under the influence of male seed (Aristotle), or nourishment or a catalyst for male seed (Galen), associating Christ with maternal seed may resonate with Christly subordination. Jesus is presented as a model especially for the enslaved (1 Pet 2:20–21), who allows himself to be controlled by those who assaulted him but is ultimately subordinate to God alone (1 Pet 2:23).

In the next chapter, I turn to depictions of the mother-child relationship beyond the medical literature. The vignettes of mothers we shall encounter there will help thicken our understanding of the qualities the addressees may have ascribed to mother-child relationships and, thereby, both act as a check on the entailments we have generate using the medical literature and generate new ones.

3. Greco-Roman motherhood discourse outside of medical literature

In the previous chapter, I surveyed understandings of motherhood in four medical authors (or corpora). This established that the new birth metaphor in the first chapter and a half of First Peter can be understood to include the blood references as part of its source domain by people familiar with these ways of thinking about human reproduction; this means, in turn, that the “mother” slot of the source domain would be mapped to Christ.¹ I also began the work of generating entailments from this mapping. These entailments enable us to test whether the metaphor should be read this way, and they constitute the exegetical pay-off of analyzing the metaphor. These initial results were encouraging. Now we cast our gaze more broadly, looking at texts outside of medical writings which present images of motherhood in order to expand our sense of the range of possible expectations for relationships between mothers and their children. This will allow the generation of further entailments, continuing the task of investigating the consequences of understanding the new birth metaphor in First Peter with Christ as mother.

¹ See the section on metaphor theory in the introduction for definitions of the terms source domain, target domain, and entailment.

I do not claim that any of the texts surveyed below were sources for First Peter; rather they illustrate contemporary values. I begin with texts which would have acquired status as classics by the time of First Peter, before moving forward chronologically. Some texts that are likely later than the writing of First Peter are included towards the end of the chapter, as they may still present ideas which were current earlier. Exhaustiveness would be impossible. Instead, I present a series of vignettes of mothers (“real” and fictional) and of people metaphorically described as maternal. While some connections with First Peter will be noted as the material is presented, this chapter concludes with a return to this biblical text, synthesizing the data of this chapter to enrich our reading of the letter.

3.1 Classical Greek sources

In this section, we treat two sets of texts which substantially predate the authorship of First Peter but whose influence would still have been felt when the letter was written. The first text, Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, makes some claims about motherhood which may be seen as in tension with the medical views surveyed previously. The second collection of texts represent some of our earliest Greek metaphors in which a man is described metaphorically as a mother. These texts illustrate what beliefs about the domain of motherhood these authors considered culturally and conceptually available to be mapped by metaphors.

3.1.1 Aeschylus, *Eumenides*

In Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, the final installment of his trilogy, the *Oresteia*, the fifth century (BCE) playwright gives the following lines to Apollo:

The so-called “mother” is not a parent (τοκεύς)² of the child, only the nurse of the newly begotten embryo (κύματος). The parent is he who mounts;³ the female keeps the offspring safe, like a stranger on behalf of a stranger. I shall give you a powerful proof of this statement. A father can procreate without a mother: a witness to this is here close by us [*indicating Athena*], the daughter of Olympian Zeus, who was not even nurtured in the darkness of a womb, but is such an offspring as no female divinity could ever bring forth.⁴

Myers states that with these words, “Aeschylus declares manliness ... generative of new life,”⁵ to the exclusion of femininity. Similarly, Anna Rebecca Solevåg describes these as “Aeschylus’ words” and claims they illustrate an opinion that was “prevalent.”⁶

² While the first gloss in LSJ for this noun is “begetter,” the word is used also to mean parent inclusive of mothers, e.g., in Homer, *Odyssey*, 1.170.

³ Ὁ θρώσκων. Leitao argues this should be translated “ejaculates” rather than “mounts.” Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 53.

⁴ 658–666. All citations from Aeschylus’ works will be from the translation in Aeschylus, *Oresteia: Agamemnon. Libation Bearers. Eumenides*, LCL 146, trans. Alan H. Sommerstein (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁵ Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 44.

⁶ Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation*, 51. For but one counterexample to the prevalence of the denial of maternity in an Attic context, Lin Foxhall shows that while a boy would normally join his father’s phratry, he could also join his maternal grandfather’s. Lin Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity*, KTAH (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 49.

If this denial of maternity were indeed prevalent in contextually salient contexts for First Peter, it would provide a sharp contrast with the medical views surveyed in the previous chapter and problematize many of the conclusions in that chapter. These words were written roughly five hundred years before First Peter, though the play was still performed in Hellenistic times.⁷ Analyzing more closely the function of this speech in the play and certain other references to motherhood in the *Oresteia* suggests, however, that Apollo's words are unlikely to represent Aeschylus' views.⁸ I do not consider that this moment in the play has much to add to our study of First Peter, but, as some scholars of motherhood in early Christianity have been

⁷ See discussion in Pat Easterling, "Agamemnon for the Ancients," in *Agamemnon in Performance: 457 BC to AD 2004*, eds. Fiona Macintosh, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 23–36.

⁸ This conclusion is not original. Reginald Winnington-Ingram argues that the audience would be hostile to Apollo's view and that "Apollo is so treated in the trilogy that we can to a considerable extent discount his *ex cathedra* pronouncements." Reginald P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 124. Thomas Rosenmeyer considers that the original audiences may have found it a "tolerably amusing" joke. Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Art of Aeschylus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 360. Other scholars who conclude that Apollo's argument is unlikely to represent the thought of Aeschylus include: A. W. Verrall, "Apollo at the Areopagus," *Classical Review* 21 (1907): 6–11; Anne Lebeck, *The Oresteia: A Study in Language and Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 128–29. Examining Euripides' reception of Aeschylus, Leitao shows that the later playwright invokes an "Apollonian" embryology only in plays featuring Orestes as a character. In *Ion*, he explicitly describes a two-seed theory (*Ion* 405–406). Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 52–57.

too quick to take Aeschylus at Apollo's word, this judgment requires some justification.

We start by considering the context of the speech. This speech is given as part of Apollo's defense of Orestes, who is on trial for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra. Prosecution is provided by the Furies, who punish those who have shed kindred blood (*Eum.* 210–12). Apollo's denial of maternity functions to refuse the Furies jurisdiction by denying that mothers and children are related by blood. The forensic context should impact how we read Apollo's words. In agreeing to provide a defense, Apollo promises "words that will charm" (θελκτηρίους μύθους; *Eum.* 81–82); he will say anything to win jurors' votes, whether he believes it or not.⁹ Examining the trial scene as a whole, Anne Lebeck documents multiple further "elements of parody and almost burlesque exaggeration" in the proceedings.¹⁰

Apollo is not particularly successful at winning these votes, convincing at most half of the Athenian jurors.¹¹ As the vote is tied, Athena advances a legal doctrine of lenity and so declares Orestes acquitted (752–53). She later consoles the

⁹ For Rosenmeyer, Apollo's own description of the defense he will provide characterizes his arguments as "tergiversations and sophistries." Rosenmeyer, *Aeschylus*, 359.

¹⁰ Lebeck, *Oresteia*, 136.

¹¹ Scholars are divided as to whether the vote is evenly split before or after Athena's vote for Orestes. See discussion in D. J. Conacher, *Aeschylus' Oresteia: A Literary Commentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 188n66.

Furies that they were not actually defeated (795).¹² Even those jurors who do vote for acquittal need not have been convinced by Apollo's denial of maternity, for the god offers three reasons to vote for his case. The first is an argument that the killing of Clytemnestra is justified, even if she does count as a parent, because she had previously killed her husband Agamemnon and because this homicide is the greater offense, as it offends the sanctity of the marriage bond (217–18, 600–602, 625–39).¹³ Following the denial of maternity, Apollo offers a third reason for the Athenians to vote for acquittal: the promise that he, Orestes, and Orestes' progeny will all be of useful service to Athens (667–73). This bribe, illegal under Athenian law,¹⁴ may provide the strongest motivation for those votes that Apollo does win.

In addition, the “proof” Apollo offers to support his denial of maternity may in fact serve to undercut this argument. Apollo points to Athena as an example of one begotten of a father without any maternal involvement. This is only an effective argument for the denial of maternity if there are no examples of people born from mothers without any paternal involvement. Apollo does not claim this and cannot,

¹² “Orestes’ acquittal does not depend upon the trial scene but on divine will.” Ibid., 187n59.

¹³ See discussion in *ibid.*, 160–61.

¹⁴ See discussion in Lebeck, *Oresteia*, 135.

for he is surrounded by such examples: the Furies, who, for Aeschylus, are born by parthenogenesis of Mother Night (321–22, 745).¹⁵

Broadening our focus from the trial scene to the rest of the *Oresteia*, several references to mothers suggest that Aeschylus does not intend to deny maternity. For instance, Clytemnestra offers a proverb that assumes mother-child resemblance: “May a morning of good news be born from the womb of this night of good news!” (*Ag.* 264–65). Cassandra, while uttering prophecy, describes Clytemnestra as “mother of Hades” (*Ag.* 1235). Froma Zeitlin argues that this title is polyvalent, but maintains that part of the meaning is that “Clytemnestra is indeed the mother of death—author, architect, progenitor of destruction.”¹⁶ When Electra, Orestes’ sister, finds a lock of hair by Agamemnon’s tomb she is sure at once that it is Orestes’ hair, as it so resembles her own and cannot be her mother’s, as Clytemnestra would not leave such a pious offering at the tomb of the husband she had killed (*Cho.* 175–90).

¹⁵ “[The Furies] identify themselves as offspring of Night to Athena whom, in contrast, they address as daughter of Zeus. They are the children of mother without father as she is child of father without mother. Night is not parent of the Erinyes in Hesiod; she does, however, give birth to figures with a similar function, the Keres ... (*Th.* 217, 220–22). These children of Night have no father (*Th.* 213).” *Ibid.*, 127–28. For further examples of reproduction without male involvement in Greek texts starting from Homer, see Troy W. Martin, “Animals Impregnated by the Wind and Mary’s Pregnancy by the Holy Spirit,” *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 31 (2014): 11–24.

¹⁶ Froma I. Zeitlin, “Postscript to Sacrificial Imagery in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 1235–37),” *TAPA* 97 (1966): 645–53, 650.

Taken together, these references show that a variety of characters in the *Oresteia*, including highly trustworthy ones, assume the resemblance of mother and child in both body and character and use this assumption both to form metaphors and to understand relationships between Clytemnestra and her children. When Clytemnestra reminds Orestes that she breastfed him (*Choe.* 876–78), this seems to cause Orestes to think twice.¹⁷ Far from denying maternity, Aeschylus' trilogy assumes that maternal nutrition of a child creates a bond and forges various types of resemblance.

3.1.2 Males as mothers in Classical Greek metaphors

As far back as Homer, Greek authors have applied maternal metaphors to male characters.¹⁸ The pain Agamemnon experiences when wounded by a spear is likened to the pain women experience in childbirth, which, according to the poet, is induced by arrows shot by the Ilithyiai, the goddesses of painful childbirth (*Il.*

¹⁷ He has to be reminded by his companion Pylades of the primacy of Apollo's oracle. See discussion in Conacher, *Oresteia*, 123.

¹⁸ See discussion in Nicole Loraux, *The Experiences of Tiresias: The Feminine and the Greek Man*, trans. Paula Wissing (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 31–37.

11.269–72).¹⁹ After Patroclus' death, Menelaus stands guard over his body and is compared to a cow guarding a calf born that day (*Il.* 17.4–6). These two similes rely on different properties of the motherhood source domain. The former highlights childbirth as a time of pain and suffering. The latter assumes a tendency of mothers to protect their vulnerable neonates by remaining close to them. While there is, of course, a large chronological gap between Homer and First Peter, these similes still show us features of the motherhood conceptual domain that were available as sources for metaphorical language. While the pain and suffering of childbirth was common in the medical literature, the postpartum protective stance is something in which the medics seem uninterested but that has the potential to enrich a reading of the new birth metaphor of First Peter.²⁰

Leitao has argued that pregnancy and parturition metaphors for (predominantly male) intellectual creativity started to become popular in the 420s BCE.²¹ He presents several examples in which writing poetry is described in terms of giving birth (e.g. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1059; Euripides, *Andromache*, 476–77).²² Part of the work these metaphors do, Leitao argues, is to provide a way of explaining how

¹⁹ The association between battle and childbirth has a lively afterlife. Compare, for instance, Medea's statement that she would rather go to battle three times than give birth once in Euripides, *Medea*, 248–51.

²⁰ We noted in the previous chapter, however, that many medics described pregnant women as protectors of their vulnerable children.

²¹ Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 100.

²² *Ibid.*, 120–27.

the poems can be said to be at once the product of the Muses' inspiration and of the poets' labor (pun intended).²³ One example Leitao offers is from Euripides' *Suppliant Women*: "Whenever the composer of hymns gives birth (τίκτει) to songs, he must be in a good mood to give birth....' (180–85).... Works written by a poet match the state of mind or personality of the poet himself; the exterior reflects the interior."²⁴ These metaphors reflect an affirmation of the importance of maternity (without any denial of the importance of paternity); they leverage an assumed resemblance between mother and child to understand inspired poets' ownership of and influence over what they produce, without denying their inspiration. These metaphors may also use parturition metaphors to communicate the process of writing poetry as potentially fraught with suffering, or as bringing honor to the successful poet.²⁵

²³ "There is still the possibility of external inspiration—we may even imagine that it is the Muse who 'impregnates' the ... poets—but the poets, through nine months of gestation make the poem fully and bodily their own." *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁵ Metaphorical invocations of birth to describe poetry-writing continue and are employed by Augustan poets, among others. For instance, as Virgil begins the second, martial, half of his *Aeneid*, the poet invokes the inspiration of the muse Erato. He then describes the kinds of events he will narrate, using first person singular verbs of speech, such as *revocabo* (7.40) and *dicam* (7.41). He recapitulates this, and promises comparative greatness for his story, by promising that "a greater succession of events will be born (*nascitur*) by me" (7.44). See discussion in Mairéad McAuley, *Reproducing Rome: Motherhood in Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and Statius*, Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 76, 312.

The process of doing philosophy is also discussed using metaphors of pregnancy and parturition, especially by Plato.²⁶ A developed sequence of parturition metaphors appears, for instance, in Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* (see 206c–212a). Before Diotima explains the production of philosophical speech in terms of pregnancy, she redescribes male sexuality in female terms. She states that “all humans (ἄνθρωποι) are pregnant (κυοῦσι) both in body (κατὰ τὸ σῶμα) and in spirit (κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν)” (206c).²⁷ Diotima unpacks what it means to say that men are pregnant in body before turning to pregnancy in “spirit,” describing “male-female intercourse [as] birth (τόκος)” (206c). This is coherent if Plato is working with a theory of seed as a homunculus, which could fairly be said to be “born” during ejaculation.²⁸ Having appropriated the language of birth from women's bodies to men's, Plato is then ready to complete the transfer and use it to describe male intellectual activity. This two-stage appropriation is important as, in the *Symposium*, Plato presents the site of the (re)production of philosophical knowledge as male-male pederastic relationships. Plato must have Diotima feminize male sexuality before he can have her sexualize philosophy. As David Halperin has argued, this

²⁶ For reception of these ideas by Philo, see Walter T. Wilson, "Sin as Sex and Sex with Sin: The Anthropology of James 1:12–15," *HTR* 95 (2002): 147–68, 155–57.

²⁷ Except where otherwise stated (principally for the classical Greek dramatists cited above), all translations are my own.

²⁸ For this conclusion, supported by references to similar imagery in the *Timaeus*, see Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 184.

transfer enables an imagined world in which male sexuality can be creative and reproductive without women.²⁹

Diotima then describes a multistep process of maturation in philosophy. The philosopher begins by loving one particular beautiful body, which leads to begetting (γεννᾶν) beautiful words (210a). From there, the philosopher moves first to beautiful bodies in general, and then to beautiful spirits. Love of these enables the philosopher to give birth to words (τίκτειν λόγους) that are capable of teaching others (210c). After sufficient progress, the philosopher is able to move on from giving birth to words. If he becomes able to gaze upon “divine beauty in its form alone (μονοειδές)” (210e), he is then able “to give birth (τίκτειν) not to images of virtue but to real virtue” (212a). These philosophers have reached that form of metaphorical pregnancy and parturition that Diotima had earlier said was “fitting” (προσήκει) to the soul—giving birth to “prudence and the rest of virtue” (209a).

Metaphors of pregnancy and birth for the work of philosophy are not unique to Diotima’s speech. Plato has Socrates use them directly in the *Theaetetus*. At one point in this late dialogue, the titular character is struggling to find an answer adequate to Socrates’ question. Socrates reassures him: “You are suffering labor pains (ὠδίνεις), dear Theaetetus, because you are not empty but pregnant (ἐγκύμων)”

²⁹ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality, and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 113–51.

(148e). Theaetetus is, at least, pregnant. He is on Diotima's path of ascent, even if he isn't very far along it. Some students who come to Socrates cannot claim even that. Socrates explains that when students who are not yet pregnant come to him, he "plays matchmaker" (προμνησμαι) and sends them to Prodicus or some other instructor (151b) for more basic instruction.³⁰ For students who are pregnant, Socrates metaphorically plays midwife (μαία), the craft (τέχνη) his mother practiced (149a). That Socrates understands his activity in terms of his mother's trade is an interesting form of mother-child resemblance.

In these metaphors, the quality of what is born depends on the quality of the mother. An unskilled novice is not yet pregnant. For those who are pregnant, the more sophisticated the philosopher, the more impressive the intellectual progeny. This is not quite mother-child resemblance, but does imagine that the caliber of the child reflects that of the mother. In the world of these metaphors, pregnancy is what forms a woman for more successful future pregnancies. Diotima states that the result of the (potentially painful) word-producing pregnancies, which must precede virtue-producing pregnancy, is that the philosopher-mother becomes "strengthened and matured" (ῥωσθεὶς καὶ ἀξίηθεις; *Symp.* 210d). This is the notion, affirmed by some

³⁰ Leitao presents evidence that Prodicus was compared to a male sex-worker who played the active role in metaphors used by Xenophon. A common source may explain why Plato names Prodicus alone as a philosophical inseminator. Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 131–32.

medics and rejected by others, that pregnancy is salubrious. Diotima also describes parents nourishing their young (209c) and as ready to fight for them (207b), like the cow protecting its calf to whom Homer likened Menelaus.

These metaphors exhibit many qualities in common with the maternal metaphor of First Peter. They reflect an understanding of pregnancy and birth as painful yet salubrious, of the mother-child relationship as involving some kind of resemblance, and of mothers as acting to nurture and protect their offspring. They also show that men can be described as metaphorically maternal without threatening their masculinity. There is one important difference, though: in none of the metaphors surveyed in this subsection is a human being the target onto which the mother's child is mapped.

3.2 Some mothers from Roman Comedy

In this section, I move forward in time and shift to Latin literature. I consider three mothers from two Roman comedies: *Asinaria* by Plautus (third–second century BCE) and *Hecyra* by Terence (second century BCE). These plays are adaptations of Greek plays for Roman audiences,³¹ and thus they provide a helpful bridge from classical Greek literature to the Roman world. As Sharon James states, “Roman

³¹ In the case of *Asinaria*, this is mentioned in the play's prologue (11).

comedy presented situations that its audience understood as relevant to Rome; its social context speaks to Roman concerns, values, and structures.”³² While these plays are Republican, they continued to be performed during the Imperial period and even became common school texts.³³ These plays provide a rare window into nonelite attitudes.³⁴

These three women should not be taken as typical of all mothers in Republican Rome. Indeed, these are not real women’s stories at all, but the literary creations of (nonelite) men. However, they showcase for us three possibilities for how such men thought about mothers and mother-child relationships. While *Hecyra* does feature one parturient woman, she is kept safely off-stage. The three mothers

³² Sharon L. James, "A Courtesan's Choreography: Female Liberty and Male Anxiety at the Roman Dinner Party," in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, eds. Christopher Faraone and Laura McClure (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 224–62, 226.

³³ John Henderson, *Asinaria: The One about the Asses (Plautus)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), vii; Gesine Manuwald, "The Reception of Republican Comedy in Antiquity," in *Cambridge Companion to Roman Comedy*, ed. Martin T. Dinter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 261–276. For Ovid’s reception of *Asinaria* in particular, see J. C. Yardley, "Propertius 4.5, Ovid *Amores* 1.6 and Roman Comedy," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 213 (1987): 179–89.

³⁴ "It is generally held by historians of slavery that Roman slaves left little to express their feelings and ideas about their experience. The main goal of this books is to suggest that they left quite a bit, and that historians can find in the remains of [Roman new comedy] much that testifies to the experience of the bottom layers of central Italian society in the 200s BCE, not only in Rome but in other Latin-speaking cities and towns." Amy Richlin, *Slave Theater in the Roman Republic: Plautus and Popular Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.

we meet are mothers of children on the cusp of adulthood. These three mothers provide three snapshots of mother-child relationships. These snapshots help us understand what kind of authority mothers did and did not exercise, and how mothers were concerned to act to form resemblance in their children long after infancy.

3.2.1 Cleareta from Plautus' Asinaria

John Henderson describes *Asinaria* as “full of Rome: slavery and sex slavery; money and family structure; masculinity and social standing; senility and partying; jokes, lies and idiocy.”³⁵ Cleareta is a *lena*, that is a woman who manages *meretrices*, or female sex-workers.³⁶ The only *meretrix* Cleareta appears to manage is her daughter, Philaenium. In one of her two scenes (127–248), the audience sees Cleareta send away a young *amator*,³⁷ who has overstayed the degree of welcome for

³⁵ Henderson, *Asinaria*, vii.

³⁶ At least in Roman Comedy, *lenones* (the male equivalent of *lenae*) manage, and usually enslave, both male and female sex-workers, while *lenae* only manage other women. Evidence from the jurists shows that *lenae* existed and were not merely a creation of the comedians. See Sharon L. James, *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion: Gender and Reading in Roman Love Elegy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 53.

³⁷ Scholars are divided on the identity of this *amator*, as the earliest manuscripts do not supply names of speakers. He has been variously taken to be either Argyrippus (who has been mentioned in an earlier scene, but has not yet appeared), Argyrippus' rival Diabolus (who is formally introduced later in the play), or a third

which he paid. In her other scene (504–44), she shows herself to be just as strict with her daughter, refusing to allow her daughter to spend her time for free with Argyrippus, an *amator* with whom she's fallen in love.

The first characterization the audience hears of the relationship between Cleareta and Philaenium is that Cleareta is in control.³⁸ The rejected *amator* states: “you’re mother and master (*mater t^u, ead^{em} era e^s*)” (147).³⁹ James shows that *lena* were not usually the mother of the *meretrices* they managed and that, in general, “the *lena*—unlike the pimp (*leno*)...—has no powers of ownership over the *puella*.”⁴⁰ Cleareta’s control over Philaenium does not derive from her status as *lena* alone; her maternity is relevant to the form of power she exercises.

amator. For discussion of the options, and an argument for the third, see Henderson, *Asinaria*, 221–22nn3–5.

³⁸ The Augustan poet Horace approved of strict mothers, at least as regards mothers of boys, painting a picture of the virtuous Rome of old in which “severe mothers” trained their young sons through chores. *Carm.* 2.6.39–40. For further examples of Roman preference for strict over indulgent mothers, see Susan Dixon, *The Roman Mother* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 131. Summarizing her study of a broad range of texts, Dixon concludes that “the mother was above all a figure of authority, to be deferred to even more by her daughter than by her son.” *Ibid.*, 227.

³⁹ For scansion, see Henderson, *Asinaria*, 14. The last five words are marked by elision, leaving *mater* and *era* the only two words all of whose sounds are pronounced.

⁴⁰ James, *Learned Girls*, 54.

Cleareta uses food metaphors to explain her relationship with her daughter. To explain her refusal to grant the *amator* favors on credit, Cleareta explains that her practice is exactly the same as that of a baker or wine merchant (200). Finally, in an extended simile beginning at line 215, she compares her profession to bird-catching: “I’m the catcher // the moll’s the meal, the bed’s the bait; lover boys make lovely birds.”⁴¹ Cleareta consistently compares herself to a human with power over animals or food; both the *amatores* and Philaenium are represented by food. Philaenium is, variously, regular bread, festive wine, and bait.

The images that cast Philaenium as nonanimal food conceal both her desires and the fact that her work is active. These are complaints that she will give voice to later in an argument with her mother, both expressing that she doesn’t like being kept away from the one she loves (515) and reminding Cleareta that if she stops working, the family business will grind to a halt, using the image of a galley slave stopping rowing (519–20). These complaints, though, are bracketed by Philaenium’s admission of the obligation she has to obey her mother.⁴² Cleareta begins the

⁴¹ *Auceps sum ego // esca est meretrix, lectus illex est, amatores aves.* 220–21.

⁴² Dorota Dutsch claims that Cleareta and Artemona, the subject of the next subsection, are atypical within the stock of mothers in Roman Comedy “in their lack of concern for their children’s happiness.” Dorota M. Dutsch, “Mothers and Whores,” in *Cambridge Companion to Roman Comedy*, ed. Martin T. Dinter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 200–216, 205. In Cleareta’s case at least, this is because her primary concern is that she and her daughter not starve, as she reminds her (531). This is a higher priority for her than her daughter’s ability to

conversation by asking if Philaenium is really going to depart from her *imperium*, or command (505). Philaenium then poses an important question: does the authentic practice of *pietas* require conformity to one's mother's *mores*, regardless of what those *mores* are (506–507)? Cleareta's response reveals that, for her, the answer to this question is clear: whatever *pietas* is, destroying maternal imperium (*matri imperium minuere*; 508) is not it. Cleareta further points out that in even asking this question, her daughter has become her *accusatrix* (513). With an oath (*edepol*), this question seems to startle Philaenium, who immediately denies any intention to accuse, stating that she simply wants to lament (*queror*; 514–15).⁴³ She concludes by promising complete obedience: “You’ve brought up (*produxisti*) an obedient (*audientem dicto*) daughter, mother” (544).

The question of how *pietas* and obedience are related is a question that occupies Plautus in other plays of his. For instance, in *Stichus* two sisters, whose husbands have been away for two years, resist their father's instruction to remarry on the grounds that this would violate their obligation of *pietas* with respect to his

spend time with an *amator* who, however elite he may be, has no current access to cash. Similarly, Plautus' *Cistellaria* opens with a discussion between a *lena*, her *meretrix*-daughter and another girl in which the *lena* explains that they “barely survive” (27) and that she engaged her daughter in sex work “so that I don't starve” (41).

⁴³ Her lament is clearly stated, marked by metrical hiatus: *illo quem / amo prohibeor* “I am kept away from the man I love” (515).

original command to marry.⁴⁴ Richard Saller demonstrates that “Romans associated *pietas* in the context of family not so much with submission to higher authority as with reciprocal affection and obligations shared by all family members.”⁴⁵ Indeed, Saller finds examples in Seneca’s *Controversiae* in which *pietas* excuses one from obedience to the *paterfamilias*.⁴⁶ Saller notes, however, that the jurists attest that “*pietas* obliged parents and children to provide maintenance for one another.”⁴⁷

This discussion may seem to have taken us a long way from First Peter. The relationship between a *lena*-mother and her *meretrix*-daughter is likely not the first example people would think of to understand Christ’s metaphorical maternity of Christians. This relationship provides one case study of how mother-child relationships operated. Parents and children both worked, and made sacrifices, to provide for one another. While a mother did not have the same kind of command

⁴⁴ See discussion in Amanda N. Krauss, "Panegyris channels Penelope: Metis and Pietas in Plautus's *Stichus*," *Helios* 35 (2008): 29–47.

⁴⁵ Richard P. Saller, "Corporal Punishment, Authority and Obedience in the Roman Household," in *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome*, ed. Beryl Rawson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 144–65, 147. He also shows that *pietas* was important in families that were not recognized as such by law, including slave families and children emancipated from their parents. *Ibid.*, 149. For one’s inability to file suit against father or mother, even if later adopted by someone else, see Jane F. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life* (New York: Clarendon, 1998), 124.

⁴⁶ Saller, "Corporal Punishment," 150.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

authority a paterfamilias did under law, *pietas* still led to real obligations.⁴⁸ After “meeting” two more of the mothers of Roman comedy, we shall consider how this form of authority might influence a reader’s understanding of Christ’s lordship.

3.2.2 Artemona from Plautus’ Asinaria

Artemona is the mother of Argyrippus. From her point of view, the plot of *Asinaria* is rather more complicated than it is for Cleareta. Off-stage, at some point she finds out that the titular asses she had agreed to sell have been taken, yet her steward never received the twenty minae she had been offered for them. On stage, she discovers the connection between these losses when she is informed by a rival of Argyrippus’ that her husband, Demaenetus, has paid twenty minae to purchase a year of Philaenium’s time for their son. (By this point, the audience has already seen Demaenetus assist two of the enslaved members of the household in fraudulently obtaining the twenty minae from the ass-trader). She also learns that Demaenetus has demanded a price for his generosity: one night with Philaenium before Argyrippus’ year starts, during which he will give her the clothing he stole from his wife. Artemona interrupts a party at which Demaenetus, Argyrippus, and Philaenium

⁴⁸ “*Pietas* is owed to parents, both father and mother, though the mother has no legal power or authority over her children.” Ibid., 146.

are preparing to feast. She takes Demaenetus home with her, promising him a remedial beating.⁴⁹

Artemona's character may be seen most clearly in relief, when compared with Demaenetus'. In the first exchange of words between characters in the play, Demaenetus admits that he is an indulgent father to his son (49–50).⁵⁰ Demaenetus states that he has resolved to follow his father's approach, and "purchase" (*emere*) his son's affection (72–73). The funds he will use for this purchase, though, are his wife's; Demaenetus "sold his command (*imperium*) for a dowry" (87). This opening scene introduces Artemona, who will remain offstage until line 851 (over 90% of the way through the play), through a series of contrasts with Demaenetus. She is strict with their son, whereas he is indulgent (78–79). She holds the power and the purse-strings.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "His humiliation is intended to bring him to his senses and make him play the role, at least, of a Roman head of household." David Konstan, *Roman Comedy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 51.

⁵⁰ "This play brings you the novelty neurosis of 'Father who would befriend son.'" Henderson, *Asinaria*, 125.

⁵¹ "Artemona, by virtue of the large dowry she controls, has actually been playing the role of the paterfamilias." Konstan, *Roman Comedy*, 50. The problems experienced by men who married for money was a theme also in Menander. See Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece & Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 43–44. Closer to the time period of First Peter, Martial similarly states that when a man marries for money, he acquires not a wife but a husband. *Epigrams*, 8.12.

The play's opening dialogue also introduces the theme of parent-child resemblance with its reference to Demaenetus' desire to emulate his own father. It raises the question of which, if either, of his parents Argyrippus will come to resemble. Artemona's power to influence is first sounded metrically. Until Artemona enters, Demaenetus has only spoken in iambic meters. Once Artemona sings her first line, changing the meter to trochaic septenarii, Demaenetus and every other character continues in this sung meter.⁵² Artemona complains, while she is on-stage but unseen and unheard by Demaenetus, Argyrippus, and Philaenium that "[Demaenetus] is corrupting (*corrumpit*) his son" (875). Her concern is that their son is becoming "his son," and that Demaenetus is exercising the greater formative influence. After Artemona interrupts the party, the chief complaint she makes to Demaenetus concerns his malformation of Argyrippus, asking, "Is it just for a father to confer (*largirier*) such *mores* on his son? Have you no shame?" (932–33). This exemplifies what James identifies as a more general pattern in Roman comedy, characterizing elite mothers' actions on behalf of their sons: "Where the son is put at

⁵² For Plautus' use of this technique to characterize influential women, see discussion of Nausistrata in Plautus' *Phormio* in Timothy J. Moore, "Music and Gender in Terence's *Hecyra*," in *Women in Roman Republican Drama*, eds. Dorota M. Dutsch, et al. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 68–87, 68.

risk of unhappiness or corruption by his father's misbehavior, the mother—always an *uxor dotata*—will step in to control the father.”⁵³

Does it work? The play gives some indications that Artemona may prove successful in properly forming her son, despite Demaenetus' problematic influence. Argyrippus is clearly not happy with Demaenetus' fee, as Demaenetus himself notices (849–50). This means that Demaenetus has not succeeded in his original aim of buying his son's affection. Argyrippus claims that *pietas* prevents his eyes from revealing his pain (831). Here Plautus continues to play with the question of what *pietas* actually requires of children.⁵⁴ After Demaenetus has thoroughly insulted his wife to Philaenium, Argyrippus asks his father “do you love mother?” (900). This is not a terribly strong defense of his mother, but he may be demonstrating here a measure of surprise and distaste at these insults. At the very least, he does not join in the disparagement of his strict mother. When Artemona does interrupt the party, Argyrippus twice claims to have tried to stop his father (931, 938), and his mother seems to praise him for this (*bellum filium*, 931).

Study of Artemona's character reveals a different conception of mother-child resemblance than we saw in the *medicus*. Here, resemblance is not the inevitable

⁵³ Sharon L. James, "*Mater, Oratio, Filia*: Listening to Mothers in Roman Comedy," *ibid.*, 120.

⁵⁴ “A stroke of Plautine irony: It is not the duty of a son to promote his father's debaucheries.” Konstan, *Roman Comedy*, 54.

result of blood (or seed) kinship. Rather, it is something uncertain and fragile, which this mother cares about greatly and must actively work to achieve.

3.2.3 Sostrata from Terence's Hecyra

Hecyra is a play characterized by incomplete information and misunderstandings, on the part both of the audience and of various characters. At one point, many characters, including Sostrata and her son Pamphilus, believe that Pamphilus' new wife, Philumena, wishes to divorce him because she cannot stand to live with Sostrata. Pamphilus is torn between *pietas* to his mother and affection for his wife. Later, Pamphilus learns that this is false, but decides (for another misunderstood reason) that he wants a divorce. At this point, Pamphilus starts to use *pietas* to his mother as an excuse for ending the marriage. Sostrata offers to withdraw from the city and live at the family's country estate so as he does not have to do that, but Pamphilus refuses to allow that to happen.

This play illustrates that, even without any formal power to command, mothers could still influence the marriages of their children. In his letters, Cicero praises Quintus for choosing to marry the bride that his mother Pomponia favors and for his strong love for his mother. Pomponia cannot force the marriage to

happen, but Cicero at least thinks that her opinion should carry weight.⁵⁵ Jane Gardner describes one mechanism through which influence could be exerted: inheritance. Even though mothers were not often part of the same legal *familia* as their husband and children by this time, “so long as a woman left a valid will, then she could benefit her children by leaving her property to them. By the late Republic it is taken for granted that she will do so.”⁵⁶

It is also notable that the social conventions of *pietas* allow Pamphilus to oppose his mother’s offer to move to the country. As David Konstan puts it: “the object of filial piety is not a parent’s whim or convenience, what Pamphilus calls *commode* (481, 495); it is rather a social code which is understood to be objective.... Pamphilus, we might say, exploits the fact that the subjective and objective content

⁵⁵ See discussion and sources in Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 189–90; Keith R. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family: Studies in Roman Social History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 184–85. Bradley points out that this influence did not only flow “down” family trees; when Quintus’ father (also named Quintus) decides to remarry, Quintus the Younger opposes Aquilia as his step-mother and prevails in preventing the marriage. See also discussion in Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 62–63. This discussion concludes: “Thus the right of a mother to determine a child’s marriage was social rather than legal and a mature child might even successfully defy her wishes, but it is part of the overall authority of the Roman mother that she played an important part in such negotiations.”

⁵⁶ Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 220. I.e., most marriages by this time were *sine manu*. Similarly, Dixon argues “that the position of respect and authority of the Roman mother emanated in part from her effective power of disposition over her fortune.” Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 41. She further argues that similar attitudes could “trickle down” to the less affluent classes.

of *pietas* are not clearly distinguished.”⁵⁷ This corresponds to what we observed above in considering Plautus’ *Asinaria*. *Pietas* is distinguishable from obedience. The proper exercise of *pietas* necessitates careful consideration of the good of the other family member. Sostrata exhibits a genuine willingness to act sacrificially for her son’s good; Pamphilus genuinely considers and then feigns (convincingly for a while) the same willingness.

3.2.4 Summary

Here we summarize some of what we have observed from these three mothers of Roman Comedy, considering how they may aid us in reading First Peter without yet trying to reach conclusions. In the conclusion to this chapter, we will more thoroughly test possible entailments of the maternal metaphor for the Christology and soteriology of First Peter.

Artemona’s story shows a mother’s efforts, continuing through young adulthood, to form resemblance in her son.⁵⁸ Sostrata shows a mother’s willingness to act sacrificially for the sake of her children. This aspect of how these authors

⁵⁷ Konstan, *Roman Comedy*, 137.

⁵⁸ This is not an invention of this play. “There is evident in the classical period a strong social expectation of active concern and involvement by mothers in the welfare of their children, both during marriage and after its dissolution by divorce or the death of the *pater*.” Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 211.

depict mothers could form an interesting complement to, for instance, the image from First Peter of Christians walking in Christ's footsteps (2:21). The footprint image on its own could be understood as an almost "deist Christ," who has provided the footsteps and now offers no further assistance to those attempting to walk in them. Interaction with a maternal metaphor portraying Christ as continually active in the formation of Christians, alters how we read this image of Christ providing an example.

Peter refers unambiguously to Christ as Lord (κύριος) at least in 1:3 and 3:15. If the image of Christ as Lord and Christ as mother are to function coherently, what might this mean for Christian ethics? The forms of authority we have seen mothers exercise in these plays differ from a legal right to give commands.⁵⁹ Yet children are still expected to work and act sacrificially for the good of their mothers. This might help us understand a Christian lordship that is authoritative without "lording it over" anyone. First Peter certainly instructs its readers to "do good" (e.g. 3:11). This form of lordship then provides a model for the exercise of leadership within the Christian community, who are to act "without compulsion" (5:2). Difficult things must be done for the sake of mothers, just as the addressees are instructed to, for instance, obey human authority "for the sake of the Lord" (διὰ τὸν κύριον; 2:13).

⁵⁹ Summarizing a study of a much broader range of texts, Dixon writes: "In effect, sons *chose* to defer to a mother. Paternal authority was different." Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 181. Emphasis original.

3.3 Augustan reforms, propaganda, and opposition

In this section, we move closer to the time period of First Peter, and examine how legal and political changes in Rome refigured motherhood. As the Roman Republic became an Empire, legal privileges were increasingly granted to mothers, especially mothers of many children, that were not afforded other women. In the first subsection, I briefly document a range of important legal provisions concerning motherhood. These laws reinscribe an association of social honor with motherhood. If a reader understood a mother's labor to bring her honor, this would allow a maternal Christological metaphor to function as a way of understanding how Christ's passion brought him glory. In the second subsection, I consider the motivations of the Emperor Augustus in particular in enacting these reforms and how they fit into a broader pattern of propaganda. This propaganda established a new norm of public representation of mothers as part of the self-definition of a people. Such representation may encourage the metaphorical ascription of maternity to Christ as Peter seeks to form his readers in their identity as the "People of God" (1 Pet 2:10).

3.3.1 Legal privileges attached to motherhood

One legal privilege mothers had long enjoyed in the Republic was the right to object to the behavior of a *tutor* of one of their children.⁶⁰ In general, Roman law did not permit women to file suit on behalf of another. However, a charge of *crimen suspecti tutoris*, of being an untrustworthy tutor, could be filed by a woman who was the mother, grandmother, sister, or nurse of the one receiving improper tutelage. This special grant of power reflects a view that the law should respect and promote a role for mothers as protectors of their children, a role we also saw underlying a maternal metaphor in Homer. It is also noteworthy that nurses are given the same right, providing further illustration of the strength of the bond that nursing can foster, as we saw in the medics.

At some point, likely during the first century BCE, the praetorian rules made important changes to inheritance law, inter alia allowing mothers and children to inherit from each other as cognates, whereas they had previously had no mutual

⁶⁰ For a discussion of this law, see Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 251; Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London: Routledge, 2002), 250–54. Grubbs provides examples of such suits from the early second century CE in the Greek East. For a full discussion of the tutelage of fatherless minors, see Bruce W. Frier and Thomas A. J. McGinn, *A Casebook on Roman Family Law*, American Philological Association Classical Resources Series 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 424–37.

inheritance rights under civil law.⁶¹ The second-century (CE) jurist Gaius interpreted the motivation for such rules as follows: “The proconsul, prompted by natural equity (*naturali aequitate*), promises possession of property to all cognate relatives, whom a claim of blood (*ratio sanguinis*) calls to the inheritance, though they may fail at civil law.”⁶² As Gaius understood these rules, admittedly at some centuries’ remove, they respond to a view that blood relations, including mother-child relations, have an importance that is “natural” and transcends the artificiality of civil law.⁶³ This shows how far we are at this point in Roman history from a “denial of maternity” *à la* Aeschylus’ Apollo.

An even more sweeping series of changes came to Roman family law with Augustus’ Julian laws, passed between 18 BCE and 9 CE.⁶⁴ Pál Csillag helpfully summarizes these laws as follows: “Augustus ... granted a number of benefits of both

⁶¹ Gardner dates the first promulgation of such rules, which had to be regularly renewed, to some point between 125 BCE and 17 CE. These rules would eventually be codified by Hadrian. Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 20–24. For Ulpian’s commentary on these rules, see Frier and McGinn, *Roman Family Law*, 339–40. For a broader history with examples of cases, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 52–60.

⁶² *Digest* 38.8.2. Translation adapted from Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 274.

⁶³ This blood relation does not transcend the legal institution of slavery, though. Susan Dixon points out that there was no taboo against separating enslaved mothers from their children by selling them separately. Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 34.

⁶⁴ The term “the Julian laws” generally refers to the *leges Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, *Iulia de adulteriis* (both 18–17 BCE), and *Pappia Poppaea* (9 CE). For dating of these laws, see Pál Csillag, *The Augustan Laws on Family Relations*, trans. József Decsényi and Imre Gombos (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 29–35. For helpful concise overviews of the contents of this legislation and its aims, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 84–86; Foxhall, *Studying Gender*, 37–38.

public and private law to married people, to which others were added when there was offspring of the marriage ... [and] introduced measures prejudicial to ... the *caelibes* (unmarried in terms of the Augustan legislation) or *orbi* (person having no offspring).⁶⁵ Some examples will help illustrate this program and show how it applied to women of every social status. *Caelibes* were not able to inherit at all, whereas *orbi* could only claim half of what was left to them.⁶⁶ However, anyone in possession of the *ius liberorum* (three legitimate children for one born free, four for someone freed later in life) would escape the penalties of the Julian laws.⁶⁷ Thus, those with the appropriate number of children would not have to remarry after divorce or the death of a spouse. Women with this status would escape the need to be supervised by a *tutor mulierum* and were eligible for certain public honors, including wearing the *stola instita*.⁶⁸ A *libertina* (a woman once enslaved, now freed) in possession of the *ius liberorum* was freed from the tutelage of her former owner,

⁶⁵ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 77. Parentheses original. This is rather similar to Cassius Dio's summary: "Upon the unmarried men and the women without husbands he imposed rather heavy penalties, and conversely, he set up prizes for marriage and child-bearing." *Roman History* 54.16.1–2. Cited in Grubbs, *Women and the Law*, 85.

⁶⁶ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 85; Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 72.

⁶⁷ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 124–25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 167, 173; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 73; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 69. For the ways in which a *tutor* could severely restrict the freedom a woman, especially an elite woman, to manage her own property, see Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 64–65; Grubbs, *Women and the Law*, 23–45; Foxhall, *Studying Gender*, 94–95.

which included the right to inherit from her, even against a will.⁶⁹ Even without four legitimate children, the obligation to perform *operae* for patrons was substantially reduced for *libertinae* who had two or more children born during their enslavement or a living five year-old child.⁷⁰ Spouses were restricted in how much they could inherit from each other, and these restrictions became more liberal with each child born to the marriage.⁷¹

This legislative program inscribed in law the proposition that motherhood brought honor, extending to mothers (in proportion to their fecundity) both prestige and greater freedom to manage their own affairs.⁷² As adopted children did not count for these laws, they associated honor for women specifically with giving birth to children who lived.⁷³ While the law itself only granted the *ius liberorum* to women for bearing the appropriate number of children, the law did not restrict the emperor. In 9 BCE, Augustus bestowed the status on his wife Livia, even though she had only

⁶⁹ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 168; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 74; Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 18, 66.

⁷⁰ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 169; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 68. As Rome did not enslave many people through the conquest of new territories in this period, enslaved women must have regularly given birth to maintain the enslaved population. See Susan E. Hylen, *Women in the New Testament World*, Essentials of Biblical Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 115.

⁷¹ Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 69; Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 53–54.

⁷² “Motherhood, then, became legally endorsed as a formal source of social and economic power for women.” McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 41.

⁷³ Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 57.

two children.⁷⁴ Over the course of the first century CE, the status was bestowed for reasons that had less and less to do with fecundity. Pointing out that the Vestal Virgins were awarded the *ius liberorum* and that Claudius bestowed it on women who donated money to build ships, Kristina Milnor states that the *ius liberorum* “tends to appear in our sources more as a recognition of civic responsibility than a reflection of actual reproduction.”⁷⁵ It is notable that the name (“right of free children”) sticks. Rather than simply giving Vestal Virgins more rights, they were given an existing honor whose name denoted fecundity. This legal system both gave women honor for giving birth, and then used the language of childbearing to describe legal grants of honor and *libertas* to women, even virgins.

Ovid, who was exiled by Augustus, possibly for opposing his “family values” legislative program,⁷⁶ parodies this equation of fecundity and women’s *gloria*. Ovid tells the story of the queen Niobe in his *Metamorphoses* (6.147–312). He introduces her as the second in a series of characters exhibiting *hubris*. In Niobe’s case, this consists in the claim that worship should be offered to her, rather than to the divine

⁷⁴ Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 124; Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 79–80; Anthony A. Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 137–38.

⁷⁵ Kristina Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life*, Oxford Studies in Classical Literature and Gender Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 153. See also McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 46. Around the turn of the first and second centuries, Pliny describes the fictive grant of the *ius liberorum* as rare. *Ep.*, 2.13.8.

⁷⁶ See discussion in Milnor, *Gender*, 53–55.

Latona, as Niobe has fourteen children and Latona only two.⁷⁷ Latona responds by having her children kill all of Niobe's children. Niobe then turns to stone and weeps perpetually, though she cannot move in any other way. Mairéad McAuley makes two important observations in her reading of this story:

Unlike ... Latona..., Niobe does not use her children as instruments for achieving her will; instead she argues that the mere fact of having given birth to them ... makes her *inherently* powerful.⁷⁸ Niobe's totalizing conflation of her maternity and selfhood leads to the inexorable conclusion, however, that when she is no longer a mother, she is no longer a person.⁷⁹

Ovid presents a grotesque exaggeration of the linking of women's honor to fecundity that the Julian laws reflected and reinscribed.

To summarize, Romans with the power to shape the legal system viewed the blood relationship forged by motherhood as an important bond, important enough that laws might be changed if they did not respect it. This may help us understand why the mother-child relation is even a candidate for a metaphor describing the relationship between Christ and Christians. Augustus strengthened the connection between giving birth to legitimate children and a woman's honor. Just as many medics affirmed that childbirth was salubrious, jurists ensured it was legally

⁷⁷ Compared with Homer's telling of this tale (*Il.* 24.601–17), Ovid's account is expanded in many ways, in particular in its focus on Niobe's *hubris* and pride.

⁷⁸ McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 156.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

beneficial. This provides another reason for birth to provide an apt metaphor for the Christ's passion: both involve bodily suffering, and both result in glory.

In addition, the legal system saw a mother's role as protector as important enough to justify an exception to the general principle prohibiting women from bringing suits on another's behalf. Elsewhere Peter present Christ as a shepherd, and shepherds were charged with protecting their sheep.⁸⁰ As we saw in the introduction, when two different metaphors in one text describe the same subject in the target domain, common entailments are thereby highlighted. The maternal metaphor and the shepherd metaphor work together to highlight Christ's protective role.

3.3.2 Mothers in Augustan propaganda

Augustus' changes to family law were part of a broader reform program, in which maternity played a special role. As Peter works to form in his readers a "distinctive corporate identity"⁸¹ as members of a new people,⁸² he must construct this identity in distinction to Roman imperial identity. The use of mothers in Augustan imperial propaganda, which set the tone for the remainder of the first

⁸⁰ See, e.g., Zech 13:7, where the shepherd must first be struck before the flock can be scattered. See the section in chapter one on Christ, the chief shepherd for more on this metaphor in First Peter.

⁸¹ Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 195.

⁸² 1 Pet 2:10. These people are to honor the emperor as they honor everyone, but only fear the Lord (God? Jesus? 2:17).

century, is relevant in considering how Peter may have used maternal imagery in his description of a new people.

Augustus himself describes his legal reforms thus: “By passing new laws, I restored (*revocavi* / διωρθώσαμην) many practices (*exempla* / ἑθῶν) of our forebears that were falling into disuse” (*Res Gestae*, 4.8). His laws were innovative in content, but ostensibly traditional in the behavior they were designed to effect.⁸³ The Julian laws did not simply aim at maximizing the number of citizen children legitimately born. One illustrative example of Augustus’ concern for moral rehabilitation of the Roman populace over simply increasing the birth rate can be found in his laws regulating adultery. While Augustus allows some forms of legal marriage that had previously been prohibited (such as between nonsenatorial freeborn citizens and *libertae/i*), he prohibits marriage between a freeborn man and a woman who had been convicted of adultery, without giving any way for such a woman to be “purified” and restored to the task of providing citizen children for Rome.⁸⁴ In order for this law to be enforceable, the Julian laws required a husband who discovered his

⁸³ Augustus’ laws aim at the “revival of domestic and civic virtues he regarded as so vital for the preservation of classes enjoying his patronage.” Csillag, *Augustan Laws*, 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97–98.

wife to have committed adultery to file a *libellus* accusing her in public court and abolished his former right to kill her.⁸⁵

These laws had the effect of making women's behavior matter in public, not merely family, law.⁸⁶ By adding restrictions on which women could enter into legitimate marriages, the Julian laws "legally enforced a stereotypical cultural division of women into 'mothers' and 'whores.'"⁸⁷ It is the former who became, in Augustan propaganda, the "safeguards of *Romanitas*."⁸⁸ The laws also tended to erode previous rights of *patres*.⁸⁹ In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus presents as the climax of his accomplishments that he was proclaimed *pater patriae*, Rome's father (18.35). Augustus' program concentrates the previous rights of *patresfamiliae* in his own

⁸⁵ Ibid., 183–85. A husband who does not file such a *libellus* could be prosecuted for *lenocinium*, i.e., pimping. This would result in his exile and confiscation of half his property. See sources collected in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life*, 129–34.

⁸⁶ Similarly, a *Senatus Consultum* of 21 CE made magistrates who brought their wives on foreign assignments legally responsible for the wives' actions. See Mary T. Boatwright, "Faustina the Younger, 'Mater Castrorum'," in *Les Femmes Antiques entre Sphère Privée et Sphère Publique*, eds. Regula Frei-Stolba, et al. (Bern: Lang, 2003), 249–268, 263.

⁸⁷ McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 43. While charges of *adulterium* or *stuprum* could also be brought against men, the law carved out for them a "safe harbor" of permitted extramarital sex, whereas nothing equivalent was available for women. See Foxhall, *Studying Gender*, 42–43.

⁸⁸ McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 52. For instance, at the Secular Games, the 110 years of the *saeculum* were represented by 100 *matronae*.

⁸⁹ See Milnor, *Gender*, 150. For a first century description of Roman husbands' prior practice of disciplining their wives, see Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 6.3.9–12, cited in Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life*, 121.

person, as the singular *pater* of Rome. McAuley refers to this as the re-presentation of politics as “familiarized.”⁹⁰

If Augustus is Rome’s *pater*, this prompts the question: who is the *mater*? Augustan propaganda would offer various possible answers to this question. One option is Venus, celebrated by Virgil in his *Aeneid*⁹¹ and Horace in his *Carmen Saeculare*, a poem written for Augustus’ Secular Games, as the mother of Aeneas and hence of the Julian house. Augustus completed a temple of Venus *Genetrix* on the Forum Iulium and commissioned sculptures of her in military dress, departing from the tradition of depicting her seminude.⁹² Milnor describes this program as a “rehabilitation of Venus, from rather risqué goddess of love to matronly progenetrix.”⁹³

Another option is Augustus’ own mother, Atia. In Nicolaus of Damascus’ biography of his friend Augustus, the author goes to lengths to assure the reader

⁹⁰ McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 32. Beth Severy argues that innovation in cultic practices in Augustus’ lifetime had a similar effect: “The cumulative effect of these [new] rites and festivals was to make the family of Augustus part of the religious framework of the entire community, and also to define that community as part of a household under the spiritual protection of its *pater*, Augustus.” Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 97.

⁹¹ “Aeneas ... is the prototype of the *pious* son fulfilling his mother’s (Venus’) rightful ambitions for him.” Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 188.

⁹² McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 44–45.

⁹³ Milnor, *Gender*, 57. See also Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 71, 74.

that Augustus was raised well by his mother.⁹⁴ Atia, along with her husband, is very involved in Augustus' childhood instruction, actively supervising his tutors (4–7). Even after he gains the *toga virilis* and is publicly recognized as man rather than boy, Atia controls his movements in order to protect him (8–14). When Caesar is killed by the conspirators, Atia summons her son home to her, and he comes (38–43). However, Nicolaus is also keen not to portray Augustus as improperly constrained by Atia. Later in life, he ignores her advice and does not inform her of his plans (126–134). Nicolaus comments that this is wise, as she is overly cautious.⁹⁵ Milnor is right to judge Nicolaus' Atia as a “lively and intelligent ally to her son,”⁹⁶ yet she is also limited. Nicolaus portrays her as a protective mother, which is generally good for her son, but whose protective timidity Augustus must eventually resist.⁹⁷ This is a new aspect of the mother as protector trope we have seen a few times in this chapter. The addressees of First Peter are not meant to ever resist Christ's

⁹⁴ For text, translation, and commentary, see Mark Toher, ed., *Nicolaus of Damascus: The Life of Augustus and The Autobiography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). On Nicolaus' close personal relationship with Augustus, see *ibid.*, 18–20.

⁹⁵ She is limited “by affection (*φιλοστοργίας*) and weakness (*ἀσθενείας*), being both woman and mother” (134). Toher comments, “A final encounter with Atia illustrates the transformation and conflict for the obedient son in his new identity as the heir of Caesar. In order to escape the emotional interference of his mother, Octavian lies to her.... [This] may serve as implicit contrast to the relationship of the notoriously domineering Servilia with her son M. Brutus at just the same time.” *Ibid.*, 418.

⁹⁶ Milnor, *Gender*, 90.

⁹⁷ For further examples of the “*anxia mater*” motif, see Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 193–94.

protection. A reader familiar with the notion that one should “outgrow” one’s mother’s care at some point, would experience this as a (potentially surprising) call to weakness.

The most popular choice for a maternal counterpart to Augustus, though, may have been his wife Livia, “the first ‘first lady.’”⁹⁸ As we have seen, she was fictively awarded the maternal *ius liberorum*. The sculpture of the Augustan *Ara Pacis* (9 BCE, dedicated on Livia’s birthday) paired Augustus and Livia in various ways.⁹⁹ Beth Severy comments, “if the *Ara Pacis* articulates a paternal role for Augustus over the community of Rome, Livia is presented in these same terms as his female counterpart, the *mater* of the state.”¹⁰⁰ Livia made a practice of providing dowries for women who lacked them and raised many children, unrelated to her by law or blood.¹⁰¹ After Augustus’ death, the senate offered her the novel title *mater patriae*.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Barrett, *Livia*, 121. For positive descriptions of Livia in Jewish sources, see Josephus, *Ant.* 17.1.1; Philo, *Legat.* 319–20; discussion in Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 293–94. Beth Severy understands Livia as having exercised agency in forging this public role for herself. Severy, *Augustus*, 134.

⁹⁹ Barrett, *Livia*, 139.

¹⁰⁰ Severy, *Augustus*, 136. For instance, Livia and Augustus are the only two figures to wear a veil and garland. As Augustus is connected to Aeneas, Livia is connected to Venus. See also Barrett, *Livia*, 127–28.

¹⁰¹ Severy, *Augustus*, 155.

¹⁰² Her son Tiberius vetoes this. See Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.14.1; Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 97; Barrett, *Livia*, 219; McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 47–48. Even though officially

Roman Imperial Ideology loomed large in first century (CE) Roman Anatolia.¹⁰³ Augustus had made mothers matter for the self-presentation of a people. Presenting Christ in maternal terms is one strategy for successfully presenting the Christian elect People of God (1 Pet 2:10; 5:12) as an attractive new ethnic identity for readers who had previously celebrated a Roman identity.

3.4 Further case studies from the first and early second centuries

In this section, I present a series of brief case studies, or “cameos,” of references to mothers in Greek and Latin literature from the first century (CE) and slightly beyond. These texts serve to further broaden our awareness of the range of possibilities of how mothers are invoked in various literary contexts. Again, it must be stated that this is not true women’s history, but an episodic history of how men spoke about mothers, and how they used speech about mothers to think and talk about other things. I present these texts in approximate chronological order. They confirm that themes we have already heard from earlier texts were still sounded in the late first century. These texts also give us further insight, in particular, into just

vetoed, the title *Augusta Mater Patriae* still occurred on certain coins commemorating her. See Severy, *Augustus*, 242.

¹⁰³ Benjamin B. Rubin, "(Re)presenting Empire: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008).

what it means to talk about resemblance between mother and child. Additionally, while these are not medical texts, some of them do mention blood and milk to talk about what connects parents and children in close relationships and forms likeness; the social relationships with which this chapter is principally concerned were not, for these authors, conceptually sealed off from the transfer of bodily fluids explicitly mentioned in First Peter.

3.4.1 Seneca

We begin our survey of so-called “silver age” Latin authors with the philosopher, statesman, and dramatist Seneca. In various works, Seneca plays with the concept of mother-child resemblance, both using an assumption of resemblance to rhetorical effect and investigating its limits. In this section, we examine Seneca’s presentation of his own mother Helvia in the *Consolatio* addressed to her and of the mothers in one of his dramatic works, *Phaedra*.

Seneca composed the *Consolatio ad Helviam Matrem* around 42 CE, likely a year into his exile to Corsica. He had been exiled by Claudius ostensibly for adultery, but probably also to remove a political rival. The *Consolatio* is addressed to his mother and presents itself as an attempt to help her manage her grief. Seneca likely always intended a broader readership for it, though, and he hoped it would help

prepare for his recall to Rome by assuring readers that he was not a political threat.¹⁰⁴

In this work, Seneca explicitly disavows self-praise (5.2) but devotes much space to praise of his mother.¹⁰⁵ Among other positive qualities, Seneca writes that, unlike some mothers, Helvia does not seek power through her sons (14.2). Far from taking advantage of her sons, she is generous to them and manages their inheritance wisely (14.3). He comments also on her lack of “unchastity” (*impudicitia*; 16.3), illustrated by her avoidance of revealing clothing (16.4). These two claims for Helvia, that she does not seek political power and that she does not engage in improper sexual behavior, are precisely the two defenses Seneca needs to offer for himself in order to rebut both the pretextual and underlying reasons for his exile.¹⁰⁶ This strategy can only be successful if Seneca can rely on his readers to assume that sons resemble their mothers in character.

¹⁰⁴ Arther Ferrill, "Seneca's Exile and the *Ad Helviam*: A Reinterpretation," *CP* 61 (1966): 253–57, 254. For an argument for a double audience and purpose, see Susan A. Curry, "Seneca Rising: Epistolary Self-Reflection in the *ad Helviam*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 61 (2018): 45–55, 46.

¹⁰⁵ In a work full of *exempla*, Seneca “idealizes Helvia herself as *the* example of a good mother.” Curry, "Seneca Rising," 51. Emphasis original.

¹⁰⁶ Seneca “[displays] his mother’s long-suffering *pudicitia* to his readers in Rome as part of his ethical and political self-promotion, as an indirect way of asserting his *own* chastity and of staking a claim for his own *libertas*.” McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 183. Emphasis original.

There are two other features of mother-child relationships in the *Consolatio* worth noting. Firstly, Seneca portrays his relationship with his mother before his exile as very close. He speaks of embraces, conversations in which she confided in him about her worries, common study, and mutual delight in one another (15.1–2). Here we have a depiction of an intimate companionate relationship between an adult son and mother. Seneca also uses maternity as metaphor. He mentions that Helvia should take comfort in the company of her sister whose concern for all of her relatives is said to be “maternal” (*maternum*; 19.1). One example Seneca gives of this is his aunt’s physical care for him when he was once sick (19.2). This metaphor assumes that care for a child in distress is an activity sufficiently strongly associated with mothers as to be mapped in a metaphor.

While this *Consolatio* relies on an assumed resemblance in character between mothers and their children, Seneca’s play *Phaedra* investigates how powerful such resemblance may be.¹⁰⁷ The play asks to what extent human action is constrained by

¹⁰⁷ This play is hard to date, but it was probably written before 54 CE. See A. J. Boyle, *Seneca's Phaedra*, Latin and Greek Texts 5 (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1987), 5. It is disputed whether Seneca wrote the play for staged performance or for recitation. Regardless, none of Seneca’s tragedies became school texts. See *ibid.*, 10; Roland Mayer, *Seneca: Phaedra*, Duckworth Companions to Greek and Roman Tragedy (London: Duckworth, 2002), 17, 89. One of Seneca’s sources for this play was likely Euripides’ *Hippolytus*. In Euripides’ play, Phaedra has more self-control and does not attempt to seduce Hippolytus.

one's mother.¹⁰⁸ The plot concerns the blended family of Theseus, his son Hippolytus, and Theseus' new wife Phaedra. Hippolytus' mother was the Amazonian Antiope, deceased by the time of the play.¹⁰⁹ Phaedra's mother was Pasiphae, who had previously been punished by Venus with desire for a bull, who fathered another child of hers, the Minotaur. While Theseus is away, Phaedra falls in love with Hippolytus, whose sole interest is hunting and who has committed himself to celibacy out of hatred for all women but his mother. Phaedra's nurse attempts first to persuade Phaedra that she can forget this love. After this fails, she attempts to persuade Hippolytus to abandon celibacy. She fails in this too. When Phaedra attempts to seduce Hippolytus, he flees, and the nurse has her first "successful" idea: to accuse Hippolytus of having raped Phaedra. When Theseus returns, he prays to his father Poseidon to send a sea-bull to kill Hippolytus, which he does. Phaedra then admits Hippolytus' innocence and kills herself.

Hippolytus' resemblance to his mother is a theme frequently sounded in the play. *Phaedra* opens with Hippolytus singing of hunting, showing in lively form, rather than telling, this Amazonian aspect of his character (1–84). Phaedra sees both paternal and maternal resemblance in Hippolytus, but identifies the paternal

¹⁰⁸ "*Phaedra* focusses on *natura* and human impotence." Boyle, *Phaedra*, 18.

¹⁰⁹ Amazonians, first mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 3.189), were female warriors who avoided permanent sexual unions, engaging in sexual union with male strangers for the purpose of reproduction, but killing all male offspring. See discussion in *ibid.*, 151.

resemblance as primarily physical,¹¹⁰ while from his mother he has inherited his *rigor*, at once harshness of facial features and severity of character (658–59). The nurse names as maternal resemblance both his love for hunting and his rejection of concourse with the opposite sex (229–32). In conversation with Hippolytus, the nurse characterizes his complete rejection of city life and love as a grotesque exaggeration of his mother’s race, whose members do “feel Venus’ yoke” and reproduce (574–79). A. J. Boyle comments that the “motif of the enlargement or intensification of evil are common in Senecan tragedy,”¹¹¹ and the nurse does view the rejection of family life as an evil, painting for Hippolytus a vivid picture of the apocalyptic barrenness that is, for her, the logical end of his position.¹¹² She does maintain hope, though, that Hippolytus is persuadable by words, at least when aided by her prayer (406–22). Theseus also believes that Hippolytus resembles his mother. However, he misreads the resemblance. When he believes that his son is a rapist, he states that this is an echo of the marriage-less sexuality that characterizes the Amazonians (908–11).

¹¹⁰ The chorus affirms that Hippolytus physically resembles his father (831).

¹¹¹ Boyle, *Phaedra*, 178.

¹¹² See Russell M. Hillier, "Comparable Apocalypses of Barrenness and Superabundance: Seneca's *Phaedra* and John Milton's *Comus*, or *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*," *Notes and Queries* 66 (2019): 535–37.

Phaedra is also portrayed as resembling her mother. This is named by several characters in the play, beginning with Phaedra herself (112–18).¹¹³ The nurse says that Phaedra's desire is more monstrous than her mother's (140–45), and Hippolytus makes the same comparison (688). The nurse, again hopeful that persuasion can help Phaedra avoid maternal determinism, tells her to banish memories of her mother as a way to eliminate her desire (170, 242). Phaedra resembles Pasiphae not just in having unnatural sexual desires, but in those desires resulting in the birth of a bull-like monster, even if the birth is metaphorical in Phaedra's case. The messenger's description of the emergence of the monster from the sea is described with the language of pregnancy and parturition, though it is the sea which is described as pregnant and giving birth (1016–21).¹¹⁴ The decision to accuse Hippolytus of rape, though, cannot be traced to Pasiphae. This is the nurse's idea (720–21).¹¹⁵ All of Phaedra's desires and actions in this play are "begotten" either by her mother or her nurse, the two women that most medics would have said had the most influence over her.

¹¹³ Boyle points out that this is a distinctively Senecan theme; Euripides mentions Pasiphae but once in his *Hippolytus*. Boyle, *Phaedra*, 143.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 198. Boyle points out that this is a Senecan addition, not present in Euripides or in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

¹¹⁵ On the nurse as driving the action of the play, see Stavros Frangoulidis, "The Nurse as Plot-Maker in Seneca's *Phaedra*," *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 137 (2009): 402–23.

Seneca's portrayals of Hippolytus and Phaedra present mother-child resemblance as both real and powerful, yet also different from simple identity. The different possibilities for what it might mean for Hippolytus to resemble each of his parents show that "resemblance" is not a univocal notion. As the nurse sees it, resemblance is a creative activity in which the offspring negotiate their inherited legacy and participate in determining what resemblance will mean for them. This is important for understanding what it might mean for a Christian to resemble Christ. Diverse modes of resembling Christ are available (for instance, some but not all Christians are called to serve as elders; 5:1-5). Hippolytus' failure to repeat his father's defeat of monstrous bulls also serves as a reminder that the mere fact of the new begetting does not necessarily ensure that complete resemblance will be effected.¹¹⁶ The addressees must still continue to seek to be formed in ever-greater Christlikeness, aided in part by the letter Peter sends them, the ministry of the local elders, and Christ's ongoing nurture of them.

Before leaving this play, we may note two other aspects of motherhood mentioned briefly in *Phaedra*. Firstly, when Hippolytus calls her "mother," Phaedra rejects this title as "too superior (*superbum*) and powerful (*potens*)" (608-609).

While Phaedra's intent is to have him call her instead servant, opening up the

¹¹⁶ Compare Matt 3:9: "Do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. For I tell you that God is able to raise up from these stones children of Abraham."

possibility of a sexual relationship,¹¹⁷ her description of “mother” as a title assumes the high social honor ascribed to motherhood that we saw also encoded in the Julian laws. Secondly, when Theseus learns of Hippolytus’ death, he mourns him, despite still believing at this point that Hippolytus has raped his wife. Struck by the contradiction in his emotions, in an apostrophe to “too powerful *natura*,” he complains of the strength of the “bond of blood” (*sanguinis vinculo*) with which *natura* holds parents (1114–16). Blood stands as metonymy for all that links parents to children, just as blood is important in bringing Christ into the new birth imagery in First Peter.

3.4.2 Thetis from Statius’ Achilleid

While our study of Seneca’s *Phaedra* showed that, for one author, parental resemblance requires ongoing negotiation and development throughout adult life, examining Statius’ portrayal of Thetis will show some of the limits of a mother’s power to reform her liminally adult son. Late in his life, likely in the mid-nineties CE, Statius began work on his *Achilleid*, which, in its surviving form, features Achilles’ mother Thetis at least as prominently as the eponymous hero.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Boyle, *Phaedra*, 172; Mayer, *Phaedra*, 27.

¹¹⁸ Likely unfinished, the *Achilleid* is nevertheless a “coherent and polished piece of work.” P. J. Heslin, *The Transvestite Achilles: Gender and Genre in Statius’*

The *Achilleid* opens by recalling a tradition about Thetis' power as a mother (1–3). Zeus learned that any child he fathered with Thetis would be powerful enough to displace him from his reign. Hence, she is made to marry the mortal Peleus. Their son is exceedingly powerful for a mortal, but not so powerful as to be able to threaten Zeus. This is a form of inheritance from mother to child that is slightly different from resemblance. As we saw in certain of Plato's birth metaphors, this aspect of the plot assumes that a mother can transmit certain characteristics consistently to any of her children, even if those characteristics (martial prowess in this case) are not ones she herself exhibits. Thetis is consistently an amplifier of paternal power.

The first book of the *Achilleid* narrates Thetis' attempts first to avert the Trojan War and then to prevent Achilles from taking part in it. As she explains her motivation, Thetis speaks of how injury to her son causes pain for her. Even the fear of harm coming to him is described as "swords hostile to [her] womb" and "wild

Achilleid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 57. "The *Achilleid* is more about Thetis than Achilles." *Ibid.*, 157.

beast at [her] breasts” (131–33). Thus, Thetis is characterized by a curious mix of power and impotence, for her plans to protect Achilles fail.¹¹⁹

Thetis attempts to play the motherly role of protector for her son by hiding him on the island of Skyros, disguised as a young woman. Thetis characterizes her plan as working magic (135), and Statius compares her actions as she “changes her son (*natum mutantis*)” (334) to an artist sculpting wax (332–33).¹²⁰ She does not merely redress her son, but reshapes his body and “subdues” (*domat*) his unruly hair (328). As McAuley puts it, the transformation, “supposedly aesthetic and sartorial only, is in fact a *physical* alteration.”¹²¹ Achilles permits this only because he sees a young woman on Skyros to whom he is attracted (325–27).

The transformation is only temporary. Like Nicolaus’ Augustus, Achilles resolves not to obey his overly timid mother (624, 660), though he only reveals his true identity to one person before his body gives him away. He has only to look at a spear and his hair rebels and stands up (855–56). Ulysses realizes who he is, and Achilles starts to remove his dress. Before he is able to complete this, as the battle trumpet sounds, the dress falls untouched from him, and his shoulders regain size

¹¹⁹ “She is so powerful that her potential to overturn Zeus’ hegemony must be neutralized, [yet] on the other hand she is a fretful mother, powerless to protect her own son.” *Ibid.*, 160.

¹²⁰ “A Pygmalionic role.” Antony Augoustakis, “Achilles and the Poetics of Manhood: Re(de)fining Europe and Asia in Statius’ *Achilleid*,” *CW* 109 (2016): 195–219, 214. See also discussion in Heslin, *Transvestite Achilles*, 117–18.

¹²¹ McAuley, *Reproducing Rome*, 363. Emphasis original.

(878–81). The magic is undone. Thetis’ attempt at formation of her son is described as “overreach”¹²² by P. J. Heslin, “too much mother” by Ulysses (2.37–38), and *nefas* by Achilles (2.44). Heslin suggests that Statius presents Thetis as having been too absent from Achilles’ life up until the Skyros transformation, arguing that Statius agrees with Apollonius that Thetis had abandoned him and that it was Peleus’ decision to entrust his education to Chiron.¹²³ Just as she combines power and impotence, she has also been too little and too much mother.

Statius’ characterization of Thetis’ and Achilles’ relationship presents anew some themes we have already seen: the formative power of maternity; the role of mother as protector; and the need for a son to outgrow her timidity at some point. This work gives us, though, a new take on what maternal formation can look like. For Statius, once Achilles has been born to Thetis, the die is cast. While he does not

¹²² Heslin, *Transvestite Achilles*, 105. Heslin, of course, here is paraphrasing (her view of) Statius’ characterization of Thetis’ actions, not presenting her own judgment of Thetis.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 114–15. First century encomiastic biographies of elite men often present their mothers as having been very involved in their education. We have already seen the example of Atia’s involvement in Augustus’ education in Nicolaus’ biography. For an example from later in the first century, consider Tacitus’ biography of his father-in-law, Agricola. Agricola was raised by his mother, Julia Procilla. Tacitus portrays the relationship between them as close and credits Julia with helping Agricola moderate his interest in philosophy and so become better prepared for a career in public service (4). For women as teachers of children, boys and girls, elite and nonelite see Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Power of Children: The Construction of Christian Families in the Greco-Roman World* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 116–17; Hylan, *Women*, 119.

stress her abandonment of her son, he does seem to assume it. Thetis may have ceded any ability to continue to form her son by not being involved in his childhood. But it is not clear that, for Statius, she had any ability to do this after his birth anyway. Statius compares Achilles to a supposedly tamed lion cub who won't stay tamed (855–56); nature looms large over nurture for Statius, and Achilles cannot be reformed, even by his mother. For Statius, it is not so much that mothers are powerful; what is powerful, rather, is the fact of who one's mother was. The new birth imagery in First Peter would be striking in a particular way to a reader who accepts this kind of natal determinism. Such a reader would be led to conclude that anything worth the name of “new birth” must effect a substantial change in someone. Belief in such natal determinism also has consequences for how we understand Christ's authority, a topic to which we will return in the conclusion to this chapter.

3.4.3 Three mothers from Pliny's Epistolae

Pliny the Younger served in Roman Imperial government throughout the Empire, including in Roman Anatolia. He published a large collection of his letters, mainly dating from the turn of the first and second centuries CE, some of which

describe relationships between women and the children they raised.¹²⁴ The public nature of these letters shows that Pliny's relationships with these women form an important part of his self-presentation. They inform our understanding of the role of nature and nurture in forming resemblance, as well as of mother-child affection.

Pliny several times presents his relationship with his mother Plinia Secunda as very close. For instance, when some estates his mother left him in her will fail to perform profitably, he states that he loves them only because they were his mother's.¹²⁵ A more vivid depiction of Pliny's relationship with his mother comes in his description of their escape from the eruption of Vesuvius, which occurred when Pliny was eighteen (*Ep.* 6.20.5). When it becomes clear that they need to leave urgently, Plinia Secunda begs Pliny to escape without her, as she is old and frail and could die happy only if she knew that she had not caused his death (6.20.12). Pliny refuses to seek safety without her, and she reluctantly (or sorrowfully, *aegre*) accompanies him. This account serves to present both Pliny and Plinia Secunda as willing to sacrifice their lives for one another (when the risk was very real; many,

¹²⁴ On the circumstances and aims of Pliny's publication of these letters, see Jacqueline M. Carlon, *Pliny's Women: Constructing Virtue and Creating Identity in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–7. For dating of individual letters, see Pliny the Younger, *Complete Letters*, Oxford World's Classics, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹²⁵ *Ep.* 2.15.2. He also states in 7.11.5 that he's willing to sell any land except that which he inherited from his parents. See discussion in Carlon, *Pliny's Women*, 116–17.

including Pliny the Elder, died in this eruption). This is a more extreme version of the willingness to act sacrificially that we saw in Terence's *Hecyra*.

As full of praise as Pliny is for his own mother, he may be even more effusive in the case of Calpurnia Hispulla, the aunt of Pliny's wife Calpurnia, who, he says, was also a very formative influence on him in his youth (4.19.7). In a letter addressed to Calpurnia Hispulla, Pliny calls her a model of *pietas*, which she exhibits by loving (*diligas*) her dead brother's daughter as if she were her own (4.19.1). In another letter to Calpurnia Hispulla, Pliny even describes her affection for Calpurnia as "more tender than the fondness of a mother" (*materna indulgentia molliorem*; 8.11.1). This has borne fruit in Calpurnia, whose several admirable virtues (4.19.2) prove her worthy (*dignam*) of Calpurnia Hispulla, as well as of her father and grandfather (4.19.1). Jacqueline Carlon suggests that part of Pliny's purpose in publishing these letters is to reassure a reader who may worry about the moral quality of his wife, as "her father had not raised her."¹²⁶ Certainly, the letter reveals a concern with nurture; that the benefits of nature may not be realized without proper nurture. A similar concern may be observed in Pliny's promotion of Quadratus, whose tutor he had been (7.24). As he praises Quadratus, he must deal with concerns about the moral failings of Ummidia Quadratilla, his grandmother who raised him. Pliny praises some aspects of Ummidia's character, and shows her adept

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

in shielding Quadratus from her defects, thus “salvaging her reputation and more importantly that of her grandson.”¹²⁷

The affection and willingness for mutual sacrifice that Pliny attributes to (idealized) mother-child relationships is something that can sensibly be mapped to the Christ-Christian relationship. This aspect of the metaphor has the power to help the addressees of First Peter form a deeper conviction of their belovedness, as well as encouraging them in sacrificial practices of discipleship. The emphasis on the importance of nurture forms somewhat of a counterpoint to our study of Seneca. Just as today, the relative importance of nature and nurture was a contested question in antiquity. Addressees of First Peter who were particularly concerned about nurture would be especially alert to ways of understanding a maternal Christology which emphasized Christ’s ongoing care for the Christian, long past the moment of conversion or baptism.

3.4.4 Plutarch’s Consolatio

Around 90 CE, Plutarch wrote a letter to his wife Timoxena, after learning that their young daughter had died.¹²⁸ This letter reveals how one Greek-speaking

¹²⁷ Ibid., 204.

¹²⁸ For dating, see Sarah B. Pomeroy, "Reflections on Plutarch, *A Consolation to His Wife*," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to His*

resident of Roman Anatolia in the late first century talked about motherhood, both Timoxena's own practice and the prevailing social norms, with which he at times compares her. Plutarch speaks of affectionate intimacy between parents and children, maternal suffering, and maternal honor. While both Timoxena and her daughter are portrayed as virtuous, there is no concern to explicitly trace the origins of the daughter's virtue to her mother or father.¹²⁹

Plutarch paints a picture of a close relationship between the girl, Timoxena the Younger, and both of her parents. Plutarch had recognized the importance of maternity in giving the girl his wife's name (2). Plutarch says that he and Timoxena shared the raising of all of their children at home (2).¹³⁰ That they employed a nurse (2) does not mean that they were uninvolved. Plutarch says that Timoxena is not like

Wife: English Translations, Commentary, Interpretive Essays, and Bibliography, ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75–81, 76. For scholarly debate on whether or not the letter was originally or ever intended for broader publication, see *ibid.*, 76–77.

¹²⁹ On the basis of other texts of Plutarch's, Magdalena Myszkowska-Kaszuba argues that his view was that "the virtue of parents is inherited by their children." Magdalena Myszkowska-Kaszuba, "The Roman Mother like the Spartan: Remark on a Cross Cultural Notion of Mother(hood) in Plutarch," *Hermes* 145 (2017): 480–487, 485. Plutarch does not investigate this notion of inheritance in the *Consolatio*.

¹³⁰ "The word order emphasizes their joint role." Richard Hawley, "Practicing What You Preach: Plutarch's Sources and Treatment," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to His Wife: English Translations, Commentary, Interpretive Essays, and Bibliography*, ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 116–127, 125n54.

other (elite) mothers who only take the children into their arms after someone else has cleaned them and cheered them up (or “made them pretty,” γανωθῆ, 6). Plutarch also speaks of the “keenness” (δριμύτης) of the love (φιλοστοργία) one feels for children of that age (2). Attributing to mother-child relationships this kind of closeness, activity, and quality of affection adds color to the invocation of a maternal metaphor in a soteriological context.

Plutarch also talks about maternal sacrifice. Timoxena had nursed at least one of her children herself and had suffered some kind of complication requiring surgery (5).¹³¹ The *Consolatio* also contains reference to the honor that would accrue to a woman for being a mother (9).

The most important thing we learn from Plutarch’s *Consolatio* may simply be that even elite men knew at least something about their wives’ work of child-rearing, including about the difficulties of breastfeeding.¹³² Presumably, less elite men, living in closer quarters with their families, would be even more likely to have this knowledge. This helps to increase the likelihood that more of the addressees of First

¹³¹ Pomeroy speculates that this may have been the lancing of a blood blister. Pomeroy, "Consolatio," 79. We have inscriptional and other evidence from around this period that stating that a woman breastfed her own children could function as a form of praise, so this detail contributes to the presentation of Timoxena as an ideal mother. See Lefkowitz and Fant, *Women's Life*, 30; Hylan, *Women*, 116.

¹³² C. W. Marshall, in his study of references to lactation in classical Greek works, uses Plutarch as evidence that male knowledge of “the feeding and care of their children” was not limited to medics. C. W. Marshall, "Breastfeeding in Greek Literature and Thought," *Illinois Classical Studies* 42 (2018): 185–201, 198.

Peter would have had knowledge of childbirth and lactation that could be mapped by a Christological metaphor.

3.4.5 Faustina the Younger in the Historia Augusta

With this text, the final case study of the chapter, we move decisively beyond the period of composition of First Peter. Faustina the Younger, the wife of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, lived from approximately 130 CE till 176 CE.¹³³ The tradition of concern to us is first recorded in the *Historia Augusta* (*Aur.* 19), which is likely a fifth century text, though it draws upon earlier sources.¹³⁴

Faustina was the mother of Commodus, who, according to the author of the *HA*, had worse habits (*mores*) than any scoundrel. This causes a problem, as this author views his father as morally exemplary. This could be explained if Faustina perhaps were the source of Commodus' moral failings. However, this would be hard to maintain, as Marcus Aurelius himself counted his wife as one of his blessings, describing her as "obedient, affectionate (*φιλόστοργον*), and unaffected" (*Med.*,

¹³³ For general information about Faustina, see Boatwright, "Faustina."

¹³⁴ For a survey of over a century of scholarship on the composition of the *Historia Augusta*, see Eliodoro Savino, *Ricerche sull'Historia Augusta* (Naples: Naus Editoria, 2017). While the text presents itself as fourth century, Savino argues that it is a fifth century forgery. It is not a Christian text. For a concise treatment of the question of sources for the *Historia*, including the possibility that the author had access to primary sources from Marcus Aurelius' reign, see David Rohrbacher, "The Sources of the *Historia Augusta* Re-examined," *Histos* 7 (2013): 146–180, esp. 155.

1.17.7).¹³⁵ The author reports approvingly the following solution to the problem. Faustina had fallen in love at first sight with a certain gladiator.¹³⁶ Determined not to act adulterously, she informed her husband. After consulting with Chaldeans, Marcus determined that the gladiator should be killed and that Faustina should bathe in his blood and then have sex with her husband. This she did, and she was cured of her infatuation, but Commodus was born “a gladiator, not a prince” (*Aur.* 19).

This story rests upon an assumption of parent-child resemblance, but posits that such resemblance can be overridden by the presence of another person’s blood. This version of the story affirms that Marcus and Faustina are Commodus’ real parents, but that the blood of the gladiator exercised a greater formative influence. Like the medical writers of the previous chapter, this author assigns great formative power to blood. A reader to whom this story made sense would see similar power in Christ’s blood, as referred to in First Peter.

¹³⁵ For praise of Faustina during her lifetime, see also Boatwright, "Faustina," 253.

¹³⁶ The concern that the sight of gladiators would be harmful to women was quite common. According to Suetonius, Augustus, for instance, only permitted women to attend gladiatorial games if they sat in the highest rows. *Life of Augustus*, 44.5.

3.5 Conclusion

As each of the above case studies have been presented, I have suggested some ways in which they can thicken our awareness of what writers were doing when they wrote about mothers and, thereby, enrich our reading of First Peter. A fuller accounting of beliefs concerning motherhood conceptually available to the early audience of First Peter provides further candidate properties of this source domain that the metaphor may or may not map to its target domain. The more that identifying these properties helps give a compelling reading of the letter, the more likely we are to have found a fruitful way to construct the metaphorical mapping. In this conclusion, I draw together the data of this chapter. This will most enliven my reading of First Peter as regards resemblance to Christ and Christ's authority. Before turning to these two topics, though, I summarize certain other ways in which the work of this chapter can inform our reading of First Peter.

Firstly, I noted that, from Homer on, men could be described (in entirely positive ways) using maternal metaphors. Secondly, we have seen that various male authors treated in this chapter, none of whom were professional medics, knew of pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding as forms of suffering. We have also seen that motherhood was socially valorized, and that the glory that could accrue to mothers had been codified in Roman law by the first century CE. This confirms, as we saw in the medics, that the image of woman giving birth coheres well with the

epistle's treatment of Christ's "sufferings and subsequent glory" (1 Pet 1:11).

Thirdly, we have seen that Augustus' legal and political reforms gave a new importance to a "first lady" for Rome. As Peter seeks to construct an identity for his addressees as a new nation (1 Pet 2:9),¹³⁷ having a mother-figure in their new symbolic world would help readers who had previously prized a Roman identity adapt to this new ethnic identity.

This chapter has also explored what beliefs around mother-child resemblance were culturally available to Peter and his addressees. In chapter one, we saw that Christ-Christian resemblance is part of the soteriology of First Peter, and, in chapter two, we saw that four relevant ancient medical corpora posited mother-child resemblance. The current chapter has established that this belief was not the exclusive preserve of medics, and that mother-child resemblance was mapped by other maternal metaphors (starting with the *Oresteia*).

We have seen diverse opinions on the importance of nature versus nurture when it comes to mother-child resemblance in character. For instance, Plautus' Artemona is engaged in a struggle with her husband to see which of them will form their son, but Seneca's Hippolytus cannot escape the influence of his dead mother.

¹³⁷ John Elliott describes this as "the fundamental indicative for the entire epistle." John H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy: An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase basileion hierateuma*, NovTSup, 12 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 217.

Emphasizing nature or nurture highlights different elements of the soteriology of First Peter. If nature is emphasized, then the power of God's redemptive action is highlighted; "new birth" effects radical change in Christians, and they can have confidence in their new status.¹³⁸ Emphasizing nurture highlights different soteriological themes; the addressees are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (to use Pauline language), while Christ is active in their continued formation.¹³⁹ This "nurture soteriology" leaves open the possibility that, even after the new birth, someone might turn away and walk in footprints other than Christ's, as indeed did happen in Pontus within a generation of the composition of First Peter.¹⁴⁰

I do not think that a reader need choose between these two emphases; the tension between nature and nurture can be theologically and pastorally fruitful. An analogy can be drawn with the diaspora imagery: Christians have been made into a new people; this is good news that is accomplished. This people, however, is still

¹³⁸ This encompasses the first three of what Dryden refers to as Peter's "strategies": "a narrative worldview centered on God's salvific acts; ... Remembrance ... that their conversion was a paradigmatic life-defining event; ... Construction of a distinctive corporate identity for the church." Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 194–95.

¹³⁹ While Dryden does not emphasize the continued action of Christ, a call to the addressees to act so as to live in to their new identity corresponds to the final two of his description of Peter's strategies: "Moral instructions [that] serve not only to define ethical norms but also to aid growth in character; ... *Imitatio Christi*." Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁰ See Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.

scattered and both awaits an in-gathering and is called to participate in moving towards that goal. A soteriology that takes seriously the importance of both nature and nurture at once affirms that God has acted in a decisive way and that the reformation of the Christian in the likeness of Christ is not yet complete, with the Christian being called to cooperate in Christ's ongoing formative work.

We were also reminded, especially by Seneca, that "resemblance" is not a univocal concept; there is not a singular way in which one person might resemble another. This is important if a maternal Christology is to be able to account for a diversity of vocations within the Christian communities addressed by First Peter. In 1 Pet 4:10–11, Peter echoes the Pauline language in Rom 12:6–8 of "gifts differing." First Peter contains a universal call to holiness (1:15–16) and a recognition of a diverse range of possible modes of discipleship through which that holiness can be lived out and increased. The footsteps image of 1 Pet 2:21 could, in isolation, be taken to suggest that there is only one way to follow Christ. A maternal Christology affirms resemblance and the universality of the call to holiness, while also providing a way to understand diversity within this singularity.

The ways the texts treated in this chapter picture relationships between mothers and children also help enliven our reading of the maternal metaphor in First Peter. Most of these texts present a strong affectionate bond between mother and child, which nonetheless allows for a measure of strictness on the part of the

mother.¹⁴¹ In 1 Pet 1:8, we read of the addressees' love for Christ, and the letter frequently enjoins or comments upon love within the Christian community.¹⁴² There is no explicit mention of Christ's love for Christians in the letter, but the maternal metaphor is able to help fill this gap. This metaphor provides both promise of Christ's closeness and affection and a summons for Christians to draw close themselves.

We have seen how *pietas* entailed mutual obligations between family members and created expectations for mothers and children to act sacrificially for each other. Christ's sacrificial action on behalf of Christians is a central theme for First Peter (see, e.g., 2:21, 24). The letter enjoins Christians to participate in that sacrifice (e.g., 4:1, 13), but does not explicitly identify that as a sacrifice made to God or Christ, unlike Paul in Rom 12:1, say. The maternal metaphor provides an alternative way of presenting that Pauline call.

The sources examined in this chapter also frequently presented mothers as involved in the education of their children and acting protectively. In First Peter, we read of Christ's Spirit inspiring the prophets (1:11), which is an educative role. We also read that the addressees were formerly in ignorance (1:14), so they have already

¹⁴¹ The exceptions, such as Thetis, are presented as bad examples of motherhood. Presumably, if Christ is to be understood in terms of mothers, he is to be understood in terms of the ideal mothers.

¹⁴² 1:22; 2:11, 17; 4:8, 12; 5:14.

received some education. The addressees are also said to be protected by the power of God (1:5). Christ is not specifically named as an agent of either of these acts, but the maternal metaphor can bridge these gaps too. The Christians are not viewed as moving beyond the sphere of this protectiveness, even though this was generally an expectation for mature men, at least. This fits well with what could be called a timidity in the ethics of First Peter, the politeness in what Horrell calls “polite resistance.”¹⁴³ For instance, Christians should be ready to make a defense of their hope, but only to those who ask for it (3:15). This is not “shouting from the rooftops” evangelism.

When a resemblance soteriology is operative, ethics and Christology should be mutually informing, as Christians seek to live out the kind of “Christic obedience” mentioned in 1 Pet 1:2. As we saw in the introduction, when the same subject is described by two metaphors with different source domains, common entailments are highlighted and contradictory entailments downplayed. The “lord” metaphor for Christ influences how we read the “mother” metaphor and vice versa. We have seen that mothers had a high degree of influence over their children’s lives, including over

¹⁴³ Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 238. There is still resistance in the ethics of First Peter, Horrell rightly argues. To name Rome as Babylon (5:13) figures Rome as a power that will be overthrown, and, while the emperor is to be honored, only God is to be feared or worshiped (2:13). Horrell cites an Ethiopian proverb to characterize this ethic: “Bowling obsequiously, at the same time farting silently.” Ibid.

their marriage and education, and could be authoritative and even severe¹⁴⁴ but lacked the legal power of command possessed by *patresfamiliae*.¹⁴⁵ In First Peter, it is God the Father who judges and is to be feared (1:17; 2:17), not Christ. Instead, Christ suffered silently. If Christ is lord and mother, then he has authority, but exercises that with a tenderness and willingness to sacrifice. As a moral correlative to this Christology, Peter enjoins Christian slaves and wives of pagan husbands to be “quiet evangelists” (2:18–20; 3:1–6).¹⁴⁶ They can have influence without acting rebelliously (2:12; 3:1). Within the Christian community, the elders are to avoid “lording it over” those they care for (*κατακυριεύοντες*; 5:3).

In this chapter, we have seen that as we thicken our understanding of how the source domain of motherhood might have been conceptualized by the addressees of First Peter, assuming a maternal metaphor allows us to read a richer Christology and soteriology from the letter. In the next chapter, I examine a final set of background texts that discuss motherhood: Jewish and Christian texts that may well have been known to Peter and the addressees

¹⁴⁴ “The central argument of this work has been that the Roman mother ... was viewed primarily as the transmitter of traditional morality—ideally, a firm disciplinarian.” Dixon, *Roman Mother*, 233.

¹⁴⁵ “Roman adults were expected to display great respect and even submissiveness to their parents. The mother’s position was not as firm at law as it was within the received morality.” Ibid., 234. MacDonald points out that Peter assumes his readers accept traditional notions of respect toward elders in 1 Pet 5:1–5. MacDonald, *Power of Children*, 98.

¹⁴⁶ The term is MacDonald’s. See MacDonald, *Power of Children*, 95.

4. Maternal imagery in Jewish and Christian texts

This chapter examines images of motherhood in Jewish and Christian texts that either could have served as sources for First Peter, or that are contemporaneous and can serve as comparanda. We will examine texts that talk about characters who are “really” mothers (in the story world), but our main focus will be on texts that adopt the language of motherhood to talk about God and God’s agents. I will show that Peter stands squarely within a tradition, while, at the same time, developing that tradition in new ways that allow him to express convictions in a unified image about Christ’s role in God’s work of redemption and the corresponding transformation of Christians.

4.1 Pre-Pauline scriptural texts

To speak anachronistically, in this section I am interested in Peter’s “Old Testament.” In what follows, I refer to this simply as Peter’s use of “scripture.”¹ I do not attempt to precisely define what was or was not canon for Peter; the data is simply not available to allow precise judgments here. What we do know is that “First

¹ Any terminological choice here is in some way problematic. It is possible that Peter regarded some Pauline collection as scripture. I do not include Paul’s letters in this section, as they form the focus of the next. Neither do I attempt to settle whether or not Peter viewed them as scripture in the same sense as, say, Genesis.

Peter makes extensive use of the Jewish scriptures as one of the most important traditions from which the letter's content is constructed."² William Schutter divides these borrowings, which exhibit dependence on the Septuagint,³ into citations, allusions, and biblicisms (idioms informed by biblical language).⁴ Schutter finds citations from Genesis, Exodus, Hosea, Isaiah, Psalms, Proverbs, and Wisdom. He identifies allusions from a broader range of Pentateuchal and prophetic books. The biblicisms may further show the influence of Sirach and First Maccabees.

I begin this section by selectively surveying how these texts talk about characters who are mothers, treating first the process from conception till birth (as in Chapter 2) before turning to depictions of the roles of mothers in the lives of their offspring, from infancy through adulthood. I then turn to maternal metaphors, in particular, the use of such metaphors for Moses and for God.

² Horrell, *1 Peter*, 61.

³ In what follows, I use the term "Septuagint" to refer to a variety of Greek translations and compositions commonly grouped under this label, with somewhat fuzzy boundaries. See Melvin Peters, K. H., "Septuagint," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:1093–1104.

⁴ William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, WUNT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 35–43. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 12–16.

4.1.1 Mothers from conception till birth

The rabbis prove themselves keen readers of Genesis when they state that “there are three partners (שותפין) in the creation of a human: The Holy One, Blessed be He, the father, and the mother.”⁵ For Genesis, God is the primary agent in human conception. When Rachel appeals to her husband Jacob to give her a son, he responds angrily, “I am not in place of God am I?” (Gen 30:2 LXX).⁶ Rachel tries two forms of reproductive technology to try to satisfy her desire for children—surrogacy (30:2–8) and pharmacy (30:14)⁷—neither of which prove satisfactory. Rachel can only conceive once God remembers Rachel, hears her, and opens her womb (30:22).⁸ Candida Moss and Joel Baden point out that Genesis often speaks of God opening a

⁵ B. Nid. 31a. All translations of ancient texts are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁶ “Equally understandable is the angry reply; Rachel is demanding the impossible from Jacob.” Claus Westermann, *Genesis*, trans. John J. Scullion, S.J., 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984–86), 2:474. “The power to create life is not among those dealt to Jacob in his blessing, but rather is a question of God’s cooperation with Rachel’s imperative.” Rachel Havrelock, “The Myth of Birthing the Hero: Heroic Barrenness in the Hebrew Bible,” *BibInt* 16 (2008): 154–78, 163.

⁷ Mandrakes were “believed to be an aphrodisiac and an aid in conception.” Janice Pearl Ewurama De-Whyte, *Wom(b)an: A Cultural-Narrative Reading of the Hebrew Bible Barrenness Narratives* *ibid.* 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 118. While Bilhah, a woman Rachel enslaves and uses as a surrogate, does produce children for Jacob, Rachel’s subsequent use of the technologies of mandrakes and prayer shows that this does not satisfy her, as De-Whyte argues; *ibid.*, 116.

⁸ Candida Moss and Joel Baden describe God’s success after the mandrakes’ failure as an “Israelite rebuke to ... medicinal treatments.” Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Baden, *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 64.

woman's womb prior to conception, including with women with no history of infertility (e.g., Gen 29:31, when speaking of Leah).⁹ Surveying a wide array of texts describing God as opening something, they conclude: "When God opens something, he changes it from its usual state to an unusual state.... Closed womb ... is usual, and the opened womb ... is unusual."¹⁰

It is not only in Genesis that agency over conception is assigned to God. For instance, for Hannah to conceive it is necessary both for her husband to "know" her and for God to "remember" her (1 Sam 1:19–20). God's control over conception is also affirmed in the Psalms (e.g. Psa 126:3 LXX) and Isaiah (e.g. 66:9), two of Peter's favorite books to quote. As Moss and Baden put it: "There is nothing 'natural' about conception. It is emphatically God's doing."¹¹ If the new birth metaphor in First Peter is read with this view of God's control over conception in mind, God's free sovereignty in choosing for this new birth to occur is emphasized. Not only is God father in Peter's new birth metaphor, God is also God, fully in control over conception in a way a human father is not.

The rabbinic quote with which I began this subsection continues to speak of both the father's and the mother's contributions to the *conceptus* as seed. Using the

⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., 56–57. As Moss and Baden point out in their discussion, the authors of Genesis Rabbah understood this well when they said that "God has keys to the womb" (Gen. Rab. 73.4).

¹¹ Ibid., 55.

causative of זרע (whose nominative form means “seed”) for both, the rabbis say that the father “emits as seed (מזריע) something white” and the mother “emits as seed (מזרעת) something red” (b. Nid. 31a). While this may well reflect the Aristotelian notion that menses are female seed, the existence of female seed also has good biblical precedent. There are two distinct types of reference to male seed in biblical texts. Beginning at Gen 9:9, σπέρμα (translating Hebrew זרע) can refer to a man’s offspring. In Lev 15:16–18 and elsewhere, the same terms can refer to a substance a man emits. But before σπέρμα is used to refer to a man’s offspring, it is used for a woman’s (Gen 3:15). The Hebrew text of Lev 12:12 also refers to women emitting seed, using the causative of זרע. The Septuagint translates this verb as a passive (σπερματισθῆναι), but rabbinic exegesis understood this as the emission of seed.¹²

Biblical texts also present God as active in the formation of the child *in utero*. For instance, Isa 44:24 and 49:5 describe God forming (using the verb πλάσσω) the prophet “from” the womb (the preposition having a temporal sense). In the latter verse, this formation aims specifically at the creation of a servant with a mission. In Jer 1:5, the prophet can be known by God even before this formation occurs, and God sanctifies the prophet before his birth. For the psalmist, God’s role was more

¹² See discussion in Pieter W. Van der Horst, “Sarah’s Seminal Emission: Hebrews 11:11 in the Light of Ancient Embryology,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, eds. Abraham J. Malherbe, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 287–304, 300–301. The broader argument of this book chapter is that Heb 11:11 reflects a two-seed theory.

explicitly bodily, providing (ἐκτήσω)¹³ him with internal organs and holding or helping him (ἀντελάβου) in his mother’s womb (Psa 138:13 LXX). In Genesis, infants are also presented as active while *in utero*; Rebecca’s twins begin their struggle long before their birth, in a way that is palpable to their mother (Gen 25:22–24).

Later scriptural texts show more interest in the roles male and female bodily substances play in the formation of their offspring. Describing how he was “carved” (ἐγλύφην) in his mother’s womb, the author of Wisdom states that he was either planted or made solid in blood (παγείς ἐν αἵματι)¹⁴ and that this was done by male seed (Wis 7:1–2). Fourth Maccabees, a text roughly contemporary with First Peter, describes seven brothers as “having been grown from the same blood” (13:20, i.e. their mother’s) and states that this common material origin is part of what creates their strong fraternal bonds (13:23). These later two texts show an increasing emphasis in Hellenistic Judaism on maternal donation of blood during gestation. Fourth Maccabees in particular witnesses to a belief that this blood has strong formative effects.

¹³ This is meaning I.2 of κτάομαι in *LSJ*, “procure or get for another.”

¹⁴ In addition to these two possible meanings of πήγνυμι, it is possible that παγείς could be the aorist passive participle of πάσσω, meaning “sprinkled with blood.” While *LSJ* does not list an aorist root for πάσσω that would yield this form, the *TLG* lexical database includes alternative finite aorist forms with a ξ, such as ἔπαξαν. These may point to an alternative aorist root of παγ-, as we see with τάσσω, which can form its aorist system from ταγ-. If this is the correct meaning, it would provide an intriguing connection with the sprinkling of blood mentioned in 1 Pet 1:2.

Scriptural texts recognized pregnancy and birth as a dangerous and painful experiences for women. In fact, Septuagint Genesis provides an etiology for this (Gen 3:16).¹⁵ The pain of birth (ὠδίς or ὠδίν) becomes proverbial for any serious distress, as in Jer 4:31, but these words can also be used literally, as in 1 Sam 4:19, to describe Phineas' wife giving birth.¹⁶ Genesis also contains a story of a woman dying in childbirth. In Gen 35:16–18, Rachel is said to give birth with difficulty (ἐδυστόκησεν).¹⁷ As she is dying, she names her child “Son of my pain,” which Jacob revises to Benjamin. In Hebrew, these two names are similar in sound. The Septuagint translators choose to translate the first name and transliterate the second, highlighting the mention of pain even though this obscures the phonetic similarity

¹⁵ Carol Meyers has helpfully problematized this reading of Gen 3:16 MT, yet she agrees that Gen 3:16 LXX should be understood this way. Carol L. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 95–121.

¹⁶ For more detailed lexical study of the use of ὠδίν, στεναγμός see Susan G. Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 113–14; Presian R. Burroughs, "Liberation in the Midst of Futility and Destruction: Romans 8:19–22 and the Christian Vocation of Nourishing Life" (ThD Diss., Duke University, 2014), 132–36. Below, in the section on maternal imagery for God, we will consider the application of this terminology to the Deity.

¹⁷ For an argument that this is presented as a breach birth, see De-Whyte, *Wom(b)an*, 121. De-Whyte's argument assumes that the authors of Genesis were reasonably knowledgeable about women's experiences during childbirth.

between the two names. It should also be noted that, unlike the Greek customs we observed in the previous chapter, women in these texts often name their children.¹⁸

Becoming a mother is also presented as a significant means of gaining honor in scriptural texts. Rachel's first recorded words in Genesis are a plea for children in which she identifies her childlessness as a form of social death ("Give me children or I shall die"; Gen 30:1). When she does give birth, Rachel exclaims that God has taken away her "shame" (ὄνειδος; Gen 30:23).¹⁹ Just as childbirth could proverbially stand for pain, so childlessness could stand for shame, as in Isa 23:4, when Sidon is instructed to be ashamed (αἰσχύνθητι) and confess metaphorical female childlessness, a status that God is said to reverse in Isa 54:1. For both men and women, offspring provided a form of life after death. Absalom builds a monument to himself to keep his name alive, as he has no son (2 Sam 18:18). While children had very real economic value in an agrarian society, Rachel and Hannah both belong to families in which other wives have already provided sufficient offspring. What Moss and Baden say of Hannah could be applied to both these women: "When Hannah expresses her desire to bear a child, it is not just the economic, historical, or familial pressures

¹⁸ See discussion in Havrelock, "Myth of Birthing," 175–77. "The giving of a name affords the mothers the opportunity to tell their story." Ibid., 176.

¹⁹ Pointing out that the same word is used to describe the collapsed walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:17), Moss and Baden comment: "The experience of infertility in ancient Israel was utterly crushing." Moss and Baden, *Reconceiving Infertility*, 40.

upon which she is acting. She is acting for herself.”²⁰ When Hannah does conceive, she exclaims her joy in song (1 Sam 2:1–10). This song compares her successful delivery of a child to a great military victory for which the credit is given entirely to God, as is stated even more forcefully in the Septuagintal plus in 2:10.²¹ This analogy captures both the honor Hannah has won through her son, while also reinforcing an association between childbirth and physical danger.

We have seen in this section that many of the beliefs about procreation we observed in Greek medics in chapter two were shared by various scriptural texts. Procreation involved male and female seed, maternal donation of blood, and pregnancy and childbirth formed a dangerous source of social honor for women. What is new in these texts is the very active role assigned to the Deity.

4.1.2 The roles of mothers after a child's birth

Various scriptural texts depict the activities of mothers in their children's lives after birth, from caring for neonates through to promoting, protecting, and influencing their adult children. While certain texts provide evidence of the use of

²⁰ Ibid., 33.

²¹ Walter Brueggeman admits that “the ‘Song of Hannah’ ... is likely to have been taken from Israel’s repertoire of public hymns,” but nevertheless argues that it has been selected for its appropriateness to this moment in the narrative. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 16.

wet nurses (Gen 35:8; 2 Kings 11:2; Isa 49:23), others mention mothers nursing their own children (Gen 21:7; 1 Sam 1:23; Song 8:1; 2 Macc 7:27). Sarah, who presumably has the means to employ a wet nurse, views it as a special blessing that she is able to nurse Isaac (Gen 21:7).²² In Song 8:1, the bond between siblings is tied to their having drunk the same milk. In Lam 4:3, nursing a child is contrasted (in antithetic parallelism) to cruelty.

Mothers are also presented as being heavily involved in an important aspect of the neonatal formation of their sons: circumcision. While Abraham circumcised Isaac (Gen 21:4), Zipporah circumcised her sons by Moses (Exod 4:24–25). Later texts attribute responsibility for a boy's circumcision to his mother, even if a male ritual specialist may perform the physical cutting. In 1 Macc 1:60–61, we read that, as part of anti-Jewish persecution, women who had their sons circumcised (περιτετμηκίας) were executed, along with those who performed the circumcision (περιτετμηκότας). In the parallel texts, 2 Macc 6:10 // 4 Macc 4:25, there is no reference to male circumcisers. It is quite possible that these texts present the mothers as the agents of the circumcision.²³ In the parallel in Fourth Maccabees, the

²² Westermann argues that the phrasing of Gen 21:7 witnesses to “an ancient traditional form of informing the father [of the birth of a child]: Sarah suckles a child!” Westermann, *Genesis*, 2:334.

²³ See discussion in Susan Haber, “Living and Dying for the Law: The Mother-martyrs of 2 Maccabees,” *Women in Judaism* 4 (2006): 1–15, 3. As Haber points out, if mothers never circumcised, there would have been no need for the rabbis to

author makes clear what may be implicit in the earlier two texts: that the women had their sons circumcised even though they knew they would be executed, presenting these mothers as willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of their offspring, as we saw in the previous chapter.

Scriptural texts present mothers as involved in their children's lives far beyond infancy. The Book of Proverbs presents mothers and fathers as involved in teaching their children (e.g., 1:8; 6:20).²⁴ Other passages in Proverbs instruct the reader to continue to honor their mothers, even when they are old (23:22), and pronounce curses on those who fail to properly honor father and mother (20:10 LXX; 24:52 LXX). The Masoretic text of Proverbs records instructions to King Lemuel by his mother (31:1–9).²⁵ The king's mother uses her maternal status to establish her authority to give instructions, addressing the king as "son of my womb"

prohibit them from doing this. See b. 'Abod. Zar. 27a. For history of the progressive ritualization of the act of circumcision, including increasing restrictions on who the agent may be, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised: Gender and Covenant in Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 21–22.

²⁴ "The listing of each parent individually, rather than being an accommodation to the needs of parallelism in the poetic form of Proverbs, is probably an indication of the complementary contribution of each parent to the socialization of the young." Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 151.

²⁵ In the Septuagint, these words (24:69–77) are reassigned to God, although the text still states that the (now anonymous) king to whom the words were addressed was instructed by his mother. This version of the text may present the king's mother as having played a mantic role.

(31:2).²⁶ Similarly, the Mosaic law commands its adherents to honor both father and mother (Exod 20:12; Lev 19:3; Deut 5:16). The punishment for opposition is death (Exod 21:15–17). As Carol Meyers argues, “Children in these laws are not naughty toddlers but contributing adult household members.”²⁷

In addition to instructing their offspring, scriptural texts depict mothers serving as promoters and protectors of their children. Take, for instance, Rebecca’s close management of the life of her son Jacob (Gen 27:1–45). To secure a blessing for him, she gives commands and expects obedience (27:8, 43), risks receiving a curse herself (13), and devises a plan to protect him from his brother’s anger (43–45). Bathsheba is another example of a mother who takes action to promote the interests of her adult son (1 Kings 1:15–35).²⁸ In Song 3:11, Bathsheba crowns Solomon. Ginny Brewer-Boydston argues that Bathsheba, in ensuring the succession

²⁶ “Like the male sages, she [the king’s mother] makes use of direct address, using familial terms ... and feels free to make direct admonitions and prohibitions, making vigorous use of imperatives, showing that she has the authority to speak and expects her words to be obeyed.” Carole R. Fontaine, *Smooth Words: Women, Proverbs and Performance in Biblical Wisdom* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 61.

²⁷ Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 156.

²⁸ “Bat-Sheba, mother of a son of the royal household, is a powerful figure.” Beverly A. Cushman, “The Politics of the Royal Harem and the Case of Bat-Sheba,” *JOT* 30 (2006): 327–43, 338.

of her divinely chosen child, stands in contrast to the mothers of the divided monarchy, who exert their influence to corrupt.²⁹

The presence of legal injunctions to honor one's mother may suggest that many were not doing this. Indeed, narrative portions of the Bible confirm that sons could and did ignore their mothers' wishes. For instance, Solomon is presented as highly willing to honor his mother and fulfill any request she makes (1 Kings 2:19–20). Yet, when she requests that Abishag be given to his (half-)brother Adonijah as a wife, not only does he refuse, but he orders Adonijah killed (1 Kings 2:21–22).³⁰ Beverly Cushman points out that “Bat-Sheba does not protest.... The maintenance of her son's claim to the throne [is] her primary concern.”³¹ Her role as promoter takes precedence over her concern for own authority.

During the divided monarchy, relationships between royal mothers and sons deteriorate further.³² The Queen Mother Anna (in Hebrew, Ma'akah) has an

²⁹ Ginny Brewer-Boydston, "Good Queen Mothers, Bad Queen Mothers: The Theological Presentation of the Queen Mother in 1 and 2 Kings" (PhD Diss., Baylor University, 2011), 220. Brewer-Boydston also argues that, in the context of royal polygamy, “a son's claim to the throne partially relied on the status and rank of his mother.” Ibid., 180.

³⁰ “The polite manner which her son Solomon employs in his dealings with her serves to emphasize the fact that he acts contrary to her request.” Athalya Brenner-Idan, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (London: Bloomsbury, 1985), 18.

³¹ Cushman, "Politics of the Royal Harem," 340.

³² For a detailed study of how the variable moral quality of Queen Mothers serves as an index of the decay of the monarchy, see Brewer-Boydston, "Queen Mothers."

authoritative status as a leader (ἡγετομένη; translating גבירה), but King Asa removes this from her when she organizes improper cultic gatherings (3 Kgdms 15:13). The narrator praises this action of Asa's, but criticizes him for not going far enough in destroying the high places. In contrast to Asa, King Ahaziah is corrupted by his mother; Athaliah serves as his "counselor of sin," and forms him in the likeness of her relative Ahab (2 Chron 22:3).

The prophet Ezekiel also blamed certain mothers for their children's misdeeds. Presenting Hamutal metaphorically as a "lioness [who] raises her sons to devour people and destroy cities[,] Ezekiel indicts Hamutal, who placed her second son [Zedekiah] on the throne, for her teaching and includes her in the blame for their downfall"³³ (Ezek 19:1–14). While this text, like the example from Chronicles, focuses on the power of nurture to form likeness, another text from Ezekiel suggests that good nurture cannot always overcome a problematic nature inherited from one's mother. In Ezek 16:3–45, the prophet compares Israel to a child first adopted and then married by God, but who nevertheless still acts like her mother. Despite God's

³³ Ibid., 219. On Hamutal, see 2 Kings 23:30; 24:18; Jer 13:18; 52:1. While Brewer-Boydston admits that the identification of the lioness as Hamutal is not incontrovertible, in any case, the lament criticizes a mother for how she has raised her sons and assumes that a mother's power to form is powerful. For evaluation of this interpretative option alongside others, see Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, NICOT, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997–98), 604–607. Block prefers to understand the lioness as the nation as a whole. On this reading, it is still relevant that Israel's formative role is described in maternal terms.

attempts to reform, the proverb “like mother, like daughter” (Ezek 16:44) still applies.

These texts witness to similar convictions about the roles of mothers as we saw in the non-Jewish texts in the previous chapter. For these authors, maternal authority carried weight, for good or for ill, and mothers were often presented as active, at times sacrificially, to form their children³⁴ and promote their interests. The roles elite mothers played in royal succession provides an interesting connection with the royal vocation assigned to the addressees of First Peter (2:9).

4.1.3 Mother Moses

We now turn to an important metaphorical invocation of motherhood: Moses’ denial of his own maternity in the book of Numbers. After listening to the Israelites’ ongoing complaints about the manna God has been providing, Moses turns in

³⁴ It should be noted that all my examples in this subsection, except for the brief mention of the mother in Song of Songs and Ezek 16:3–45, concern mother-son relationships. On the paucity of our evidence for mother-daughter relationships, see Ross S. Kraemer, “Jewish Mothers and Daughters in the Greco-Roman World,” in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity*, ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen, BJS 289 (Atlanta: Scholars press, 2020), 89–112. Marriage of girls at a young age may have led to less opportunity for girls’ parents to be involved in their lives as young adults. The mother-daughter relationship treated the most fully in any Septuagintal text is that between Edna and Sarah in the book of Tobit. Kraemer notes the involvement of Edna in Sarah’s preparation for marriage, her tears at the thought that Sarah may witness another death, her exercise of prayer, and the close relationship between them (91-92).

exasperation to God in prayer, complaining of “this people” as a “burden”³⁵ God has laid upon him (Num 11:11). Moses then denies that he conceived or gave birth to this people and asks why God has charged him with taking this people to his breast, as a nurse takes a nursling (Num 11:12). Moses’ denial is framed as a rhetorical question (with *μή* anticipating a negative response). As Martin Noth notes, “implicit in this [question] is the very unusual idea that [God] himself is Israel’s mother.”³⁶ God seems to admit Moses has a point, establishing a council of seventy to support Moses (11:16–17) and providing quail for the people (11:18–20). The gift of quail, unlike the manna, is angrily given in grotesque superabundance and results in a plague, killing many of the people (11:31–34).

Numbers has Moses present himself as sharing (unwillingly) in part of God’s maternal activity. Moses’ task is that of leading the people to the promised land,

³⁵ Hebrew אשׁוּר. The Septuagint instead has Moses describe the people as an “assault” (*δρμή*) of God against Moses.

³⁶ Martin Noth, *Numbers*, OTL, trans. James D. Martin (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 86. For the same conclusion, see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2003), 85; Myers, *Blessed Among Women*, 93. The maternal imagery for God may be continued in the Hebrew text by Moses’ use of the second feminine singular pronoun (היא) for God in Num 11:15. While Milgrom identifies this as an archaic form of the second masculine singular pronoun (Milgrom, *Numbers*, 242n31.), this use is very rarely attested in the Hebrew Bible. While the participle agreeing with היא is pointed as a masculine by the Masoretes (הַיְהוָה) the consonantal text could just as well be pointed as a feminine (הַיְהוָה). For medieval Jewish interpretation of this verse that understands the pronoun as feminine, see Lisa Guenther, “‘Like a Maternal Body’: Emmanuel Levinas and the Motherhood of Moses,” *Hypatia* 21 (2006): 119–36, 126.

including providing them with food to eat on the way. In the journey metaphor of First Peter, this is Christ's task, making this description of Moses' work as maternal an important precursor to the maternal metaphor in First Peter. The maternal description of the Deity will concern us in the following subsection, but here we note that part of God's maternal response to Moses' prayer is undertaken in anger and effectively disciplines the people, reflecting the same kind of *severitas ac disciplina* that later Roman authors would value in mothers.

This narrative in Numbers looks back to the golden calf incident. As Jacob Milgrom points out, the description of the wilderness generation as "this people" "contrasts tellingly with that episode, where it is God who employs this term (Exod 32:9; 33:12) and Moses who argues with Him that 'this people' is 'Your people' (Exod 33:13)."³⁷ Hence, it is notable that when the golden calf incident is narrated in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, Pseudo-Philo employs a maternal image for Moses. In this text, though, likely written around the same time as First Peter,³⁸ Moses takes on a more complete maternal role after breaking the tablets: "he became like a woman

³⁷ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 85.

³⁸ For an argument for a date between 70 and 100 CE, see Daniel J. Harrington, ed., *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques*, SC 229–30, trans. Jacques Caveaux, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1976), 2:66–74.

bearing her firstborn (*primitivis*, plural), her hands are upon her chest³⁹ and she has no strength to help herself bring forth" (12.5).

Unlike in Numbers, where God is the one who gave birth to Israel and enlisted Moses to help with neonatal care, for Pseudo-Philo, Moses gave birth to the people. This parturition is painful and is at risk of becoming a miscarriage when the people turn to idols. Moses needs God's help to bring the people to birth. This transfer of a maternal metaphor from God to Moses provides further evidence that Moses' task of leading the people of Israel to the promised land could be described as maternal in the first century CE. It also illustrates a contemporary pattern of speaking of Moses in an increasingly godlike way, as is also seen in certain texts from Qumran and in Philo.⁴⁰

In the Teacher Hymns, part of the *Hodayot* found at Qumran, possibly dating from the early first century BCE,⁴¹ God and the Teacher, a Moses-like figure,⁴² are

³⁹ The Hebrew text of Jer 4:31, though not the LXX, has a woman experiencing a difficult first birth similarly stretching out her hands. This woman is a figure of Jerusalem being sacked. This image reinforces associations of childbirth and violence we saw in both the medics and Greek poetry. For the pain of childbirth as an image for the pain of a battle wound, as in the *Iliad*, see Jer 29:23 LXX = 49:22 MT.

⁴⁰ See Crispin Fletcher-Louis, "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology," *DSD* 3 (1996): 236–52; M. David Litwa, "The Deification of Moses in Philo of Alexandria," *SPhilo* 26 (2014): 1–27.

⁴¹ For introductory questions relating to the *Hodayot*, see Eileen M. Schuller, "Recent Scholarship on the *Hodayot* 1993–2010," *CurBR* 10 (2011): 119–62. My references will be to the text, though not the facing translation, in Eileen M. Schuller and Carol A. Newsom, *The Hodayot (Thanksgiving Psalms): A Study Edition of*

both described in maternal terms. The Teacher's distress is described as like birth pangs (11.7; 13.32–33). Often, when pain is described as like birth pangs, the baby slot of the source domain does not get mapped to anything in the target domain, but the description in 11.7–11 does refer to a son (presumably pointing to the Yahad), who, in being born, is delivered from the “breakers of death.” The Teacher's labor-like pains are fruitful, and have salvific effect. In a later passage, the Teacher declares that God has made him both father and wet nurse to the “children of kindness” (בני חסד; 15.23–25).⁴³ In 17.30–31, the Teacher thanks God for having delivered sanctification and compassion to him through his mother's womb and his mother's and nurse's breasts. These women served as conduits of divine blessing for him.

1QH^a, EJL 36 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012). The Teacher Hymns are found in columns 10-17 of 1QH^a. Manuscript evidence suggests that the Teacher Hymns did circulate independently.

⁴² I refer to the “I” of the Teacher Hymns as “the Teacher.” On the Teacher as the one who institutes a new covenant, see M. O. Wise, “The Concept of a New Covenant in the Teacher Hymns from Qumran [1QH^a X–XVII],” in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 71 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 90–128. Like Moses, the Teacher's face shines (11.4) and he has tablets that are destroyed (16.38). Jacob Cherian explicitly connects the Teacher's self-identification as nurse with Moses' refusal to take this role in Numbers. Jacob Cherian, “The Moses at Qumran: The מוֹרֵה הַצֶּדֶק as the Nursing-Father of the יְהוָה,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2006), 351–61.

⁴³ On the translation of אֹמֵן as “wet nurse,” see Julie A. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot*, STDJ 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 147; McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 113. This is the same Hebrew word as in Num 11:12.

However, the Teacher then goes on to state, in the climactic final lines of the Teacher Hymns, that both of his parents abandoned him, and God then became father, mother and nurse to him (17.35–36). The Teacher thus presents himself as a mediating figure between God and the people he teaches.⁴⁴ Just as he presents actual mothers and wet nurses as people through whom God blesses newborns, the Teacher plays a similar role. The people he leads encounter God’s paternity, maternity, and work of nurture through him.

4.1.4 Mother God

While Moses’ question in Numbers seems to presuppose divine maternity, other scriptural texts are more explicit in describing God as Israel’s Mother. In this section, I analyze several of these, asking what tends to be said of God when the Deity is described in maternal terms.

I start with Deut 32:8–14, which forms part of the Song of Moses. In this passage, God, who claimed Israel as his own (9), is described as “like” (ὡς) an eagle caring for “its” (αὐτοῦ)⁴⁵ young (11). Two images of the exodus journey are then

⁴⁴ “He is the conduit of the elect status God grants to the community.” Matthew J. Goff, “Reading Wisdom at Qumran: 4QInstruction and the Hodayot,” *DSD* 11 (2004): 263–88, 287.

⁴⁵ The masculine pronouns reflect the grammatical gender of the word *αἰτός* (eagle) in Greek, which I reflect in my paraphrase with English neuter pronouns for

given. In the first, the eagle carries its young as it flies (11). In the second, the eagle image is dropped and God is said to lead the Israelites (12). Both these descriptions assign agency to God. The former presents the Israelites as entirely passive; in the second, they participate in the exodus by walking at God's direction. The song then returns to the imagery of infancy for the Israelites, but without the avian metaphor. The Israelites are said to have nursed (*ἐθήλασαν*; 13), but God is not explicitly referred to as the one who lactates in the Septuagint version of the passage.⁴⁶ Rather, the Israelites nursed on honey from the rock, oil from a hard rock, and other, less miraculous, foodstuffs, including sheep's milk and wine, referred to as "blood of a grape" (14).⁴⁷ God's motherly work of nurture is mediated through material things, including through rocks. By the time First Peter was composed, Paul had already identified the nourishing rock as Christ (1 Cor 10:4). Christ is also described as a stone in 1 Pet 2:4.

the eagle. The Hebrew text also contains masculine forms to agree with *נִשֵּׁר* (eagle). Commentators agree, though, that this image is maternal. See Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 369–72.

⁴⁶ The Masoretic text has *וַיִּנְקֵהוּ*: "And [God] gave him (Israel) suck."

⁴⁷ This way of referring to wine is rare, only appearing elsewhere in the Septuagint in Gen 49:11; Sir 39:25; 50:11; 1 Macc 6:34. Telford Work understands this as a sacrificial image. Telford Work, *Deuteronomy*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 285.

Reference to God having wings like a mother bird, as in this hymn⁴⁸ from Deuteronomy, can also be found in several psalms. One such reference is Psa 17:8 (LXX 16:8). This verse combines an identification of the psalmist as the “apple of [God’s] eye,” a phrase which only appears elsewhere in the Septuagint in Deut 32:10, with a plea for God to cover the psalmist with his wings. Frank Hossfeld and Erich Zenger have argued that these wings should be understood as part of a mother bird metaphor, against an older view that the wings of the cherubim in the Temple are meant.⁴⁹ Relevantly for understanding first century Christian readings, this interpretation also seems to be reflected in Matt 23:37 // Luke 13:34, where the wings belong to Jesus.

Other references to God’s wings in the psalter (36:7; 57:1; 91:4) similarly envisage them as a source of protection. In Psalm 36, this is associated with being housed and fed. But in Psalms 17 and 57, the protection is envisaged in martial

⁴⁸ On this generic classification, which helps motivate reading this image together with the psalmic references to follow, see Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 369; Matthew Thiessen, "The Form and Function of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43)," *JBL* 123 (2004): 401–24.

⁴⁹ The role of the Temple cherubim is to support God’s throne; they do not use their wings protectively. See Frank L. Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms*, Hermeneia, trans. Linda M. Maloney, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005–), 2:70–71. For the Temple cherubim interpretation, see Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988–89), 1:248.

terms.⁵⁰ Themes of battle cohere well with the image of God as a mother bird. As Hossfeld and Zenger put it: “The most effective protection for young birds are the powerful pinons and sheltering wings of the mother bird.... The bird ... hovers over its young and shelters them under its wings while driving off hostile attackers by beating its wings.”⁵¹ In Jer 29:23 LXX, God is described as an attack eagle.

Maternal imagery for God is also associated with violence in Hos 13:8. Here, God attacks Israel with the ferocity of a mother bear bereft of her cubs. The image of a mother bear who has lost her cubs is also employed as an example of fury in Prov 17:12 and 2 Sam 17:8, but in Hos 13:8 there is a tragic irony; those attacked are the absent cubs, who have distanced themselves from their mother. For Andrew Dearman, this image represents a way of understanding divine punitive action: “[God’s] aggression, therefore, is not simply the reflex action of a predator who kills to eat, but a rage over loss.”⁵² Divine grief is also expressed via God’s self-description as a mother in Jer 8:21 LXX, in which God’s grief at Israel’s hurt overwhelms her as labor pains overwhelm a parturient woman.⁵³

⁵⁰ The psalmist begins a plea for God to go to war in 17:18. The superscription of 57 places the entire psalm on the lips of David in his guerilla warrior phase, on the run from Saul.

⁵¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:430; 2:71.

⁵² J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 324.

⁵³ Terence Fretheim takes this verse as the words of the prophet rather than the Deity, but notes that we may “understand the mourning of God and the prophet as

The latter chapters of Isaiah contain a series of maternal images of God.⁵⁴ The first is: “I have kept silent. I will not forever be silent and hold back, will I? Like a woman giving birth, I have waited. [Now] I will at once amaze and dry up” (Isa 42:14 LXX). This image follows immediately after a description of God as a warrior. As Dille points out, the juxtaposition of God as warrior and a birthing woman “highlights the areas where the networks of associated commonplaces overlap... anguish and courage, danger, inevitability, and the hope of deliverance from death and of new life.”⁵⁵ The subsequent verses explain how drying up will amaze: God will dry up water features that block the exiles’ way back to their land and lead them home. This is a recreation of the world (including turning darkness to light), performed to make possible the journey home. Klaus Baltzer points out that God’s drying up of the Red Sea is elsewhere presented as God’s battle against Pharaoh.⁵⁶

so symbiotic that in everything we hear the anguish of both.” Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, OBT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 150.

⁵⁴ In addition to the two discussed here, Isa 45:10 compares God to both a father and mother, in parallel, and Isa 49:14-15 assures the audience that God is even more reliable at remembering Israel than a mother is for her child.

⁵⁵ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 174. I would part company from Dille on the relevance of “inevitability.” Not only does this cause theological problems with God’s sovereign freedom, but neither do warriors inevitably go to war nor do all pregnancies lead to labor.

⁵⁶ Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, Hermeneia, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 141.

What is described is new creation and new exodus to undo exile; at once battle and birth. This new beginning is described as birth partly to interpret why the Israelites had to wait so long: “What appeared to be inactivity was gestation.”⁵⁷

In Isa 66:7–13, maternal imagery is applied both to Zion and to God. In verses 7–11, Zion is mother to the returned exiles, restored to this position by God. Gina Hens-Piazza points out that in the first chapter of the book, Zion is introduced in a series of feminine personifications as at once vulnerable and attacked (1:8) and shamefully sinful (1:21), but God promises to eventually restore the city (now described in Greek Isaiah as maternal) to honor (*μητρόπολις*; 1:26). Reading the whole book of Isaiah canonically, this promise is fulfilled in chapter 66.⁵⁸ One of the ways in which the addressees benefit from Zion’s new status is that they are nourished by her milk (66:11). In the next verse, God then presents himself as nourishment for the addressees, stating “I turn (*ἐκκλίνω*) to them as a river of peace” (66:12 LXX). Then, in verse 13, God promises to comfort, or urge on, (*παρακαλέω*) the addressees like a mother. This will lead to renewed vision and rejoicing for the addressees (14), as is promised to the addressees of First Peter (1:8). As river and mother, God is both giver and gift in this oracle, but the prophet spends more time

⁵⁷ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 69.

⁵⁸ Gina Hens-Piazza, "Zion's Destiny as Theological Disclosure: A Feminist Mapping of a Metaphor Across Isaiah" (paper presented at the International Meeting of the SBL, Rome, 3 July 2019).

developing maternal imagery for Zion than for God. God's maternity is mediated and most fully known to the addressees through Zion, a "person" who has suffered and now has been restored to glory.

There are some common themes to these invocations of maternal language for God. Many of these examples concern nurture. This is often mediated, through a rock or through Zion, for instance. Others concern protection, which is often linked with martial imagery. While Mother God can be affectionate, cherishing the psalmist as the apple of her eye, she is no pushover. She provides grotesque quantities of food as a punishment in Numbers, fights Israel's enemies as an attack eagle, and turns on Israel for its idolatry like a ferocious bear. She also allows herself to be overcome by grief, shared with various prophets.⁵⁹ Some of these texts associate divine maternity with election. For others, God's motherhood is particularly associated with the return from exile. Dille comments on why maternal imagery for God may be especially suitable for this: "The unusual prevalence of explicitly feminine language may be especially evocative of the home, since home is stereotypically and archetypally the realm of the mother. The captives are homesick."⁶⁰ This fits

⁵⁹ "The prophet participates in aspects of the divine life, and God participates in the suffering of his people." Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 77.

⁶⁰ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 177.

particularly well with overarching metaphor in First Peter of the journey home from exile.⁶¹

4.1.5 Summary

Many of the characteristics associated with mothers in these scriptural texts are shared by pagan sources: like battle, birth is a painful and dangerous process; fecundity brings honor; mother-child resemblance is formed by both nature and nurture, and blood and milk are involved in this; mothers have authority and can even be portrayed as violent; mothers acted sacrificially to promote their children's interests.

The texts surveyed in this section also provide some distinctive emphases, some of which can enliven our reading of the maternal metaphor of First Peter. Firstly, many of them stress God's control over conception and involvement in fetal formation, which can include the sanctification of a child *in utero* (Jer 1:5). This provides a connection between the source domain (conception, birth, and care of the neonate) and target domain (God's saving action in Christ): God is ultimately the agent in both. We also saw in the Hodayot, that labor could be described as an infant's salvation from death. Peter views the new birth as having given his

⁶¹ See the summary in Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 274.

addressees “living hope” (1:3), transferred them from darkness to light (2:9), and saved them from perishability (3:4).⁶² This resonates well with understanding birth as salvation from the “breakers of death,” as the Teacher Hymns express it.

We have also seen that scriptural texts use maternal metaphors for God especially in two contexts: to describe God protecting someone from harm; to describe God leading people on a journey home. These two contexts both attend the situation of the addressees as Peter presents it. They need protection, as they are undergoing a “fiery ordeal” (4:18) and the devil is prowling like a lion (5:8). They are also a diaspora people, journeying home in Christ’s footsteps (2:21).⁶³ That Christ is presented as mother in the new birth section of the letter suggests an active role for him in both protecting and guiding the addressees, as is also suggested, though not required, by the Shepherd metaphor in 2:25.⁶⁴ When the same subject is described by two different metaphors, readers select shared properties of each source domain to map to the common object, with the result that these shared properties become

⁶² Feldmeier characterizes salvation in First Peter as “the overcoming of impermanence.” Feldmeier, “Salvation,” 211.

⁶³ Recall that Martin identifies the relevant properties of diaspora that are mapped by the central metaphor of First Peter as journey and danger: “the temporal aspect of Diaspora as a road to be traveled or a journey to be undertaken and the threatening aspect of the Diaspora as a dangerous place pressuring the faithful to assimilate and defect.” Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 274.

⁶⁴ Compare the activities of the shepherd in, say, Psalm 23.

highlighted.⁶⁵ While the textual metaphor in 2:25 does not explicitly mention protection or guiding, the fact that the letter establishes a context of danger and journey and that, by 2:25, the audience have already encountered Christ as mother can serve to highlight these functions of shepherds.

It is notable, though, that Peter does not describe God “the Father” as Mother. Rather, this metaphor is only used for Christ. We have seen in the scriptural sources that ascriptions of maternity to God often involve some form of mediation, whereby God’s maternity is made manifest and tangible through Zion, Moses, a prophet, a rock, or (for the covenanters at Qumran) the Teacher. Around the same time as the composition of First Peter, the authors of First Timothy and Hebrews identified Christ as the mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24), which is hardly an un-Pauline idea (cp. 2 Cor 5:19). In presenting Christ as mediator of God’s maternal functions, Peter was not, though, writing on a blank slate. Paul had already presented himself and his fellow apostles as mothers who participate in God’s painful and creative labor. I now turn to Paul’s use of maternal metaphor.

⁶⁵ For the theoretical underpinnings of the effects of juxtaposing such metaphors, see Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 16, 67–69.

4.2 Paul

The thesis of this section is that Paul's self-application of maternal imagery is an important precedent for Peter's Christological use of such imagery. To make this argument, I begin by considering the role of kinship metaphors in Paul's letters in general, then examine Paul's self-application of parental images (both paternal and maternal), and conclude by exploring the relationships between First Peter and the Pauline corpus.⁶⁶

4.2.1 The most pervasive kinship metaphors in Paul's letters

Paul's use of familial language to talk about community in his churches has long been described as his corpus's "most significant metaphorical usage."⁶⁷ Wayne Meeks argues that these metaphors play "a role in the process of resocialization by which an individual's identity is revised and knit together with the identity of a group."⁶⁸ Karl Sandnes notes that kinship metaphors would be especially appropriate

⁶⁶ For the purposes of the section, I restrict my attention to the undisputed Pauline epistles. For discussion of Titus, see section 4.3.1.

⁶⁷ Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 53–54.

⁶⁸ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social Word of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 86.

for people who may have forfeited familial harmony to join a church.⁶⁹ In this section we examine briefly the two most common kinship metaphors in the Pauline corpus: that God is Father; and that God's children are, therefore, one another's siblings.⁷⁰ These form an overarching framework within which other kinships metaphors may be properly understood.

Paul frequently refers to God as Father.⁷¹ For instance, in 2 Cor 1:2–3, God is described both as “our” Father and as Jesus’ Father. Recent scholarship has moved away from Joachim Jeremias’s position that early Christian use of “Father” for God reflected Jesus’ special “Abba experience.”⁷² Instead, studies have highlighted the

⁶⁹ Karl O. Sandnes, *A New Family: Conversion and Ecclesiology in the Early Church with Cross-Cultural Comparisons*, Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 91 (Bern: Lang, 1994). Similarly, “Paul sought to fill the void left by broken connections.” McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 123.

⁷⁰ This “therefore” reflects the structure to the metaphors that Abera Mengestu finds in his study. “When Paul refers to God as ‘our Father’ at the beginning of his letters, he suggests not only that the recipients relate to God as children, but also that they are siblings as they share a Father. The kinship term ‘father’ forms a ‘hegemonic idiom’ in terms of which the rest of the relationships are cast.” Abera M. Mengestu, *God as Father in Paul: Kinship Language and Identity Formation in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 202.

⁷¹ For Norman Peterson, God as Father and Christ as Lord are the “organizing metaphors” of Paul’s thought. Norman R. Peterson, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 206.

⁷² For the history of scholarship and an argument in support of this move, see Mary Rose D'Angelo, “Intimating Deity in the Gospel of John: Theological Language and ‘Father’ in ‘Prayers of Jesus’,” in *God the Father in the Gospel of John*, ed. Adele Reinhartz, Semeia 85 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 59–82.

parallels in the Hebrew Bible,⁷³ Second Temple Jewish writing in Greek,⁷⁴ Qumran,⁷⁵ Targumim,⁷⁶ and Roman Stoicism.⁷⁷ Indeed, as the culmination of a catena of biblical citations, Paul presents God's paternity of church members as the fulfillment of prophetic promises (2 Cor 6:18; citing 2 Sam 7:14 and Jer 31:9). In 2 Sam 7:14, God promises paternity to a future Davidic Messiah. In Jer 31:9, the oracle gives God's paternity of Israel as the reason why God will lead Israel home from the exile.⁷⁸ For Paul, while God's paternity is associated with his universal status as Creator (1 Cor 8:6), it is also particular and the result of God choosing to extend the

⁷³ Marriane M. Thompson, "The Living Father," *ibid.*, 19–32.

⁷⁴ See Mengestu, *God as Father*, 10; Florian Wilk, "'Vater...'. Zur Bedeutung der Anrede Gottes als Vater in den Gebeten der Jesusüberlieferung," in *The Divine Father: Religious and Philosophical Concepts of Divine Parenthood in Antiquity*, eds. Felix Albrecht and Reinhard Feldmeier (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 201–32. Both of these authors highlight the use of "Father" as a vocative in prayers.

⁷⁵ Waverly E. Nunnally, "The Fatherhood of God at Qumran" (PhD Diss., Hebrew Union College, 1992); Lutz Doering, "God as Father in Texts from Qumran," in *The Divine Father: Religious and Philosophical Concepts of Divine Parenthood in Antiquity*, eds. Felix Albrecht and Reinhard Feldmeier (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 107–36.

⁷⁶ The Targumim tend to contain references to God as Father as plusses to the Hebrew text, and the reverse rarely occurs. See Robert Hayward, "God as Father in the Pentateuchal Targumim," *ibid.*, 137–64.

⁷⁷ See Mengestu, *God as Father*, 90; George H. van Kooten, "The Divine Father of the Universe from the Presocratics to Celsus: The Graeco-Roman Background to the 'Father of All' in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians," in *The Divine Father: Religious and Philosophical Concepts of Divine Parenthood in Antiquity*, eds. Felix Albrecht and Reinhard Feldmeier (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 295–324.

⁷⁸ This oracle itself refers back to Exod 4:22. In the Exodus passage, God's paternity of Israel is the reason for the exodus.

promises given to Israel to those who are “in Christ.” This particular paternity is the ground for God’s gracious actions (Gal 4:6).⁷⁹

The vertical metaphor of divine paternity connects to a horizontal metaphor of sibship among church members. Paul frequently addresses his audience as siblings, he can refer to an individual as a brother or sister (e.g., 1 Cor 1:1), and once he explicitly includes Christ among the sibship group (Rom 8:29). Kar Yong Lim has calculated that “Paul’s ... most frequently used family imagery is that of ἀδελφοί.”⁸⁰ Paul’s use of sibship language to talk about community had abundant precedent. Parallels have been adduced in the Hebrew Bible,⁸¹ Greek oratory,⁸² and voluntary associations.⁸³ Raymond Collins argues Paul’s sibship language portrays his churches as characterized by “togetherness, interdependence, goodwill, affection, friendship,

⁷⁹ On Paul’s “particularist universalism” in his use of Divine Father traditions, see further J. Ross Wagner, “Is God the Father of Jews only, or also of Gentiles? The Peculiar Shape of Paul’s ‘Universalism,’” in *The Divine Father: Religious and Philosophical Concepts of Divine Parenthood in Antiquity*, eds. Felix Albrecht and Reinhard Feldmeier (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 233–254.

⁸⁰ Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity*, 52. Lim counts 112 metaphorical uses of the nominative / vocative plural in Paul’s undisputed letters. Similarly, “Αδελφοί is far and away Paul’s favorite way of referring to the members of the communities to whom he is writing.” Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community*, 50–51. David Horrell notes that this is “on average fractionally over once per page of Nestle-Aland Greek text.” David G. Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος θεοῦ: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianity,” *JBL* 120 (2001): 293–311, 300.

⁸¹ On sibship language in Deuteronomy, see Mengestu, *God as Father*, 119. See also references in Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί,” 297nn15–16.

⁸² See Collins, *Power of Images*, 11.

⁸³ Philip A. Harland, “Familial Dimensions of Group Identity: ‘Brothers’ (ἀδελφοί) in Associations of the Greek East,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 491–513.

... [and] protection.”⁸⁴ Paul uses church members’ fictive sibship to call them to greater unity⁸⁵ and uses his status as brother to motivate various appeals he makes.⁸⁶ For Horrell, Paul’s (implicit) self-reference as brother to church members is an egalitarian image, which is negated by other images Paul applies to himself, such as father (to be discussed below).⁸⁷ However, Lim shows that brotherhood imagery need not be egalitarian; for Plutarch, younger brothers owed elder brothers obedience.⁸⁸ Paul’s self-description as brother leaves open the question of how much authority he has; a question to which other metaphors will contribute (partial) answers.

How, then, for Paul, does one become a child of God (in the particular sense that does not apply to all creation)? We find two separate metaphors for such a change in status in Gal 3:26–4:5. In 3:26, Paul uses a container metaphor:⁸⁹ “You are

⁸⁴ Collins, *Power of Images*, 12.

⁸⁵ On Paul’s use of this strategy in First Corinthians, see Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί,” 300–302; Mary Katherine Berge, *The Language of Belonging: A Rhetorical Analysis of Kinship Language in First Corinthians*, CBET 31 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004).

⁸⁶ For instance, on Paul’s use of this strategy in Phlm 7, 20, see Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί,” 302; Collins, *Power of Images*, 71.

⁸⁷ Horrell, “From ἀδελφοί,” 303.

⁸⁸ See discussion of Plutarch’s *De Fraterno Amore* in Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity*, 67–68.

⁸⁹ For a general treatment of container metaphors, see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 29–32. Lakoff and Johnson coined the term “container metaphor” to refer to a wide variety of metaphors in which something (or, in this case, someone) is conceptualized as container that other things (or, more often, people) can be in or out of. On “in Christ” as a container metaphor, see Howe,

all sons of God, through the faith, in (ἐν) Christ Jesus.”⁹⁰ There is a similar logic in 3:29. As the members of the church in Galatia are “Christ’s,” “they are related to Abraham via their incorporation into Christ.”⁹¹ Certain properties predicated of Christ, including divine filiation, are transferred to those who are “in Christ.”⁹²

Later in this passage, Paul uses a different metaphor to talk about the onset of divine filiation: adoption.⁹³ This may seem a natural extension of the metaphor of

Because You Bear This Name, 237–47; Annette Potgieter, "Spatial Metaphors as a Means of Persuasion in Romans 5:12–21," *AcT* 39 (2019): 130–46. Labelling “in Christ” a container metaphor does not answer questions such as why or how Paul uses this metaphor; it simply provides some language and comparanda with which to proceed in that conversation. For recent scholarship on Paul’s use of this term, see Michael J. Thate, et al., eds., *In Christ in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation*, WUNT, vol. 384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

⁹⁰ Translation from Hans D. Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 185. Paul never uses πίστις + ἐν to refer to the object of faith (as the author of Ephesians does in Eph 1:15). Betz does not rely on this, though, but argues for the reading of the sentence structure given by his punctuation by pointing to the parallelism it produces with Gal 3:28b (“you are all one in Christ Jesus”). *Ibid.*, 181. Further evidence could be adduced from 3:27, which also features container metaphor presented in terms of clothing (“you have put on Christ”). J. Louis Martyn argues that διὰ τῆς πίστεως is a Pauline addition to a preexisting baptismal formula. J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, AB vol. 33a (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 375. On 3:27–28, see also J. Ross Wagner, "Baptism 'Into Christ Jesus' and the Question of Universalism in Paul," *HBT* 33 (2011): 45–61, 50–53.

⁹¹ Martyn, *Galatians*, 377. See also Collins, *Power of Images*, 81.

⁹² “Through this phrase ‘in Christ Jesus’ this righteousness of the believer is anchored in the sonship of Jesus.” Dieter Lührmann, *Galatians*, Continental Commentary, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 75.

⁹³ Υἱοθεσία, “a term consistently used in Paul’s time to refer to the event of adoption as a son (not the abstraction ‘sonship’).” Martyn, *Galatians*, 390.

divine filiation, but those among Paul's audience familiar with Roman adoptions would have heard this metaphor as only claiming a rather weak form of filiation. As Michael Peppard states, "Roman adoption ... was not enacted to stabilize the life of a child, but to stabilize the future of a father."⁹⁴ Roman adoption did establish inheritance rights within the adopter's family, but, as Gardner argues, over the course of the first century, adoption becomes increasingly seen as a legal fiction for managing inheritance rather than a "real" form of filiation. For instance, adopted children did not count for the *ius liberorum*,⁹⁵ adoption did not erase the legal disabilities of being the child of an enslaved person,⁹⁶ and one could never sue one's (blood) ascendants, even after being adopted.⁹⁷

Paul goes on in the next verse to talk about renewal and reformation of the hearts of those adopted (via the sending of the Spirit). This is not celebratory surplusage; the metaphor of adoption does not communicate any kind of renewal. Metaphors of new birth communicate notions of renewal and transformation that metaphors of adoption do not. Birth metaphors were not foreign to Paul. However, he never (in his extant corpus) developed new birth metaphors so as to present God or Christ as begetting or giving birth. Instead, Paul inserts himself (or, occasionally,

⁹⁴ Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 60.

⁹⁵ Gardner, *Family and Familia*, 57.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

one of his coworkers) into a parental role in these metaphors. We now consider how these occasional metaphors fit in with the more pervasive kinship metaphors in Paul's letters.

4.2.2 Parent Paul

When Paul wrote to Philemon, telling him of Onesimus' entrance into the family of believers (his becoming a "beloved brother in the Lord;" Phlm 16), he described Onesimus not as adopted into this family but rather born (anew) into it. However, Paul does not say that God begot or gave birth to Philemon. Instead, he claims that role for himself. Paul describes Onesimus as "my own child whom I have begotten/born (ἐγεννήσα) in chains" (Phlm 10).⁹⁸ Risto Saarinen is one of the few commentators to point out that this use of γεννάω could refer to becoming Onesimus' mother or father.⁹⁹ This metaphor communicates a complete renewal of

⁹⁸ Translation adapted from Risto Saarinen, *The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon and Jude*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008), 206.

⁹⁹ Also, Reidar Aasgaard, "Paul as a Child: Children and Childhood in the Letters of the Apostle," *JBL* 126, no. 1 (2007): 129–59, 137. Saarinen goes on to argue (207) that Paul's reference to σπλάγχνα (Phlm 12) should be understood as womb (as *LSJ* confirms is possible) and so the reference is maternal. Perhaps, this is a hasty conclusion, however. Σπλάγχνα is hardly an unambiguous way to refer to a womb, and Onesimus is described as Paul's σπλάγχνα, not as offspring of it. It would be better to say that Paul has not clarified whether this parental metaphor should be understood as paternal or maternal. It is not uncommon for Paul to use a parental

Onesimus' person.¹⁰⁰ It says something about Paul also. Paul could have used a passive verb (as in John 3:3) if he simply wished to use birth as a way to describe Onesimus' renewal, avoiding mapping either parental slot in the source domain to anyone in the target domain. Placing himself in the parental role does work for Paul. It communicates a tight bond between Paul and Onesimus, a relationship of responsibility, and it seeks to leverage Philemon's affection towards Paul to achieve a certain end for Onesimus. If the image is understood as maternal, it presents Paul as having labored to bring to bear divine filiation. If paternal, Paul mediates God's own paternity. While this image is equivocal between the maternal and paternal, in other letters Paul employs both clearly defined maternal and paternal images. I survey a selection of these before asking how they may relate to Paul's Christology.

In 1 Thess 2:7–11, Paul describes himself first as mother and then as father. Paul likens the actions he and his co-workers took among the Thessalonians to “a nurse caring for her own¹⁰¹ children” (1 Thess 2:7). In the next verse, Paul spells out

metaphor for himself that is neither clearly paternal nor maternal. Beverly Gaventa points out that this is true of 2 Cor 6:13 and 12:14. Beverly R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 7.

¹⁰⁰ “Onesimus has been born or transformed from a mere potential to an actually useful person.” Saarinen, *Pastoral Epistles*, 207.

¹⁰¹ For arguments that Paul's use of the reflexive possessive *ἑαυτῆς* implies that the children in the source domain are the nurse's offspring and not simply her charges, see Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, AB 32B (New

some of the entailments of this metaphor:¹⁰² “Thus, as we were devoted to you, we decided to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our very selves, because you have become beloved to us.” The image characterizes the apostles as warm and affectionate towards the Thessalonians and suggests that they acted self-sacrificially in the interests of the Thessalonians.¹⁰³ Sources we surveyed in chapters two and three confirm that breastfeeding was associated with physical hardship. We also observed that breastfeeding was seen to have formative effects, whereby the infant was made like its nurse. This theme is also sounded explicitly elsewhere in First Thessalonians. Paul praises the Thessalonians for having become imitators both of the apostles and of Christ by receiving the gospel along with affliction (1:6; see also 2:2). Other entailments may be that the “Thessalonians are wanted children”¹⁰⁴ and that the apostles are suffering from the kind of anxiety that would afflict a “nursing mother separated from her children.”¹⁰⁵ Beverly Gaventa thinks it

York: Doubleday, 2000), 146; Collins, *Power of Images*, 17; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 74; McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 56–57.

¹⁰² “Paul chooses to repeat in plain Greek what he began to say in terms of metaphor.” Fee, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 73–74.

¹⁰³ Like “a nurse, [who] gives of her own body for the life of the infant.” McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 134.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 137. In 1 Thess 2:17–18, Paul expresses distress that his plans to visit Thessalonica have been thwarted.

plausible that, with this image, Paul may be accepting the role that Moses rejects in Num 11:12.¹⁰⁶ That Paul compares himself with Moses in Rom 9:3 and 2 Cor 3:12–13 strengthens the case for this possible allusion.¹⁰⁷

A few verses later, Paul compares the relationship between himself (and his coworkers) and the Thessalonians to that between a father and his children (2:11). Paul explains this image in terms of a father's moral-educative role, pointing to his work of "urging and encouraging and bearing witness that [they] should walk worthily" (2:12); i.e. act rightly. This is precisely the kind of behavior that Paul says the Thessalonians observed in them (2:10), so there is also a mimetic quality to the father image, like the mother image.¹⁰⁸ Collins also links the fatherhood image back to Paul's statement in 2:9 that Paul and his coworkers labored hard so as not to be a burden.¹⁰⁹ However, when the audience hears 2:9, they have already heard the maternal image and have not yet heard the paternal. Hence, it may be better taken as an implicature of the mother image, especially as the mother is portrayed as someone who works (as a nurse).

¹⁰⁶ Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 24.

¹⁰⁷ Compare Rom 9:3 with Exod 32:32. See discussion in J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 45.

¹⁰⁸ Paul's self-reference as father in 1 Cor 4:15-17 is explicitly mimetic.

¹⁰⁹ Collins, *Power of Images*, 17.

Paul's two parental metaphors for apostles in First Thessalonians are sandwiched between two metaphors that reverse the imagery. Immediately prior to the mother image, Paul describes himself and his coworkers as having been "infants (νήπιοι) in [their] midst" (1 Thess 2:7).¹¹⁰ Only slightly later than the father image, Paul describes his distress at being separated from the Thessalonians in terms of being orphaned (ἀπορφανισθέντες; 2:17). John Chrysostom comments, "though standing in the relation of a father to them all, he yet uses that language of orphan children who have prematurely lost their parent."¹¹¹ While the aspect of infants highlighted by the metaphor in 2:7 is likely their innocence (as infants never employ deceptive speech),¹¹² combined with the orphan metaphor these images also present the apostles as of low status and vulnerable. While the apostles worked so as not to be materially dependent on the Thessalonians, in some sense, as Reidar Aasgaard puts it, "in 1 Thess 2:7 Paul is putting himself at their mercy."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Some manuscripts have ἡπιοι (gentle) instead of νήπιοι here. NA²⁸ selects νήπιοι as the earlier circulating text. For (convincing) arguments that this decision is correct, see Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "'But We Became Infants Among You': The Case of ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in 1 Thess. 2.7," *NTS* 46 (2000): 547–64; Aasgaard, "Paul as a Child," 147–48; Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 19–20; Fee, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 65–71; McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 35–43. For further endorsement, though without argument, see Collins, *Power of Images*, 18.

¹¹¹ John Chrysostom, *Ep. Olymp* 8.12.40–41. Translation Weima, "We Became Infants," 558.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 563; Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 27; McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*, 125.

¹¹³ Aasgaard, "Paul as a Child," 148.

Unlike in his letter to Philemon, Paul does not in First Thessalonians describe his role of evangelizing in terms of begetting or giving birth. Instead, he describes his pastoral activity in terms of childrearing. Once the Thessalonians have been brought into the sphere of God's paternity, God's fatherly care is mediated through Paul's parental action. Lest this image idolatrously end up replacing God's fatherhood with Paul's, Paul bookends the parental images with the infant and orphan images that reverse the hierarchy. Paul is indeed, as Gaventa puts it, "an authority who does not conform to standard norms of authority."¹¹⁴ The infant and orphan images make this point clearly, as does the fact that this mother works as a wet nurse, meaning she is either enslaved or among the free poor. It is important to recognize, however, that the use of a maternal image to describe the apostles does not of itself negate Paul's authority. As we saw in chapter 3, Homer describes Agamemnon and Menelaus using maternal metaphors. Homer also describes Hector with a maternal metaphor (*Il.* 6.429), and Plutarch borrows this line to describe Pollianus (*Advice to a Bride and Groom*, 48) when he instructs him to educate his wife as a mother educates her child. None of these metaphors present any of these men as less authoritative; Plutarch's, in fact, strengthens Pollianus' authority. Neither do the maternal descriptions of God in the scriptural texts surveyed in

¹¹⁴ Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 14. See also Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 6. Eastman describes Paul as "vulnerable yet authoritative."

section one make God less authoritative (indeed, at times, they are linked with God's authority to discipline). While Gaventa is surely right that "mothers in Paul's world do not have the authority of fathers," it is not true that using a maternal metaphor brings upon him "the shame of a female-identified male."¹¹⁵

Paul also describes himself as a wet nurse in 1 Cor 3:1–2a. Here, there is nothing in the text to suggest that this wet nurse is the biological mother of those she nourishes. While this passage does have a point to make about the Corinthians' immaturity, in addition, via its "emphatic ἐγώ, Paul draws attention to himself and to his ministry."¹¹⁶ This image begins a series of servile metaphors for apostleship. As Dale Martin has shown, these images do not deny Paul's authority. Rather, by "[analogizing it] to the authority of the managerial slave," they attribute to Paul "a certain amount of power and prestige" while also clarifying that his "authority [is] derivative."¹¹⁷ Only after working through this series of servile images does Paul use a paternal metaphor to describe his role in the Corinthians' lives (1 Cor 4:14–21). This image is explicitly mimetic (4:16), forming an *inclusio* with the wet nurse image, which is implicitly mimetic. Like a wet nurse, Paul endures hardship, gives of himself in order to nurture the Corinthians, and cannot help but form his likeness in

¹¹⁵ Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 13–14.

¹¹⁶ Collins, *Power of Images*, 116.

¹¹⁷ Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 137.

them through this process. This does place Paul in a position of authority, but however much he feeds his charges it is only God who can “give the growth” (3:6–7).

The letter to the Galatians is the only place where Paul unambiguously applies to himself imagery of a woman giving birth. He writes: “My children, for whom I again endure labor pains (ὠδίνω) until Christ is formed (μορφωθῆ) in you” (Gal 4:19). The “again” refers back to Paul’s initial proclamation of the gospel to the Galatians. The Galatians’ positive response to the rival teachers’ “other gospel” (1:6) has caused Paul an unnatural burden—that he endure labor a second time for the same children.¹¹⁸ Susan Eastman has persuasively argued that Paul’s metaphorical birth pains have an “experiential point of reference:... the suffering that accompanies his embodied proclamation of the gospel of the crucified Christ.”¹¹⁹ In 4:13–14, Paul has reminded them of his first visit to them and the “weakness of the flesh” that accompanied it. If this weakness is understood as the physical effects of persecution on Paul’s body,¹²⁰ this makes explicit the connection between Paul’s metaphorical laboring and literal physical suffering.

¹¹⁸ Betz, *Galatians*, 234.

¹¹⁹ Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 97. Paul refers to his physical suffering in Gal 5:11 and 6:17. In addition, 2:19 also presents Paul as a victim of violence. While “co-crucifixion” is metaphorical (Paul has not actually been crucified), this means we have two metaphorical descriptions of Paul as suffering, both of which find their “experiential point of reference” in the two literal descriptions.

¹²⁰ For references to exegetes, patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern, who have read 4:13 in this way, see *ibid.*, 102–103. Martin instead argues, with Jerome,

Paul reports that the Galatians overcame the temptation to be offended by Paul's wounded body but instead welcomed him "as Christ Jesus" (4:14). His bodily weakness mediates Christ to the Galatians. For Paul, his suffering is part of his unity with Christ, as it constitutes a shared co-crucifixion (2:19–20).¹²¹ As Eastman puts it, "the medium and the message are inseparable: Paul's discourse—packed with familial images, representative, vulnerable and yet authoritative, and above all,

that the flesh in 4:13 is the Galatians' own (weak as enslaved to sin; cp. Rom 5:19), and that the offensive flesh in 4:14 is Paul's circumcised body. Troy W. Martin, "Whose Flesh? What Temptation? (Galatians 4.13–14)," *JSNT* 74 (1999): 65–91. As part of this argument, Martin provides a convincing argument against the "illness" reading of Gal 4:13-14 (as weak flesh is not characteristic of an ill body in the relevant physiological treatises). Whether the weakness mentioned in 4:14 is comprised of wounds suffered in persecution (à la Eastman) or circumcision understood as deformity by the Galatians (à la Martin) makes little difference to the remainder of my argument.

¹²¹ "As God's messenger, Paul preached Christ (1:16); and that preaching included the conviction that, as he had himself suffered crucifixion with Christ, so in his present life he bears in his body physical scars ... that are marks of his association with Jesus.... The odiously sick ... figure was seen, then, to be in fact an angel sent from God, just as the legally executed criminal was seen to be in fact God's own Son. That correspondence caused the Galatians to welcome Paul, and that correspondence caused their attachment to Paul to be an attachment to Christ." Martyn, *Galatians*, 421. While, along with Eastman and Martin, I disagree with Martyn that Paul is presented as sick in Gal 4:14, his analysis still holds if "odiously sick" is replaced by "odiously disfigured," when we remember that both odium and disfigurement exist only in the eye of the beholder.

marked by personal suffering—demonstrates for his converts the content of the good news.”¹²²

By figuring his suffering as labor, Paul proclaims that it need not be futile but can be fruitful (if the Galatians respond appropriately). He anticipates that these pains will end when “Christ is formed in [the Galatians]” (4:19b). As Eastman and Gaventa have separately argued, this is a divine passive.¹²³ It is God who forms Christ; Paul’s labor is a means through which God does this. For Paul, God, whose formation of Israel was like a mother giving birth to a child (Isa 45:10),¹²⁴ now incarnates that labor in Paul’s suffering. As Eastman puts it, “Paul’s ‘labor’ represents God’s ‘labor,’ both as intense anguish on behalf of God’s people and as creative power bringing the new creation to birth.”¹²⁵ This image does not empty the cross of its power (cp. 1 Cor 1:17), for “Paul’s suffering [also] manifests the suffering of Christ.”¹²⁶

Like the images in First Thessalonians, the metaphor of Pauline parenthood in Galatians is mimetic. Gal 4:19 closes a section that was begun by a summons from

¹²² Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 6.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 94–95; Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 37.

¹²⁴ On the intertextual links between these passages, see Martyn, *Galatians*, 428–29.

¹²⁵ Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 120–21.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

Paul to “become like me” (4:12).¹²⁷ When he calls for such imitation from the Corinthians, Paul expands the summons and instructs them to “be imitators of [him], just as [he] is of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1).¹²⁸ This same dynamic, whereby Paul is a “middle term” through whom communities he pastors can imitate Christ, is at work in his letter to the Galatians. To cite Eastman again, “Christ will be formed in the Galatians when they ‘become like’ Paul by exchanging the marker of circumcision for the brand marks of Jesus—that is, when they join the apostle in suffering for the sake of the gospel.”¹²⁹

Jennifer McNeel, connecting 1 Cor 11:1 to her study of Paul’s nurse metaphor in First Thessalonians, comments that “Paul claimed to model his apostleship on Christ.” She then asks: “If Paul can ‘mother’ the Thessalonians, is it not because Christ has first ‘mothered’ him and all whom God has called to follow Christ?”¹³⁰ A similar question could be asked of the labor imagery in Galatians. If Paul’s suffering is birth pain labor over the Galatians, is not because Christ’s cross is birth pain labor over him and all whom God has called to follow Christ? Paul never explicitly makes this connection in any of his letters that survive to us. But maternal Christology seems but one connection away from what we do have in his letters; it is tacit in

¹²⁷ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 421.

¹²⁸ On Paul’s imitation language in the Corinthian correspondence, see Boykin Sanders, “Imitating Paul: 1 Cor 4:16,” *HTR* 74, no. 4 (1981): 353–363.

¹²⁹ Eastman, *Mother Tongue*, 97.

¹³⁰ McNeel, *Infant and Nursing Mother*.

motherhood-as-apostleship. We now return to First Peter and ask whether Peter proves himself a keen reader of what is tacit in Paul.

4.2.3 From Paul to Peter; from apostle to Christ

In his study of the sources of First Peter, Horrell concludes “that 1 Peter shows clear signs of awareness of and dependence upon Pauline language and tradition.... There are too many points of contact, in terms both of specific words or phrases and elements of theology or paraenesis, to justify the view that 1 Peter is independent of Paul.”¹³¹ The data are indeed impressive. Both the epistolary opening and closing of First Peter are reminiscent of Paul’s letters.¹³² This suggests familiarity not merely with Paul’s thought or preaching, but with (at least some of) the letters themselves. First Peter also contains much vocabulary that is distinctively Pauline within the New Testament and important for Paul’s thought, such as ἐν Χριστῷ,¹³³

¹³¹ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 37.

¹³² In the opening, Peter identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ and wishes his addressees grace and peace. The closing calls for the audience to exchange a kiss. Romans, First Corinthians, and Second Corinthians contain all three of these features, and other Pauline letters contain one or two. The blessing in 1 Peter 1:3 contains an 11-word verbatim agreement with 2 Cor 1:3.

¹³³ The phrase appears three times in First Peter; 73 times in works that explicitly claim Pauline authorship, including every undisputed letter; nowhere else in the New Testament. On the importance of this phrase for Paul’s theology, see E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

ἀποκάλυψις,¹³⁴ χάρισμα,¹³⁵ and συσχηματίζω.¹³⁶ Beyond lexical data, a longer parallel unit can be found by comparing 1 Pet 2:13–17 with Rom 13:1–7.¹³⁷ First Peter also shares sequences of biblical quotations with Romans (Rom 9:25–3 // 1 Pet 2:6–10).¹³⁸

Despite the abundance of distinctive parallels, the supposed dependence of First Peter on a Pauline corpus has come under attack by Kazuhito Shimada and Jens Herzer.¹³⁹ Both these studies, though, suffer from the same infirmity; Shimada defines “a direct dependence’ to mean a *conscious* effort on the side of the alleged borrower (in our case, Peter) to make the quotation or reference look very much alike the original text (in our case, Romans).”¹⁴⁰ Herzer accepts this definition. As

¹³⁴ The word appears three times in First Peter; thirteen times in Pauline epistles; only elsewhere in the New Testament in Luke 2:32 and the (secondary) title of Revelation.

¹³⁵ This word also appears only in First Peter and Pauline epistles. The claim involving this *χάρισματα* made in 1 Pet 4:10 is the same as the point Paul makes about this word in Rom 12:6 and 1 Cor 12:4-9: that there are various gifts and these should be put at God’s service.

¹³⁶ Only Rom 12:2 and 1 Pet 1:14, in both cases in prohibitions.

¹³⁷ For a more detailed study of this parallel, see Aejmelaes, "Pauline Heritage."

¹³⁸ David Lincicum has shown that certain works whose authors were likely to have been familiar with the Pauline corpus (such as Hebrews, First Timothy, and First Clement) show substantial overlap in biblical citations with Paul, in contrast to certain other early Christian works which do not (such as the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*). David Lincicum, "Learning Scripture in the School of Paul: From Ephesians to Justin," *ibid.*, 148–70.

¹³⁹ Kazuhito Shimada, *Studies on First Peter: With a Concordance to the Epistle* (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1998); Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des Ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998). Herzer was familiar with, and approved of, Shimada’s work.

¹⁴⁰ Shimada, *Studies on 1 Peter*, 105. Emphasis original.

Anneli Aejmelaeus comments, “out of these premises the outcome of the investigation cannot be anything but negative.”¹⁴¹ Shimada and Herzer do not necessarily err in how they apply their definition, but they reach the wrong result from their investigations due to their overly strict definition. The value in their work lies not in rebutting Petrine dependence on Paul, but in clarifying how the Peter uses Pauline material.¹⁴² Peter is not trying to make his letter look like a Pauline epistle.¹⁴³

One pattern in how Peter reuses Pauline material has not previously been identified. Peter has a *Tendenz* to take language that Paul uses for apostles or disciples of Jesus and use that language to describe Christ himself. For instance, Paul uses the term *ἐπίσκοπος* (bishop or overseer) to name a church office (Phil 1:1; taken up in 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7). In First Peter, this term is applied to Christ (1 Pet 2:25).

¹⁴¹ Aejmelaeus, "Pauline Heritage," 127n5. See also Travis Williams: “the major problem is that Shimada’s criteria are so rigidly constructed that literary dependence could rarely – if ever – be demonstrated, and thus the denial of a literary connection with the Pauline letters is (almost) inevitable,” Travis B. Williams, "Intertextuality and Methodological Bias: Prolegomena to the Evaluation of Source Materials in 1 Peter," *JSNT* 39 (2016): 169–87, 177.

¹⁴² “Herzer’s work valuably investigates the distinctive ways in which the author of First Peter presents his material, compared with Paul; but this distinctive use does not imply independence. Indeed, on this criterion one could equally well argue that the Pastorals are independent of the Pauline tradition!” Horrell, “Petrine Circle,” 37–38.

¹⁴³ For instance, First Peter closes by bidding its readers to greet each other “with a kiss of love” (ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης; 1 Pet 5:14), whereas Paul prefers the phrase “holy kiss” (ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 1 Thess 5:26; cp. 2 Cor 13:12). Peter did not feel bound by the Pauline terminology, but passed on to the Eastern churches a custom that Paul may well have introduced to the church in Rome. See Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 34.

In this same verse, Peter combines the term *ἐπίσκοπος* with *ποιμήν* (shepherd; see also 1 Pet 5:4). Paul never uses this shepherd language to describe Christ, but does use the verb *ποιμαίνω* to describe apostolic work in 1 Cor 9:7.¹⁴⁴

The same pattern can be observed in certain adjectives. Paul uses the term *ἐκλεκτός* (chosen) to describe Christ-followers (Rom 8:33; 16:13), but never Christ himself.¹⁴⁵ In First Peter, though, both Christians (1:1; 2:9) and Christ (2:4, 6) are referred to as *ἐκλεκτός*. In Paul's letters, the adjective *ἔντιμος* (honored or valuable) is only applied to Epaphroditus, Paul's trusted coworker (Phil 2:29). In First Peter, it is only applied to Christ (2:4, 6). This latter verse, 1 Pet 2:6, has a close parallel in Rom 9:33, where both those adjectives are missing.

When we examine verbs, the same pattern emerges. For Paul, Christ is never the subject of *κηρύσσω* (preach)¹⁴⁶ nor the object of *λοιδορέω* (revile)¹⁴⁷, *θανατόω* (put to death),¹⁴⁸ or *ζωοποιέω* (make alive).¹⁴⁹ Yet, in First Peter, only Christ is ever the

¹⁴⁴ The noun *ποιμήν* is used to name a church office in Eph 4:11. For references to scholars who have argued for the dependence of First Peter on Ephesians, in the context of a refutation of this view, see Shimada, *Studies on 1 Peter*, 59–63n6.

¹⁴⁵ The same is true in the disputed epistles (references to Christ-followers as *ἐκλεκτός*: Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Tit 1:10), with the exception that certain angels are referred to as “chosen” in 1 Tim 5:21.

¹⁴⁶ Paul uses this verb in Rom 2:21; 10:8, 14, 15; 1 Cor 1:23; 9:27; 15:11, 12; 2 Cor 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Gal 2:2; 5:11; Phil 1:15; 1 Thess 2:9.

¹⁴⁷ 1 Cor 4:12.

¹⁴⁸ Rom 7:4; 8:13, 36; 2 Cor 6:9.

¹⁴⁹ Rom 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:22, 36, 45; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 3:21

subject of κηρύσσω (3:19) or the object of λειδορέω (2:23), θανατόω or ζωοποιέω (3:18).¹⁵⁰

To a large extent, Peter has learned how to talk about Jesus by paying attention to how Paul talks about himself and his co-workers. Peter has taken Paul at his word, that imitation of Paul will constitute imitation of Christ (see 1 Cor 11:1). Similarly, Paul describes apostolic work as parental, and Peter describes Christ's work as parental. Unlike Paul, who mixes maternal and paternal images, Peter keeps his kinship imagery neater (at least in 1:1–2:10): the father slot is mapped to “God the Father”; the mother slot to Christ.

These are not the only fictive parenthood metaphors in First Peter. In 1 Pet 3:6, wives who do good are said to be “children of Sarah.” Paul claims that all Christ-followers are “children of the free woman,” i.e., Sarah (Gal 4:31). Paul's context for this claim, a debate about legal observance, is not Peter's. Peter may not even be dependent on Paul for this point. Philo names Abraham as the standard for all proselytes (*Virt.* 212–219), and “child of Sarah” may simply mean “like Sarah.” The Pauline parallel shows that serial inconsistent kinship metaphors can co-exist in a single letter. In one metaphor in Galatians, Paul labors over the Galatians; in another, Sarah is their mother. Similarly, Peter ascribes paternity to himself when he

¹⁵⁰ It is also true that Paul uses the verb *πάσχω* frequently with Christ followers as the subject, but never Christ, whereas Christ is often the subject of this verb in First Peter. However, Paul does refer to the *παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ* (2 Cor 1:5).

refers to Mark as his son (1 Pet 5:13). “Son” for disciple is well-attested in Paul (e.g. 1 Cor 4:17), though it is not uniquely Pauline. Peter shares with Paul the use of parenthood metaphors for himself and for Sarah. His novel contribution is to place Jesus in the motherhood slot of a new birth and neonate care metaphor. While Paul never employs such a metaphor for Christ in his extant letters, his use of parenthood metaphors for apostolic work prepared well for this contribution to early Christian thought.

When we read Peter’s new birth and neonate care metaphors with Paul’s in mind, some implicatures are suggested. When Paul self-applies the language of motherhood, it carries an association with devotion and affection. It is also linked with mimesis; to be cared for maternally by Paul is to become like Paul and, thereby, like Christ. In deleting the “middleman” in this image, Peter presents Christ’s past action (likened to labor) and ongoing care of Christians (likened to breastfeeding) as forming likeness. Similarly, Peter’s “children of Sarah” metaphor conveys likeness between Sarah and those described as her children. Paul self-applies birth language in a context of physical hardship and suffering. As Peter is clear that Christ has suffered but no longer suffers (1 Pet 3:18), the events in Christ’s life that are mapped to labor must be past. The shedding of blood during Christ’s passion is the most likely candidate. Just as Paul’s labor in Galatians participates in both God’s anguish and creative power, so does this shedding of blood.

4.3 Texts contemporary to First Peter

In the previous section, I examined Paul as a Petrine source and, in the next chapter, I will treat texts by authors who accepted First Peter as scripture. In this section, I treat four texts that use the imagery of birth or neonate care to talk about Christian life, all of which could be contemporary to First Peter. The focus in this section is not on trying to determine if any of these texts influenced Peter or vice versa. Rather, I read these texts comparatively with First Peter. Doing so shows that while Peter was not unique in comparing beginning to follow Christ to being born anew, he develops this imagery in a distinctive way, giving us a powerful image of the relationship between Christ and each Christian.

4.3.1 *Titus*

The Epistle to Titus is a pseudepigraphic Pauline letter that may well have been written in the late first century CE.¹⁵¹ Titus has many points of contact with

¹⁵¹ For this conclusion, discussion, and further bibliography, see Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, AB 35 (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 17–21; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, AYBRL (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 639.

First Peter,¹⁵² but the most notable are the parallels between 1 Pet 1:3–5 and Titus 3:5–7.¹⁵³ These two passages both speak of salvation in terms of new birth, of Jesus Christ as involved in mediating this, and of the result of the new birth in terms of inheritance and living hope. While the Holy Spirit is mentioned in this passage in Titus and not in the parallel in First Peter, Peter has just referred to the Spirit in 1 Pet 1:2. Notably, there is no parallel in Titus (or anywhere in the Pastoral Epistles) to the mention in 1 Pet 1:2 of Christ’s blood. This reference has been an important part of the preceding argument that Peter maps the mother slot of the new birth metaphor to Christ. There is nothing in Titus to suggest a maternal Christology (or theology proper). Indeed, the new birth image in Titus is a rather “thin” metaphor, with few elements of the source domain mapped to anything in the target domain. Nevertheless, some properties of birth are assumed by the author and used to make claims about salvation.

¹⁵² Both use sonship language to refer to the fictive author’s closest followers (Titus 1:4; 1 Pet 5:13); both enjoin obedience or respect to civil authority (Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:17); both describe pre-Christian existence as ignorance (Titus 3:3; 1 Pet 2:15).

¹⁵³ Indeed, Marie-Émile Boismard considered these two passages to be variations on the same hymn. Marie-Émile Boismard, *Quatre hymnes baptismales dans la première épître de Pierre* (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 15–23.

In Titus 3:5, the means (διά plus genitive) of “our” salvation is said to be a “washing of rebirth (παλιγγενεσία) and of renewal (ἀνακαίνωσις) through/by¹⁵⁴ the Holy Spirit.” Most commentators agree that “rebirth” and “renewal” are exegetical genitives (explaining what the “washing” effects) and are mutually interpreting.¹⁵⁵ That is, the primary conception of birth that is relevant to the metaphor is that it is a new beginning; the addressees have been definitively turned away from the kind of behaviors that characterized their presalvation existence (listed in 3:3). The association of water with birth makes the metaphor more vibrant and memorable. Commentators also agree that the “washing” refers to the addressees’ “personal experience of salvation;” the cross is not in view.¹⁵⁶ It is the Holy Spirit who makes the washing effective, and Jesus Christ is the means through whom God “poured out” the Holy Spirit (3:6). Christ is not directly involved in the birth metaphor, though.

¹⁵⁴ There is some manuscript evidence for διά here (D* F G b vg^{mss}). Even if this preposition were not part of original circulating text, Howard Marshall argues that it correctly clarifies the sense of the bare genitive as causal. In the end, there is little difference between regarding the Spirit as an agent here (still ultimately dependent on God), versus an instrument of God. I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 308. Quinn argues for the Spirit as “origin,” and Collins for means. Quinn, *Titus*, 224; Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 365.

¹⁵⁵ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 317; Quinn, *Titus*, 218–19; Collins, *1, 2 Tim, Titus*, 365.

¹⁵⁶ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 316. Quinn and Collins concur and argue that the reference is more specifically to baptism. Quinn, *Titus*, 217; Collins, *1, 2 Tim, Titus*, 359.

The author of Titus uses birth language to talk about a radical new beginning that takes place at God's initiative and in which Christians receive new moral traits, through the mediation of the Holy Spirit and Christ. All of this would be more than amenable to Peter. However, it leaves much unsaid. The image in Titus does nothing to connect baptism with Christ's Passion, unlike Rom 6:3-4. While Titus does present the "grace of God" as active in an on-going training of Christians (Titus 2:11-12), Christ's actions are either future (2:13) or past (2:14), not present for the addressees. When Peter extends the birth image to map the maternal slot to Christ, he is also thereby able to use an image of neonate nutrition (1 Pet 2:2-3) to portray Christ as continuing to be active in the addressees' ongoing formation. By comparing the comparatively "thinner" new birth metaphor in Titus with Peter's metaphors, we may appreciate better the creativity and the power of First Peter.

4.3.2 James

James is (likely) another pseudepigraphic Christian letter exhibiting familiarity with a Pauline corpus, plausibly dating from the late first century CE.¹⁵⁷ It

¹⁵⁷ Though I view the letter as pseudonymous, I nevertheless use the name "James" for its author. For arguments for these positions on authorship, sources, and date and further bibliography, see Martin Dibelius, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, Hermeneia, trans. Michael Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 45; Brown, *Introduction*, 742; Margaret M. Mitchell, "The Letter of James as a

also has many parallels with First Peter,¹⁵⁸ including the use of new birth metaphors accompanied by reference to λόγος (Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23). These metaphors are “thicker” than the one in Titus (in the sense that more elements of the source domain are mapped by the metaphors). James uses a series of birth metaphors in which different relationships between elements of the target domain are envisioned as having “birthed” one another. The mother slot is important to James, but it is never mapped to Christ. Indeed, James shows little interest in Christology.¹⁵⁹

In the first birth metaphor, desire conceives and gives birth to sin, which then gives birth to death (Jas 1:15). This presentation of a negative chain of births assumes that women give birth to children who resemble them. James soon presents

Document of Paulinism?," in *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*, eds. Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg, LNTS 342 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 75–98.

¹⁵⁸ They are both addressed to the diaspora (Jas 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1); they are the only New Testaments works to cite Isa 40:6-7 (Jas 1:10-11; 1 Pet 1:24); they both cite Prov 3:34 with the same variation from the LXX (Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5); and both follow this quotation with a command to resist the devil. Dale Allison counts twelve parallels between James and First Peter, in the same order but for two transpositions of adjacent terms. Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 67–68. This has convinced most scholars of a literary relationship between the two works, though the direction of influence is debated. For representatives of each position, see *ibid.*, 69–70. More recently, Horrell has favored the position that James and First Peter share a common (non-Pauline) source. Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 41.

¹⁵⁹ On the lack of Christology in James, see the classic article by Louis Masebieu, "L'Épître de Jacques est-elle l'oeuvre d'un chrétien?," *RHR* 32 (1895): 249–83.

an alternative possibility for metaphorical birth. In 1:18, James states that God, far from sending temptation, has in fact decided to “give us birth (ἀπεκύησεν)” by the word of truth, in order that the newborns might be firstfruits of God’s creation.¹⁶⁰ As in the rebirth in Titus, there is no reference to the cross here; the image refers to the experience of coming to belief in the gospel through preaching.¹⁶¹ However, unlike in Titus, this is a maternal image of God.¹⁶²

As the first chain of births in 1:15 assumed that like gives birth to like, it seems probable that, for James, being (re)born of God involves a transition to greater resemblance to God. There are various features of the letter that confirm this. James affirms that all humans are made “according to the likeness (ὁμοίωσιν) of God” (Jas 3:9) but still calls his addressees to deepen their imitation of the Deity. As

¹⁶⁰ “James’s designation of believers as ‘firstfruits’ not only declares them to be holy, but also places them in the category of those who are already experiencing the full redemption that the rest of creation still awaits. A further implication of this is that the ‘firstfruits’ are the exemplars who reflect God’s character to the world.” Dan G. McCartney, *James*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 111.

¹⁶¹ Dibelius, *James*, 105; Luke T. Johnson, *The Letter of James*, AB 37 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 202.

¹⁶² Johnson refers to this as “one of the most striking female images for God in the New Testament” and notes that some scribes, “perhaps offended by possible implications, changed *apokuein* (‘give birth’) to *poiein* (‘make’).” Johnson, *James*, 197. Of course, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, James had ample scriptural precedent for using a maternal image for the Deity.

William Baker points out, the logic of 2:1–5 is that the addressees need to become more like God by better valuing the poor, as God does.¹⁶³

Shortly after the metaphor of divine birth, James suggests this rebirth effects a real change in the metaphorical neonates. In 1:21, having told them to rid themselves of wickedness, James instructs his addressees to “welcome (δέξασθε) the innate (ἐμφυτον) word” that has the power to save them. Most commentators agree here that the “word” is the gospel.¹⁶⁴ However, despite the fact that ἐμφυτος “has the basic sense of ‘natural’ or ‘innate,’”¹⁶⁵ they resist translating it this way, either because this translation “seems inappropriate, since it is to be ‘received,’”¹⁶⁶ or because James’s anthropology seems too negative for the gospel to be universally available to humanity.¹⁶⁷ What they are missing is the possibility of understanding “innate” as part of the new birth metaphor. Δέξασθε can then be translated “welcome” instead of “receive.” This is essentially Baker’s reading: “The birthed believer ... does in fact have the word within their genetic makeup. It is ‘innate’ from [new] birth.... The command to receive the innate word is a command to draw fully

¹⁶³ William R. Baker, “Who’s Your Daddy? Gendered Birth Images in the Soteriology of the Epistle of James (1:14–15, 18, 21),” *EvQ* 79 (2007): 195–207, 206.

¹⁶⁴ Johnson, *James*, 202; McCartney, *James*, 117; Jason A. Whitlark, “Ἐμφυτος Λόγος: A New Covenant Motif in the Letter of James,” *HBT* 32 (2010): 144–65, 163.

¹⁶⁵ Johnson, *James*, 202.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Whitlark, “Ἐμφυτος Λόγος,” 147–50.

upon the power of God's word that is interwoven into every fiber of the believer's being."¹⁶⁸

As in the Epistle to Titus, James uses birth metaphors to talk about new beginnings and moral transformation. He goes further, though, in using the mother slot of the source domain to convey the communication of likeness, either from desire through sin to death, or to God. James's image, though, does not ascribe any of the pain or suffering of childbirth to the Deity, as the prophets did, and as Paul claimed for himself. Neither does James associate Jesus Christ at all with these birth images. Some of the things that Peter uses maternal imagery to say are common to these late first century Christian epistles, but Peter's contribution has a depth and power without parallel in this corpus. Other genres of Christian writing from this period, though, may provide closer counterparts.

4.3.3 Odes of Solomon

The Odes of Solomon has been called "the earliest Christian hymnbook, and therefore one of the most important early Christian documents."¹⁶⁹ In an article,

¹⁶⁸ Baker, "Your Daddy," 204–205.

¹⁶⁹ James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Odes of Solomon*, SBLTT 13, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1977), vii. Michael Lattke identifies in it "Jewish influence, ... [a] Gnostic tinge, ... [and a] Christian whole." Michael Lattke, *Odes of Solomon: A*

Michael Lattke identifies the Odes as a text roughly contemporary to 1 Peter.¹⁷⁰

While such an early dating for the Odes is not incontrovertible,¹⁷¹ the focus of this section is not on resolving literary critical questions of dependence. Rather, accepting the plausible contemporaneity of the Odes with First Peter, I read the two texts comparatively. While the Odes does not contain new birth imagery, it does contain some limited gestational imagery and more frequent images of neonatal care, in which a maternal metaphor is applied to a variety of different characters in this version of the drama of salvation.

At one point, the Odist describes himself¹⁷² as like a child *in utero*. Ode 28 is primarily about the Spirit's protection of the Odist under persecution.¹⁷³ The first verse describes the Odist as "under the wings" of the Spirit and compares this situation to nestlings being protected and fed by their mothers. The next verse

Commentary, Hermeneia, trans. Marianne Ehrhardt (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2009), 13.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Lattke, "Dating the *Odes of Solomon*," *Antichthon* 27 (1993): 45–59, 57.

¹⁷¹ Indeed, in his later commentary, Lattke himself prefers an early second century date precisely to provide some distance from works he (at that time) saw as sources for the odes, including First Peter. Lattke, *Odes*, 14.

¹⁷² I use masculine pronouns for the Odist, to match the grammatical gender employed in the text.

¹⁷³ For text and versification, see Michael Lattke, ed., *Die Oden Salamos: Griechisch—koptisch—syrisch mit deutscher Übersetzung*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011).

moves from avian to human metaphors, as the Odist compares his heart to a child in his mother’s womb, who jumps for joy and who may be receiving nourishment.¹⁷⁴ This metaphor fits well within Ode 28 taken as a whole. It presents the Odist as vulnerable and the Spirit as protector. It also suggests that the Odist is immature, in need of further growth and formation, and that the Spirit can provide this. The jumping for joy, likely an allusion to Luke 1:41–44,¹⁷⁵ also presents this gestational period as one in which the Odist can still be aware of Christ’s presence and rejoice in it.

There are other images in the Odes that present the Odist as a neonate, without identifying any parental figure. For instance, in Ode 11:1–3, God circumcises the Odist. The result is that the Odist is able to bear fruit for God and is able to be filled with God’s love. In Ode 35:3, the Odist describes himself as being received into the Lord’s company (ܦܠܝܫܐ, borrowed from the Greek *τάγμα*). Being counted in this number is likened to being a child carried by its mother (35:5). An unnamed, grammatically masculine subject gives milk to the Odist (35:5),¹⁷⁶ which

¹⁷⁴ ܦܠܝܫܐ can mean “rejoice,” which would be synonymous with the coordinate verb ܦܠܝܫܐ (“jump for joy”), or can mean “enjoy much food,” which would continue the alimentary image from the previous verse to this new context.

¹⁷⁵ Lattke, *Odes*, 387.

¹⁷⁶ Charlesworth takes the subject to be God. Charlesworth, *Odes*, 124. Lattke takes this subject to be the “company” (which is masculine in Syriac). Lattke, *Odes*, 478.

causes him to grow (35:6). Both these images present the Odist as in need of growth and transformation that God provides.

Other Odes identify who is lactating. In Ode 8:16, in words that are attributed by James Charlesworth to Christ and by Lattke to “a Revealer” (not God),¹⁷⁷ the speaker says that he fashioned the members of his people and prepared his breasts in order to feed them with his milk, that they might live by it. In Ode 19:2, the Holy Spirit is said to milk the Father. The cup (i.e., the milk)¹⁷⁸ is Christ. Verses 1–4 describe the Odist’s reception of this milk. Verses 6–11 describe the Virgin Mary’s womb retaining (حفظ) this milk, using similar language as is used for the womb’s retention of seed during ordinary conception. This leads to her pain-free delivery of a son. Here we have a homunculus theory of conception (at least for this one, rather unique, conception). Mary’s gestational role is simply to allow Christ, who is already wholly present in the milk she receives, to grow; there is no gestational formation.

If those in God’s company receive Christ’s milk or Christ as milk, this should be a means of forming likeness to Christ in them. This is indeed a theme sounded repeatedly throughout the Odes. For instance, the Odist inherits divine filiation from

¹⁷⁷ Charlesworth, *Odes*, 43n7; Lattke, *Odes*, 113. For an argument that this is a Eucharistic image, see Johannes Betz, "Die Eucharistie als Gottes Milch in frühchristlicher Sicht," *ZKT* 106 (1984): 15–18.

¹⁷⁸ Lattke, *Odes*, 270–71.

Christ the Son (3:7). This verse combines a perfective statement of union with God (7a) and a result clause in which the Odist will become a son (7d). Even if this is “paradoxical,”¹⁷⁹ it is not a contradiction; the Odist is on a journey of progressive assimilation to the divine, and there are aspects of that conformity that can be referred to as complete, as well as aspects that are not yet completed.

Another property that is said to transfer from Christ to the Odist is incorruptibility, using words from the root *سجد*. This property is predicated of God the Father (7:11) and Christ (22:11).¹⁸⁰ In 9:4, the Odist proclaims to his addressees that God wills eternal life for them and that their *telos* is incorruptibility. In 15:8, this *telos* is said to have been realized: the Odist has put on incorruptibility through the name of the Lord. As Feldmeier has argued, salvation in First Peter too may be characterized as the “overcoming of impermanence,” or corruptibility.¹⁸¹

While the Odes lack explicit birth imagery, neonatal care metaphors bear some of the same weight as the extended new birth image in First Peter. In particular, these images both describe a transfer of properties from Christ (or God) to adherents, and both use mother-child imagery to do this. For both texts, there is a

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 40. Charlesworth thinks that the statement deferring filiation to the future “may be an interpolation by a later more dogmatic Christian.” Charlesworth, *Odes*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ The identification of the subject in 7:11 is explicit in the text. In 22:11, it is the judgment of Charlesworth, *Odes*, 89.

¹⁸¹ Feldmeier, “Salvation,” 211.

gradual dimension to this transfer. The Odes use what Lattke calls “paradoxical” combinations of tenses to communicate this. In First Peter, we find language of growth, corresponding to the gradualness of the journey metaphor that is central to this epistle. An important difference in these texts is that the Odes uses metaphors of maternity in a much more fluid fashion, at times applying them to Christ, elsewhere to God the Father, elsewhere to the Spirit, and possibly to God’s company taken as a whole (on Lattke’s reading of 35:4). In First Peter, we find metaphorical maternity only applied to two figures: Christ and Sarah.

4.3.4 John

The Fourth Gospel is another early Christian work that can plausibly be dated to the late first century CE.¹⁸² There is no real evidence for literary dependence between First Peter and John.¹⁸³ The focus of this subsection will not be to argue for (or against) such a connection. Rather, I read the two texts comparatively. It has been well documented that a variety of premodern interpreters understand the

¹⁸² For arguments for date ranges that at least include this time period, even if they also allow for a date in the early second century, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray, et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 13; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 128; Brown, *Introduction*, 334; Andreas Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 8.

¹⁸³ Horrell, "Petrine Circle," 44.

passion narrative, specifically as John narrates it, to present Jesus as giving birth to the Church on the cross.¹⁸⁴ The fruitfulness of these later interpreters as potential conversation partners with First Peter will be considered in the next chapter. Here, I argue that this is a tenable reading of John and ask how such a reading of John compares to my reading of First Peter.

The prologue of the Fourth Gospel introduces birth metaphors for salvation, stating that those who receive Jesus and believe in his name thereby receive from him the power to become children of God (1:12). The next verse speaks of this becoming as birth “from God” and clarifies that this “birth” is not ordinary human generation.¹⁸⁵ Those who accept Christ, the only begotten Son of God (1:14, 18), thereby begin, in a real but limited sense, to share in his filiation.

¹⁸⁴ Concentrating on those authors who explicitly ground their maternal language for Jesus in the text of the Fourth Gospel, the clearest patristic example is Jacob of Serug. For text and discussion, see Sebastian Brock, “The Mysteries Hidden in the Side of Christ,” *Sobornost* 7 (1978): 462–72, 465. For further discussion, see Josephine Massyngbaerde Ford, *Redeemer—Friend and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 196–97. The writings of Marguerite Oingt, a thirteenth century Carthusian prioress, provide a clear medieval example, cited in Caroline W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Publications of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA 16 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 153. From the time of the Reformation, a clear example of this reading is found in the writings of Strasbourg reformer Katharina Schütz Zell, cited in Dorothy Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbolism, Gender and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 164.

¹⁸⁵ As Martin argues, the plural “bloods” in 1:13 likely refers to the blood-based contributions of both parents to conception and fetal development. Troy W. Martin,

Talk of birth returns in John 3, when Jesus tells Nicodemus that no one can see the kingdom of God without being born *ἄνωθεν*, which could mean “again” or “from above” (3:3). Nicodemus asks what Jesus means and, in his question, replaces *ἄνωθεν* with *δεύτερον* (“for a second time”), limiting the meaning to the former sense. Nicodemus understands the birth language literally and asks how one can reemerge from one’s mother’s womb (3:4). As the evangelist had made clear in the prologue, so Jesus makes clear in this conversation: he is not speaking of ordinary human generation. Jesus repeats his statement from 3:3, but now replaces *ἄνωθεν* with “from water and Spirit” (3:5). As C. K. Barrett and Francis Moloney separately argue, this replacement seeks to broaden Nicodemus’ understanding of *ἄνωθεν* rather than replace it; Jesus’ use of *ἄνωθεν* does mean “again” (as in birth, one must again pass through water, this time baptismal), but it also means “from above” (the action of the Spirit).¹⁸⁶

Commentators often understand this metaphorical birth in terms of newness, transformation, and divine initiative. As Rudolf Bultmann puts it: “Rebirth means ... something more than an improvement in man; it means that man receives a new

"Clarifying a Curiosity: The Plural *Bloods* (*αἱμάτων*) in John 1:13," in *Christian Body, Christian Self*, eds. Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor Thompson 284 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 175–85.

¹⁸⁶ Barrett, *John*, 208–209; Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., *The Gospel of John*, SP 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 92.

origin, and this is manifestly something he cannot do himself.”¹⁸⁷ This is all true, but it ignores an important part of Nicodemus’ question (which, in fairness, Jesus also ignores): who is to be the mother in this new birth? There are several options. Firstly, it is possible that there is no answer to this question. Jesus explains that this birth is not ordinary human generation, and possibly the mother slot of the source domain is simply not mapped by the metaphor. This is essentially the position of Turid Seim.¹⁸⁸ She argues that a motherless “Aristotelian” account of generation lies behind this birth metaphor, Christ’s status as “begotten” of the Father in the prologue, and Jesus’ “begetting” of the disciples by imparting spirit to them in 20:22.¹⁸⁹

However, Clare Rothschild has, correctly, critiqued Seim’s argument both for misreading Aristotle and for failing to consider rival ancient theories of conception

¹⁸⁷ Bultmann, *John*, 137. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, AB 29–29A, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 1:138; Bultmann, *John*, 137; Gail R. O’Day, “New Birth as a New People: Spirituality and Community in the Fourth Gospel,” *WW8* (1988): 53–61, 56; Köstenberger, *John*, 123.

¹⁸⁸ Turid Karlsen Seim, “Motherhood and the Making of Fathers in Antiquity: Contextualizing Genetics in the Gospel of John,” in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 99–124, 118–20.

¹⁸⁹ Seim’s focus on Aristotle to the exclusion of other ancient embryological writers misleads her on this last point. As we saw in chapter two, in Hippocratic texts, Soranus, and Galen, the mother’s *πνεῦμα* is also active in forming children *in utero*.

in antiquity.¹⁹⁰ Rothschild's positive alternative is parthenogenesis, in which "a female gamete is activated spontaneously on its own without fusion with a male reproductive element."¹⁹¹ In Aristotle's account of parthenogenesis, which he claims can occur not just in plants, but also in mares and birds, the wind "provides the invisible, activating impulse necessary for generation *in lieu of copulation*."¹⁹² On this understanding, the "old self" is the mother of the "new self." Some confirmation for this view could be found in the parable Jesus provides in John 16:20–22. Here, Jesus compares the disciples' grief at his coming death to a woman's labor pains. Both forms of suffering will come to an end and be replaced by joy. The disciples' transition from fearful mourners to joy-filled missionary disciples occurs via their own labor.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Clare K. Rothschild, "Embryology, Plant Biology, and Divine Generation in the Fourth Gospel," in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 125–51, 126–37.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 140. Not only are wind and s/Spirit the same word, *πνεῦμα*, in Greek, but this double meaning is explicitly invoked in 3:8. For more detail on ancient belief in parthenogenesis, with application to Luke's account of Mary's conception, see Martin, "Animals Impregnated."

¹⁹³ On this passage, see Ruth Sheridan, "She Forgets Her Suffering in Her Joy: The Parable of the Laboring Woman (John 16:20–22)," in *Making Sense of Motherhood: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Beth M. Stovell (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 45–64. Sheridan draws attention to the following properties of labor: "its unexpectedness, its trauma, and its potential as a 'limit-experience.'" *Ibid.*, 49.

There remains a third possibility: that John 3 does not on its own clarify who is the mother in this new birth, but instead points to reader to another location in the narrative to find the answer. There are two important intertextual links between John 3 and John 19: shortly after the new birth metaphor, there is reference to the crucifixion (3:14); shortly after the crucifixion, Nicodemus reappears (19:39).¹⁹⁴ In between these passages, Jesus offers the thirsty living water, which will flow out of a *κοιλία* (7:38). While this term can refer to any bodily cavity, it is the term Nicodemus uses in 3:4 to refer to his mother's womb. The Evangelist interprets Jesus' promise of water to refer to the Spirit (7:39). In John's crucifixion narrative, Jesus sends forth both the Spirit (19:30)¹⁹⁵ and water, mixed with blood (19:34). Craig Koester points out that Christ promised the thirsty water, then thirsted on the cross in solidarity with them, and, only after his death, gives the water; "in death he was the source of life."¹⁹⁶ But, as Dorothy Lee states, "the mingling of blood and water is particularly

¹⁹⁴ Myers detects another maternal image of Christ in John 13:23, where the Beloved Disciple rests upon Jesus' breast. She understands this as a nursing image. See Alicia D. Myers, "'In the Father's Bosom': Breastfeeding and Identity Formation in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 76 (2014): 481–97.

¹⁹⁵ On 19:30 as donation of the Spirit, not merely a euphemism for death, see James Swetnam, "Bestowal of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," *Bib* 74 (1993): 556–76; Troy W. Martin, "Ancient Medical Texts, Newly Re-discovered: The Medical Background of Biblical Breathing," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 513–38, 533–34.

¹⁹⁶ Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995), 183. Many commentators associate this giving of life with baptism and Eucharist. Brown, *John*, 2:952; Bultmann, *John*, 678; Barrett, *John*, 557; Moloney, *John*, 505.

evocative of childbirth.... His wounded side is also the *koilia*, womb, that produces life."¹⁹⁷

As Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus points us towards the Passion (and the Passion points us back to Nicodemus), the unanswered question of chapter 3—who is the mother in the birth metaphor?—may find its answer here. The reference to blood and water on its own would likely not make people think of birth. When connected with 3 and 7:38–39, though, the connections are much stronger. Our patristic, medieval, and Reformation commentators who understood Christ's cross as birthing were reading John well (and finding resources in this gospel altogether lacking in the Synoptics).¹⁹⁸ This metaphor stands alongside references to the disciples as also laboring. They share in the labor of their own rebirth, experiencing not the pain of being crucified but the pain of seeing their master crucified, with all

¹⁹⁷ Lee, *Flesh and Glory*, 158–59.

¹⁹⁸ There is a fourth possibility, that we are to understand the Spirit as giving birth in John 3:5. This is the position of Beth M. Stovell, "The Birthing Spirit, the Childbearing God: Metaphors of Motherhood and Their Place in Christian Discipleship," in *Making Sense of Motherhood: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Beth M. Stovell (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 27–44, 36. This is somewhat awkward, as ὕδατος and πνεύματος are placed in parallel, both governed by ἐκ, and water is not a mother. This may be somewhat ameliorated if the coordinating καί is understood as exegetical, which, on the basis of John 7:38–39, is the position of Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 99. Stovell also notes the connection between John 3 and John 19, leaving the Spirit's birthing transparent to Christ's labor on the cross. Stovell, "Birthing Spirit," 38. Thus, while I prefer not to understand the καί this way, on Stovell's reading, this fourth option is subsumed into the third possibility.

the grief and fear that must have induced. Just as God shares labor with the prophets and with Paul, Jesus shared his labor with his disciples, along with his filiation and his mission (see John 14:12).

Read this way, John provides the closest parallel yet to the way in which maternal metaphor functions in First Peter. Both texts use new birth metaphors in ways which place Christ in the maternal role. Both associate this with the shedding of Christ's blood. John is more explicit in depicting Jesus' disciples as sharing in this life-giving suffering, but an important part of Peter's identity for the epistle is that he is a "witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Pet 5:1). Peter also directs his addressees to pattern their suffering on Christ's (1 Pet 2:21) and presents them as being conformed to Christ's identity (for instance, as stones journeying to the cornerstone; 2:4-5). Like the disciples in John, the addressees of First Peter now know suffering but will one day know joy (1:6-8).¹⁹⁹ An important difference between John and First Peter is that John tells the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, whereas First Peter depicts Peter addressing a later generation of Christians. Hence, John shows

¹⁹⁹ On reading ἀγαλλιᾶσθε as present indicative with future reference in 1 Pet 1:6,8, see Troy W. Martin, "Present Indicative in the Eschatological Statements of 1 Peter 1:6, 8," *JBL* 111 (1992): 307-312; Troy W. Martin, "Emotional Physiology and Consolatory Etiquette: Reading the Present Indicative with Future Reference in the Eschatological Statement in 1 Peter 1:6," *JBL* 135 (2016): 649-60. Martin shows that this was the dominant patristic reading.

the disciples sharing in Christ's labor, whereas Peter spends more time on images of Christ's ongoing postnatal care (2:2–3).

4.3.5 Concluding remarks

We have seen in this section that a variety of late first century Christian texts used reproductive metaphors to talk about becoming Christian. Common work that these metaphors perform includes communicating a radical newness and portraying the transfer of properties from God or Christ to the new adherent. These metaphors come in thinner and thicker versions. Some of these metaphors map the mother slot of the source domain and others do not. First Peter and John's Gospel are the only two of these texts to link the shedding of Christ's blood to images of dangerous labor. The other texts use birth (or gestation or neonatal care) to talk about changes in the new adherent and, sometimes, the complete dependence of the adherent on God for this change. First Peter and John, like Paul before them, without neglecting this angle on birth, also attend to a mother's experience of pregnancy, birth, and neonatal care. This allows for more vibrant and powerful birth metaphors that say as much about Christ as about Christians. Indeed, Peter cannot say much about one without talking about the other. Central to his understanding of the Christian life is that it is a journey whose steps are outlined by Christ's own footprints (2:21).

5. Maternal imagery in later Christian texts

Hans-Georg Gadamer presents us with a theory of meaning according to which time “is not a yawning abyss but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in light of which everything handed down presents itself to us.”¹ In this chapter, I examine how maternal metaphors for Christ have been handed down in the centuries between their use in First Peter and modern (re)discovery of these within the biblical studies guild. A comprehensive treatment cannot be given here, but I select two corpora from diverse contexts that can fruitfully be put into conversation with First Peter: Fourth century Antiochene baptismal homilies by John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia; and Julian of Norwich’s *Showings*. The central question for each corpus is: What are they talking about when they talk about mothers? More precisely, perhaps: What work does motherhood do in their Christological, soteriological, and ethical projects?

Both of these corpora are explicit in their use of maternal imagery for Christ and use such imagery in a sustained way. Chrysostom, Theodore, and Julian all unpack this imagery at some length. Motherhood imagery is not univocal; it does not do only one thing. It cannot be assumed that what a later author does with

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 1975, 2004), 297.

motherhood imagery for Christ is what Peter was doing. These texts are worth reading not because they provide us with answers about First Peter, but because they furnish us with questions and expand our sense of the possibilities for what maternal imagery can do in thinking and talking about Christ. While there are elements of continuity and contrast between all of these texts and First Peter, we will see that the Antiochene authors explicitly state much of what I claim is implicit in First Peter, whereas Julian helps us read First Peter chiefly by showcasing various paths that Peter did not take. I have selected these two corpora out of the many possibilities because of: their unusually sustained development of maternal imagery for Christ; cultural distance from each other, First Peter, myself, and my readers; the diversity of ways in which they handle maternal imagery.

5.1 Fourth century Antiochene baptismal homilies

John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia viewed the ritual initiation of Christians “as a drama to be interpreted from the standpoint of salvation history.”²

² Hugh M. Riley, *Christian Initiation: A Comparative Study of the Interpretation of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Mystagogical Writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Ambrose of Milan*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 17 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 51. For a basic introduction to these figures and their connections in the fourth century via the Antiochene school, see Adam M. Schor, "Theodoret on the 'School of Antioch': A Network Approach," *J ECS* 15 (2007): 517–61. For texts of the homilies to be cited

As they preach to their converts, either in the run up to or shortly after their baptisms and first receptions of communion, they exposit these rituals as windows to divine action. Both Chrysostom and Theodore use maternal metaphors to talk about what Christ does in Christian initiation and do so more explicitly than Peter.

The fact that these are baptismal homilies provides a connection with the reception history of First Peter. Recent scholarship has moved away from the view of Richard Perdelwitz, Herbert Preisker, Frank Cross, and others that First Peter was originally a baptismal homily to which an epistolary frame (and, in some versions of this theory, some additional material) has been added.³ However, Horrell has shown

see A. Mingana, ed., *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, Woodbrooke Studies 6, (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1933); Antoine Wenger, A.A., ed., *Jean Chrysostome—Huit Catéchèses Baptismales*, SC 50b, (Paris: Cerf, 1957); Edward Yarnold, S.J., ed., *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1971, 1994). Citations from Chrysostom are my own translation. Theodore's homilies were preached in Greek, but later Syriac translations are all that remain. Citations of Theodore are based on Yarnold's translation, adapted by comparing with the Syriac texts in Mingana. Versification for Theodore is also taken from Yarnold, as Mingana's text lacks any numbered divisions. In addition to the introductions in these editions, for questions of dating see Pablo Agárate, "John Chrysostom's Catechesis on Baptism in the Context of the Late Fourth-Century Mystagogies," *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Scientific Research* 5 (2017): 19–25. Argárate concludes that these homilies were preached around the same time, in different churches in Antioch, while Chrysostom was a presbyter there (387–97).

³ For this history of scholarship, see Elliott, *1 Peter*, 7–12; Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 67–70. Karen Jobes's assessment is typical of more recent scholarship.

that modern biblical scholars were not the first to see such themes in First Peter; compilers of two early codices placed the letter (notably, with its epistolary frame) in paschal and baptismal contexts. He concludes, “First Peter originated as a letter, but was quickly recognized as a text especially suited to the Easter season and its baptisms and instruction, and probably came quite early to be read in such liturgical and eucharistic contexts.”⁴ While Cross sought connections between First Peter and the Paschal baptismal Eucharist described in *The Apostolic Tradition*, as he considered its author to be Hippolytus and the text, therefore, to be early and Roman,⁵ connections between First Peter and Theodore, in particular, may be more impressive. For instance, most commentators agree that Peter uses language from contract law to describe baptism in 1 Pet 3:21.⁶ This reasonably uncommon image is also found in Theodore (2:16; ,ⲥⲁⲛ).

“There is only one explicit reference to baptism [in First Peter], which embarrasses any theory that makes the performance of the sacrament central.” Jobes, *1 Peter*, 252.

⁴ Horrell, *Becoming Christian*, 72.

⁵ More recent scholarship has argued that none of these claims is true of *The Apostolic Tradition*. See Paul F. Bradshaw, et al., *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2002); Andrea Nicolotti, “Che cos'è la Traditio apostolica de Ippolito? In margine ad una recente pubblicazione,” *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo* 2 (2005): 219–237.

⁶ For this reading of ἐπερώτημα, see, for instance, Elliott, *1 Peter*, 679–80; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 255.

While life for Christians had changed greatly between the first and fourth centuries, medicine in general and embryology in particular had not undergone nearly as much change since Galen. Louise Cilliers characterizes fourth century Roman medical works as revealing “extensive knowledge of the rich foregoing Greco-Roman medical tradition, with the emphasis on reproducing existing knowledge rather than on research and original contributions.”⁷

In what follows, I will first exposit the explicit maternal metaphors that Theodore and Chrysostom use, situating these metaphors in their broader pastoral-theological projects. Then I will place these homilies in dialogue with First Peter. In both their similarities and differences, these homilies shed light on the function of maternal metaphor in First Peter.

5.1.1 Description of the homilies

Theodore describes Christ’s role in Christian initiation as follows: “[Christ] gave birth to us (ἔκτισεν ... ἡμεῖς) in holy baptism and made us his own body, his own flesh, his offspring—‘Here am I, and the children God has given me’ (Heb 2:13)—and with a love like that of a natural mother he devised a way to feed us with his

⁷ Louise Cilliers, “Vindicianus's *Gynaecia*: Text and Translation of the Codex Monacensis,” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 15 (2005): 153-236, 153.

own body, ... feeding us and so making us immortal and imperishable (لحسنة)⁸ by nature (حسنة)” (5:25). This new birth engenders likeness between Christ and the Christian: “Every animal is born of its like and feeds on its like” (5:23). By analogy with natural generation, the Eucharistic food and new birth must come from the same source (“all living creatures are nourished by those who give them birth”; 4:6). Christ’s passion is the source for both baptism (3:5) and eucharist (5:16; associating the passion specifically with the shedding of Christ’s blood).

In two separate places, Theodore extends the new birth metaphor even more fully. These two extensions cannot be harmonized on the level of source domain; they are inconsistent yet coherent metaphors. In 3:9–10, Theodore describes the waters of baptism as a womb. Here, he works with a one-seed embryology, according to which a lifeless seed is received by a woman during intercourse, which God then forms into a living human. At birth, that human possesses various potentialities that are not yet actualized, such as the ability to talk. Similarly, the unbaptized are essentially lifeless, but are radically reshaped and enlivened by God during the brief gestation of immersion in the baptismal waters. After baptism, the Christian is immortal in potential, but will only later, at the resurrection of the dead, fully enjoy

⁸ In chapter 4, I noted the frequent use of words from this root in the Odes of Solomon to describe the characteristic of Christ that is passed on to Christians.

“freedom from corruption (حرمان), death, pain, and change” (3:10).⁹ Christ is not explicitly mentioned in this metaphorical elaboration.

Later in the same homily (3:28), Theodore speaks of a Christian’s earthly life as a long process of gestation. He describes male ejaculation as the birth of a seed, as in Plato,¹⁰ with the result that natural human generation involves two births. In this account of human reproduction, Theodore describes the mother, not God directly, as responsible for the reshaping of a seed into a human, who is then born for the second time. In the target domain of God’s saving action in Christ, Theodore paraphrases Phil 3:21 and promises that, at the time of resurrection, “Christ ... will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body.” In this unusual extension of the metaphor, baptism corresponds to ejaculation, Christ is pregnant with each Christian, refashioning them throughout their lives, and they will be born immortal for a second time at the resurrection of the dead.¹¹

⁹ On the unusually strong eschatological emphasis in Theodore’s treatment of baptism, see Anna Grzwyła, “Eschatological Themes in the Catechumenal and Baptismal Rites: The Example of the Catechetical Homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia,” *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 70 (2017): 245–58.

¹⁰ *Symposium*, 206c. See discussion in my chapter 3 and Leitao, *Pregnant Male*, 184.

¹¹ On the multiplicity on births in Theodore’s account, Riley comments, “Thus, although the ‘true’ second birth will take place in the eschaton, baptism is also a second birth, because by virtue of the ‘symbols’ a real participation in this future second birth has actually been established.” Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 326.

In summary, while Theodore extends the new birth metaphor in different ways at different points in his preaching, he does often use motherhood imagery for Christ both to talk about baptism as Christ's labor and to talk about Eucharist as Christ nursing. For Theodore, both of these sacraments at once point back to "Christ's death" and forward to "resurrection and immortality at the end of time."¹² Theodore uses these metaphors to draw his audience's attention to Christ's love for them, and to the work of transformation that God and Christ work in the Christian. This work of transformation results in the Christian becoming like Christ, in particular by gaining imperishability. According to these metaphors, such changes may not be perceptible in this life, but will be in the next.

John Chrysostom used maternal imagery for Christ more rarely than did his fellow Antiochene preacher, but when he used it, he made many of the same points. In his third baptismal homily, Chrysostom first states that baptism is the means by which one becomes a child of God (5) and is a kind of birth (7).¹³ Chrysostom then speaks of the Eucharist and its apotropaic effects; when the devil sees someone with the blood of Christ on her tongue, he flees like one who sees a fire-breathing lion

¹² Grzwyła, "Eschatological Themes," 245.

¹³ The numbering of Chrysostom's baptismal homilies is not standard. The homily I treat in detail in this section is the third in Wenger, *Catéchèses*, 151–67. I also use Wenger's paragraph numbering to refer to sections of this homily.

(12).¹⁴ This leads him to a meditation on the power of Christ's blood, in which he draws together various biblical references to blood.¹⁵

He speaks first of the Passover blood, saying that the Israelites "anointed" the doorposts with this blood (ἐπιχρίω, when the text he is paraphrasing, Exod 12:7 LXX, simply has τίθημι; 14). Chrysostom relates this to Christian reception of the Eucharist by comparing a communicant's mouth to doors to Christ's Temple (15). He turns next to John 19:34, naming the cross as the moment in which Christ's blood becomes available to humanity as a gift to follow baptism, leaning on the order of the words "water and blood" in the Johannine text (16).¹⁶ After describing the cross as a moment of birth (17), Chrysostom then explicitly uses maternal imagery for Christ: "Have you seen with what food [Christ] feeds us? We acquire

¹⁴ Possibly an ironic reversal of the reference to the devil as a lion, as we see in 1 Pet 5:8. On metaphorical invocations of lions as ferocious enemies, see Troy W. Martin, "Roaring Lions Among Diaspora Metaphors," in *Bedrängnis und Identität: Studien zu Situation, Kommunikation und Theologie des 1. Petrusbriefes*, ed. David S. du Toit, BZNTW 200 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 167–179. Feldmeier detects another reference to Satan as a lion in *Joseph and Aseneth* 12.9–11. Feldmeier, *1 Peter*, 249.

¹⁵ This section of this homily proved very influential in the Western Church, being used as a lesson for Second Nocturnes for the Feast of the Precious Blood in the Roman Breviary promulgated in the wake of the Council of Trent. See Wenger, *Catéchèses*, 158n2. After the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the reading still appears in the Breviary, but now as the second lesson (of two) in the Office of Readings for Good Friday.

¹⁶ As the focus of this section of the homily is on Christ's blood, Chrysostom is not quite explicit here in linking baptism to the cross. However, elsewhere in his corpus, using Rom 6:3–4, Chrysostom identifies baptism as participation in Christ's death. See discussion in Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 276–77.

substance (συνεστήκαμεν)¹⁷ and are fed from the same food. For just as a woman feeds the child she has born with her own blood and milk, so also Christ himself constantly feeds those he begat/bore (ἐγέννησεν) with his own blood” (19). Finally, he returns to his opening theme of the Exodus, comparing baptism to the departure from Egypt.

In this cycle of blood imagery, Chrysostom explains Eucharist as a “top up” of the saving grace available in baptism by comparing it to a mother’s successive nurture of a child through blood *in utero* and then milk when nursing. Chrysostom does not explicitly talk about Christ’s love here, as Theodore does, but, in another homily, Chrysostom depicts Christ’s love as greater than that of mothers who give birth but employ someone else to nurse the child, as Christ both gives birth and nurses.¹⁸ In his cycle of scriptural images, Chrysostom links baptism both to the cross and to the beginning of the Exodus. While Chrysostom does not have the same explicit eschatological focus as Theodore, the Exodus connection presents baptism as inceptive. As he frames the Christian life as a journey, Chrysostom’s audience would imagine a future end point (as journeys terminate), without the preacher needing to comment on it. Chrysostom presents Christ as actively aiding Christians on this

¹⁷ For use of this word in embryological contexts, see Aristotle, *Gen. Anim.*, 733b20.

¹⁸ *Hom. Matt.* 82.5. Cited in Chris L. De Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 137.

journey, both through his presentation of Eucharist as “top up” of what was given in baptism, and through an earlier image in which Christ takes Chrysostom’s hand when he stumbles, lifts him up, and returns him to his feet (9). While Chrysostom does not use language of growth in his nutritional metaphor, this journey metaphor does much of the same work. It presents the Christian life as one of progress towards some desirable end, begun and sustained by Christ’s work, but with a real role for the Christian’s contributions to their own advance.

Theodore also does not explicitly connect his new birth imagery with growth, but, like Chrysostom, he does use journey metaphors. Citing Heb 2:10, Theodore refers to Christ as a “pioneer” (2.3). He describes Christians as “bound for heaven,” where they will be with Christ but are not yet. Rather, they are currently engaged in the “service (ጸሎት) of heaven” and demonstrate their love for Christ by “suffering” (ጸሎት) (3.1). The term “service” can have a military sense and certainly denotes an active contribution on the part of Christians. Christ too is presented as still active in the work of bringing Christians to their heavenly home. Using Rom 8:34 (that Christ intercedes for Christians at the right hand of God), Theodore presents Christ performing a liturgical rite (ጸሎት) in heaven, thereby drawing (ጸሎት) Christians to him. As in Chrysostom, this is an image of a journey begun and sustained by Christ, which nonetheless assumes Christian action. By presenting Christ’s sustaining action

as a heavenly liturgy, Theodore connects this to his community's eucharistic celebrations.

Unlike Theodore, Chrysostom does not explicitly use likeness language as part of his new birth metaphors. However, he does use likeness language elsewhere in the same homily. At the beginning of his third Baptismal Homily, Chrysostom praises God that those neophytes assembled before him now shine (*φαίνουσιν*) like stars (1), a reference to the movement from darkness to light that was part of the Paschal vigil baptism service.¹⁹ Playing with the polysemy of *φαίνω*, Chrysostom credits this luminescence to “the one who appeared (*φανέντα*) on earth from the heavens). Hugh Riley comments on the “more directly Christological”²⁰ use of light and darkness imagery here, as opposed to comparable homilies from other ancient authors; new Christians are shiny because Christ is.²¹

5.1.2 Theodore and Chrysostom in dialogue with Peter

Theodore and Chrysostom both use maternal imagery for Christ to say things that are very similar to what I have argued we find in First Peter. The chief difference is that these fourth century homilists are much more explicit in their use of the

¹⁹ See Wenger, *Catéchèses*, 150n2.

²⁰ Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 69.

²¹ While not explicitly invoked, the Transfiguration and other biblical references to Christ as light (e.g., Luke 2:32; John 8:12) are relevant intertexts here.

metaphor than Peter is. They both lay out more clearly how the image relates baptism to birth and Eucharist to nursing, more explicitly associate baptism and new birth with Christ's Passion, and Theodore more plainly uses motherhood imagery to explain how Christians come to resemble Christ in many ways, including imperishability. Chrysostom also manages to explicitly connect his maternal metaphor to his journey metaphor, by presenting the journey-inaugurating blood of the Passover lamb as a type of Christ's blood shed in the Passion.²² In the rest of this section, I will ask how the explicitly stated entailments of the maternal metaphor in Theodore and Chrysostom may clarify some of Peter's unstated entailments.

Both Theodore and Chrysostom use motherhood imagery to talk about the superlative quality of Christ's love. Peter never ascribes love to Jesus or to God, only ever writing of Christians' love for Jesus (1:8) or for one another (1:22; 2:17). As we saw in chapter three, close loving relationships between mothers and children were valorized in the first century. Our fourth century homilists' use of motherhood metaphors to talk about Christ's love would not have been out of place in Peter's time. While Peter never explicitly speaks of Christ's love, and his other

²² While some commentators, including Leonhard Goppelt, argue that there is a reference to the Passover lamb in 1:18–19, Achtemeier points out two major problems with this claimed allusion, namely that the lamb's blood in the exodus narrative is apotropaic rather than redemptive, and that the term ἄμωμος is nowhere used in the exodus narrative, but is frequent in cult legislation. See my chapter one for further discussion, and Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 116; Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 128–29.

Christological metaphors do not suggest it, it is a property of the maternal source domain that is available for mapping to the target domain. A maternal metaphor has the power to suggest a loving relationship in a way that shepherd or pioneer metaphors, for instance, do not. A member of the initial audience of First Peter who recognizes the maternal metaphor for Christ would be led to ask whether or not the loving quality of valorized mothers is or is not a quality that should be mapped to Christ. That Christ is presented as loving in the Pauline tradition (e.g., 2 Cor 5:14), and that Peter entreats Christians, who are meant to become like Christ, to be loving would tend to confirm that this property of the maternal source domain is to be mapped to its target.

A distinctive element of Chrysostom's development of new birth metaphors is his focus on the apotropaic function of Christ's blood. A Christian who has received the Eucharist is presented as at once an infant who has nursed from Christ's breast, and as a doorpost chrismated with the blood of the Lamb, which drives away Satan. Peter states that "the power of God" protects his addressees (1:5). He also states that the devil is a threat (5:8). While Peter places the responsibility to resist the devil on his addressees (5:8), this injunction is bracketed by promises of divine assistance (5:7, 10). In chapters two, three, and four, we found a diverse array of texts that associate maternity with a mother protecting her child. Especially notably, in chapter four, many of the scriptural examples of maternal language for the Deity used this

image to talk about protection. Given this, many members of the initial audience of First Peter, upon detecting a metaphor in which Christ is presented as mother, would be led to ask if Christ plays a protective role in their lives. This question would be reawakened by the reference to Christ as shepherd, as shepherds act to protect their sheep. While First Peter's explicit talk of protection tends to involve God rather than Christ, there is warrant in the text to also understand Christ as playing protective roles.

There is at least one element of Theodore's use of maternal metaphors that provides a potentially illuminating contrast with First Peter. In one of Theodore's extensions of the basic maternal metaphor, he describes an unbaptized person as being like lifeless male seed, only taking on life when received into a womb. In Peter's version of the metaphor, though, seed is not mapped to a Christian's previous life, but to a divine contribution to her rebirth (1:23). Theodore's metaphor describes what kind of continuity there may be between Christians' previous lives and new life in Christ: they are figured as a seed being enlivened. In Theodore's version of the metaphor, a human is as good as dead before her baptism. For Peter though, God's seed and Christ's blood combine to conceive and bring to birth someone new. Peter's new birth metaphor has no slot in its source domain that is mapped to a new

Christian's former self. Peter describes his addressees' pre-Christian manner of life as "futile" or "empty" (*μάταιος*; 1:18); there is nothing there worth transforming.²³

Another distinctive aspect of Theodore's presentation is his discussion of a newborn's unrealized potentials. Just as a very young child has the potential to speak but does not, as Theodore presents things, a Christian has the potential for imperishability, but this potential will not be realized until after her death. Theodore does not extend his new birth metaphors to talk of growth, which would allow him to draw a picture of a Christian's gradual move towards conformity with Christ consistent with his journey metaphors.²⁴ Peter does extend his new birth image to talk of the gradual growth of the Christian into salvation (2:2); receiving salvation is a continuous process (1:9).²⁵ As Peter portrays the situation, Christians are not waiting for their potentials to be actualized in heaven. According to the journey metaphor, they are getting progressively closer to that home; as expressed in the new birth metaphor, they are gradually growing into their salvation. What they are

²³ As Eugene Boring puts it, "[the readers] were not engaged in a religious quest that came to a successful conclusion when they found the Christian faith." M. Eugene Boring, "Narrative Dynamics in First Peter: The Function of Narrative World," in *Reading First Peter with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of First Peter*, eds. Robert L. Webb and Betsy Bauman-Martin (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 7–40, 30.

²⁴ Of course, in English, "gradual," etymologically speaking, is an image of a journey in which one progresses step (*gradus*) by step. This illustrates how basic the conceptual link in English is between "gradual" change and journey.

²⁵ "Peter highlights the ... ongoing necessity of his audience's conversion to new ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting." Green, *1 Peter*, 269.

waiting for is the end of their suffering.²⁶ Reading First Peter together with Theodore's homilies in respect to eschatology clarifies by contrast. Peter's talk of growth, as opposed to Theodore's talk of unrealized potentials, provides a way to talk about a different kind of eschatology, a kind that leaves room for gradualism in the Christian's earthly journey towards resemblance to Christ.

This section has sought resources for reading First Peter from two later Christian preachers who also used maternal metaphors for Christ's work. As they develop implicatures and connections of these metaphors more explicitly than Peter, comparative reading furnishes questions to address to the text of First Peter. While much of their explicit development lays out plainly what is implicit in First Peter, Theodore makes some moves that clarify our reading of First Peter by illustrating a path not chosen by the earlier author.

5.2 Julian of Norwich

Thomas Merton named Julian of Norwich, a fourteenth/fifteenth century recluse, "with Newman, the greatest English theologian."²⁷ Soskice comments on the current "revival of interest in Julian, not least for her bold descriptions of Christ as

²⁶ "The future, when Jesus Christ is revealed, signals the cessation of various trials." Ibid., 199.

²⁷ Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1964), 275.

mother and her optimism about God's love and forgiveness."²⁸ While Julian was by no means the first medieval author to use maternal imagery for Christ, she is comprehensive in incorporating "nearly every aspect" of this devotion found piecemeal in other authors of the period.²⁹ The sustained use of maternal language for Christ in such a theologically rich text commends Julian to our study; how do her abundant and explicit uses of this language clarify the function of Peter's occasional and implicit uses? Additionally, an under-appreciated aspect of Julian's writing is its interaction with the text of First Peter. I count four allusions to First Peter in Julian's *Revelations*, the latter three of which occur in the chapters in which the maternal language predominates.³⁰

²⁸ Janet M. Soskice, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126.

²⁹ Sarah McNamer, "The Exploratory Image: God as Mother in Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love," *Mystics Quarterly* 15 (1989): 21–28, 21. For important medieval precedents, see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 112–27.

³⁰ For the following data, I cite chapter and verse according to the following edition: Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, eds., *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love*, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). A paraphrase of 1 Pet 5:6 appears in 39.16–17 (simply transposed from an imperative to a first plural indicative). The healing wound of 1 Pet 2:24 appears in 61.54. Jesus is said to "besprinkil us in his precious blode" in 63.16–17, as in 1 Pet 1:2. Finally, Jesus is described as a "bishoppe" in 68.6 and the only scriptural precedent for this is 1 Pet 2:25. On Julian's knowledge of scripture more generally, without specific reference to First Peter, see John-Julian, OJN, ed., *The Complete Julian of Norwich*, (Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2009), 74.

I will proceed first to describe Julian's use of maternal language for Christ, before putting this into dialogue with First Peter. My analysis focuses on the so-called "long version" of Julian's *Revelations*. This is a later expansion of the "short version" in which she recounted various visions she received during a near-fatal illness around the age of thirty.³¹

5.2.1 Description of Julian of Norwich's use of maternal language for Christ

The most important description of the Julian's maternal language for Christ is her own. She writes: "The fair lovely word 'mother' is so sweet and kind in itself, that it cannot truly be said of anyone ... except of Him" (60 J 289); she regards Jesus as "where the basis of motherhood begins" (59 J 283).³² As John-Julian comments, "it is not that Jesus is like our mothers, but that our mothers are like Jesus."³³ This means that, in Julian's self-understanding, calling Christ "Mother" is not a metaphor;

³¹ More precisely, I generally follow the translation based on the British Library's Sloane Manuscript found in John-Julian, *Julian of Norwich*. On the relationship between the long and short versions and the various textual witness to each, see Watson and Jenkins, *Julian of Norwich*, 24–42.

³² This quotation and all other quotations of Julian except where otherwise stated are from John-Julian's edition, cited above. As a nonspecialist in Middle English, I prefer to reproduce his translation without alteration. When citing this translation in the main text, I give the chapter and page numbers.

³³ John-Julian, *Julian of Norwich*, 282. Similarly, Kerry Dearborn argues that for Julian, Jesus "far surpasses any motherliness that we might express." Kerry Dearborn, "The Crucified Christ as the Motherly God: The Theology of Julian of Norwich," *SJT* 55 (2002): 283–302, 292.

women who bear or raise children are “mothers” only derivatively. This is reminiscent of Eph 3:14–15, according to which “God is the archetype of a father, the creator of all fatherhood; and, he bears the name ‘Father’ in an exemplary way: the earthly concept and word ‘father’ is formed after the precedent set by God.”³⁴

While Julian primarily uses maternal language to talk about Christ, she also applies it to God, usually in close parallelism with paternal language that is altogether lacking in her Christological statements, e.g. “God rejoices that He is our Father, God rejoices that He is our mother” (53 J 251).³⁵

In keeping with this “primal” understanding of Christ’s motherhood, Julian does not limit Jesus’ maternity to particular moments in the life of Christ or a Christian. Rather, for her, the incarnation as a whole has a maternal character. Julian writes that “he is our Mother in mercy by taking on our fleshliness” (58 J 281). As Caroline Bynum comments, “What is new in Julian is the idea that God’s motherhood, expressed in Christ, is ... a taking on of our physical humanity in the Incarnation, a kind of *creation* of us, as a mother gives herself to the foetus she

³⁴ Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1–3*, AB 34 (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 382.

³⁵ Julian also writes that “whenever Jesus appears, the blessed Trinity is understood” (4 J 75). So, for her, if Christ is mother, then there must be something maternal about the other persons of the Trinity. Her maternal language, though, is predominantly Christological, and her paternal language is exclusively theological. At times, Julian identifies what is maternal about God as mercy (e.g., 48 J 219). Sarah McNamer compares this with contemporary medieval texts in which God’s justice is contrasted with Mary’s mercy. Maternal theology proper provides a way to locate this mercy directly in the Godhead. See McNamer, “Exploratory Image,” 25.

bears.”³⁶ The maternal aspect of incarnation for Julian is the coming together of self-gift and a shared fleshliness.³⁷

While Julian presents the whole incarnation as maternal, she still identifies the Passion closely with birth: “In His blessed dying upon the cross, He birthed us into endless life” (63 J 301). An explicit link Julian draws between birth and the cross is pain: “He ... labors until full term so that He could suffer the sharpest throes and the hardest birth pains that ever were or ever shall be” (60 J 287). It also relevant that when Julian speaks of the Passion earlier in her work, prior to explicitly introducing maternal language, she concentrates on Christ’s loss of blood throughout all stages of the Passion.³⁸ She envisions Christians benefitting from coming into contact with

³⁶ Caroline W. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 266.

³⁷ Bynum identifies as typical of what she terms the “lyrical emotional piety” that rose to prominence in the eleventh century a focus on the incarnation as fleshly sharing and solidarity between God and humanity. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 129–30.

³⁸ The first showing begins with Julian’s vision of “red blood trickling down from under the garland.” On the foundational nature of the first showing, see Soskice, *Kindness of God*, 138; Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 207. Julian describes Christ’s shed blood as “abundant” (7 J 87) and says that the drying of Christ’s flesh caused by the loss of blood constituted “the worst pain ... of the Passion” (16 J 119). On other medieval commonplaces of Passion *ekphrasis* lacking from Julian’s accounts, see David Aers, “The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*,” in *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture*, eds. David Aers and Lynn Staley (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 77–106, 86–87. The lack of this draws further attention to Christ’s loss of blood.

the blood, saying that the purpose of “His blessed Blood [is] to wash us from sin” (12 J 105) and using 1 Pet 1:2 to encourage her readers to “make our moan to our dearworthy Mother, and He shall all besprinkle us with his Precious Blood” (63 J 299). While David Aers is likely right to reject Elizabeth Robinson’s claim that Julian expects her reader to understand Jesus’ bleeding body as feminine in the earlier parts of her work,³⁹ by the time Julian introduces maternal language for Jesus (her first such explicit statement is in 58 J 279), she has already done work to prepare her readers to connect the Passion in particular with a mother’s donation of blood to her child. Julian links Christ’s Passion not merely with birth, but with all of the ways in which she envisioned mothers as sacrificially giving of their own bodies for their children’s benefit. Christ did not lose his blood for naught, but for the benefit of “every soul that shall be saved” (37 J 179).

In addition to birth, Julian frequently uses the image of a lactating mother to describe Jesus. For her, this relates to some post-Passion activity on the part of Christ: “He could die no more, but He would not cease working; therefore, it behooved Him that He feed us” (60 J 289). She compares a “mother [giving] her child suck with milk” to “Mother Jesus [feeding] us with Himself ... most graciously and most tenderly with the Blessed Sacrament, which is the Precious Food of true life” (60 J 289). Like the patristic authors surveyed previously, Julian uses nursing to

³⁹ See discussion and references in Aers, “Humanity of Christ,” 78–87.

describe Eucharist, and positions Christ as a superlative nursing mother. In a creative addition to this pattern, Julian compares a “mother [laying] the child tenderly on her breast” to “Mother Jesus more intimately [leading] us into His Blessed Breast by His sweet open Side” (60 J 289). This comparison illustrates well the tenderness and intimacy that Julian uses maternal language to ascribe to Christ.

Julian describes Christ as active in heaven in this work of feeding, but at one point denies that this work causes him any suffering: “Though the sweet Manhood of Christ could suffer but once, the goodness in Him can never cease from offering” (22 J 135). At other points, though, Julian qualifies this lack of post-crucifixion suffering on the part of Christ, writing that “now He is risen and no more able to suffer, yet He suffers with us still” (20 J 129). She speaks of Christ’s “spiritual thirst” and “love-longing” for humanity (31 J 157). Julian maintains a studied ambivalence of whether this thirst should or should not be called suffering. While she maintains an orthodox confession “that He suffered only once” (17 J 121), she takes seriously both Christ’s solidarity with human suffering and the powerful thirst with which he desires humanity’s salvation.

Julian also uses images of a mother’s care of an older child to describe Christ’s ongoing moral formation of a Christian. These images stress that while mothers may be tender and loving, that love can at times be tough: “When the child is increased further in age, she permits it to be chastised to break down vices and to

cause the child to accept virtues and graces” (60 J 291). The verb “permits” is important here. As Grace Hamman puts it, “Mother Christ, while zealously guarding his beloved child, ‘suffers’ her to fall—not punitively, but in an educational sense that allows the child to further understand herself as completely dependent and loved.”⁴⁰ Christ practices motherhood in an active and close way,⁴¹ never “[permitting] any kind of peril to come to the child” (61 J 293), but allowing the Christian enough freedom to fall so that the Christian can realize for herself her need for dependence on God. An important property of children that is mapped to Christians when Julian describes them as childlike is weakness.⁴² Julian uses mother-child language both to apply that weakness to Christians and to explain that suffering is permitted by Christ in order to instill a proper understanding both of that weakness and of the loving care that is God’s response to it.⁴³ This dual

⁴⁰ Grace Hamman, “Julian of Norwich’s Children: Childhood and Meekness in *A Revelation of Love*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 49 (2019): 169–91, 179. See also the discussion of humanity’s “need to fall” as part of “divine pedagogy” in Soskice, *Kindness of God*, 144.

⁴¹ “The mother’s serving is most near, most willing, and most certain” (60 J 287).

⁴² E.g. “I recognized no state in this life greater in weakness and in the lack of power and intelligence than our childhood” (63 J 301).

⁴³ Referring to Julian’s depictions of the world as whole, rather than the individual, as held in God’s hand, Soskice writes that “the very precariousness of the world underscores the extent to which God loves it.” Soskice, *Kindness of God*, 140.

awareness is what Julian means by “meekness,” a virtue she wishes to instill in Christians and that she sees in Christ.⁴⁴

Julian often talks of salvation in terms of growing likeness to Christ, a “great one-ing between Christ and us” (18 J 123), especially with respect to the virtue of love.⁴⁵ For Julian, to “be like Jesus” requires “our re-creation” and this will not be complete till we are “in heaven” (10 J 97). As humanity’s re-creation is but inchoate during one’s earthly sojourn,⁴⁶ Julian prays for a share in Christ’s woundedness (2 J 67), including the gift of a “wound of wish-filled yearning” (2 J 69) to match Christ’s own “spiritual thirst” and “love-longing” for humanity (31 J 157). However, some moral transformation is both possible and necessary in this life, as Julian expects eternal damnation for those who “die without love” (32 J 163). This emphasis on moral reformation corresponds to Julian’s belief that what one needs saving from is one’s own moral turpitude.⁴⁷ As Julian puts it, “we (by the wrath and contrariness that is in us) are now in tribulation, distress, and woe.... Contrariness is the cause of

⁴⁴ On the frequent occurrence of this word in a text that rarely lists out virtues, and its ascription both to Jesus and (aspirationally) to Christians, see Hamman, “Julian’s Children,” 172, 179, 182.

⁴⁵ “[Jesus] wills the we be like Him in wholeness of endless love” 40 J 189.

⁴⁶ “We cannot in this life keep ourselves from sin as totally in complete purity as we shall in heaven” (52 J 253).

⁴⁷ Denys Turner summarizes Julian as follows: “We are body and soul out of line with ourselves, and this is a predicament so radical that, fallen as a whole, it is only by our transformation as a whole that we can be retrieved from it.” Turner, *Julian of Norwich*, 215–16.

our tribulations” (49 J 233). This is all the more striking given the many external causes of suffering in Julian’s world: a plague that may well have killed her husband and child; the beginning of the Hundred Years’ War between England and France; the political-ecclesial mess of the Avignon papacy and multiple claimants to the papacy.⁴⁸

Julian uses metaphors both of journey and growth to describe someone’s gradual increase in resemblance to Christ. Some of Julian’s journey language speaks of the Christian life as a whole as a journey the Christian undertakes to reach God in heaven.⁴⁹ When she uses journey language to describe the Christian life as whole, though, more often the image is of God bringing Christians to heaven, rather than of Christians undertaking a pilgrimage.⁵⁰ When Julian uses language of movement featuring Christians as agents, it is generally to encourage her readers to quickly return to Jesus after some fall; Julian urges her readers not to hide “when our falling and our misery is shown us,” but reminds them that “when a child is distressed or

⁴⁸ See discussion in Dearborn, “Crucified Christ,” 286–87; John-Julian, *Julian of Norwich*, 5.

⁴⁹ E.g., “All who are under heaven shall come to heaven, their way is by yearning and desire,” 51 J 245; “[God] is the goal,” 34 J 169.

⁵⁰ E.g., “[Jesus] yearns ever to bring us to the fullness of joy” (Jesus as subject of transitive verb of movement; 40 J 187); “[God] has drawn and drunken His Holy Souls” (“drawn” in the sense of “haul of water from a well;” 75 J 341).

afraid, it runs hastily to the mother for help with all its might” (61 J 295).⁵¹ In this image, rather than the Christian life as a whole being presented as a long journey, journey imagery is used to refer to an immediate return to Christ after a lapse of trust. Julian does not consistently deny a role to human agency in the life of holiness,⁵² but she limits the range of actions a human can be responsible for: “the soul can do no more than seek, suffer, and trust” (10 J 99). The principal action she commends to her readers is prayer, especially penitential prayer following oracular confession (see 39 J 183),⁵³ for “prayer ones the soul to God” (43 J 201).

When describing the gradual moral reformation of the Christian that culminates in presence in heaven, Julian more often uses growth metaphors. Some of these are explicitly connected with maternal language for Christ, e.g., “for in our Mother Christ, we benefit and grow” (58 J 281).⁵⁴ According to Sarah McNamer and Grace Hamman, Julian distinguishes herself from many of her contemporaries by elevating the language of growth over journey. In contrast to the ladders, scales, and

⁵¹ Compare, “Quickly to flee from all that is not good and fall onto our Lord’s breast as the child into the mother’s arms” (74 J 339).

⁵² Though at times, she comes close. “God Himself shall do it, and I shall do nothing at all except sin, and my sin shall not hinder His goodness from working” (36 J 173).

⁵³ Jill Sirko understands penance too as pedagogical for Julian: “Penance is sent by the sinner by God, not to punish individual sins but, rather, to deal with the problem of sin and teach humility.” Jill Sirko, “Making ‘Penance Profytable’: Julian of Norwich and the Sacrament of Penance,” *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 41 (2015): 163–186, 177.

⁵⁴ See also 46 J 209; 55 J 267.

steps found in *The Cloud of Unknowing* or Walter Hilton's writings, for instance, "by choosing the growth of the child as her primary metaphor for spiritual development, Julian lifts the relationship with God out of the context of the competitive climb."⁵⁵

5.2.2 Julian in dialogue with Peter

The programmatic role of maternal language for Christ in Julian's work (and her denial that this is metaphor) provides a helpful contrast with First Peter, in which Christ as mother is merely an implicit feature of the new birth metaphor. The comparatively far greater development of maternal language in Julian, as with the Antiochene authors in the previous section, provides us with questions to ask of the biblical text. There is much that is explicit in Julian's writing and, I argue, implicit in First Peter. Julian links Christ's Passion with a mother's labor and uses maternal imagery to talk about transformation of the Christian so that they resemble Christ, and the heavenly Christ's continued action in this work. In this subsection, though, I focus on three aspects of Julian's presentation that suggest new questions for First Peter, not taken up in the previous section of this chapter: whether the heavenly

⁵⁵ McNamer, "Exploratory Image," 24. See also Hamman, "Julian's Children," 171.

Christ suffers; whether or not weakness as a property of children is mapped to Christians; the relationship between the growth and journey metaphors.

As described above, Julian is somewhat ambivalent on the question of whether or not the heavenly Christ suffers, at one point even affirming and denying it in the course of a single sentence (20 J 129). Some prior medieval English theologians were unambiguous in presenting the heavenly Christ as suffering.⁵⁶ Peter denies that the heavenly Christ suffers, stating that “Christ suffered for sins once for all (ἅπαξ)” (3:18).⁵⁷ Julian did not have access to this verse as the Wycliffe translations, with which she was familiar, read “died” rather than “suffered.”⁵⁸

Neither did the original audience of First Peter have access to this verse during their

⁵⁶ For instance, the Venerable Bede states the following in his commentary on Acts 9:4: “He did not say, ‘Why do you persecute my members?’, but *Why do you persecute me?* because he is still suffering from enemies in his body, which is the church. He declared that kindnesses bestowed upon his members are also done to him when he said, *I was hungry and you gave me to eat.*” Lawrence T. Martin, ed., *The Venerable Bede: Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Cistercian Studies Series 117, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1989), 87. Italics original to Martin’s edition.

⁵⁷ “‘Once for all’ in contrast to something that can be repeated.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 246.

⁵⁸ On Julian’s knowledge of the Wycliffe Bible, see John-Julian, *Julian of Norwich*, 74. This reading reflects a variant in the Greek manuscript tradition (including P⁷², Alexandrinus, and a corrector of Sinaiticus) in which *επαθεν* (suffered) is replaced by *απεθανεν* (died). The relation of 3:18 to the discussion of suffering in 3:17 means that the earlier circulating reading was almost certainly *επαθεν*. For this argument made at greater length, see Jobes, *1 Peter*, 258–59. The “died” reading is also reflected in most Vulgate manuscripts, and, hence, is also shared by Bede. See David Hurst, O.S.B., ed., *Bede The Venerable: Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, Cistercian Studies Series 82, (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 101.

exposure to the first half of the letter, until they heard 3:17. As readers detect a maternal metaphor for Christ's work in the first chapter and a half, they would be prompted to ask if the suffering of a mother during nursing and throughout the later life of her child should be mapped onto the heavenly Christ.⁵⁹ When they reach 3:18, they are given a negative answer to this question.⁶⁰ This makes a statement about how Peter understands the glorification that Christ has received and his addressees await: it is a glorification that does not admit of any kind of suffering, whilst still allowing shepherdly service to be offered. While Paul celebrates the pain-free fecundity of Jerusalem above (Gal 4:27), Peter celebrates the pain-free nursing of Jesus at the right hand of God. In general, glory and suffering can co-exist,⁶¹ but

⁵⁹ Previous chapters have shown that sources popular at the time of First Peter did not assume that a woman's suffering for her child was finished once she had given birth. For physical suffering during nursing, see the medical literature examined in chapter 2. For ongoing suffering throughout the work of raising a child, see chapter 3.

⁶⁰ There is a suggestion of a negative answer also in 1:11, which speaks of the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories (τὰς μετὰ ταῦτα δόξας). This verse on its own, though, does not clearly position all of Christ's sufferings in the audience's past.

⁶¹ E.g., in LXX Num 27:20, Moses is said to have a glory (δόξα) even while he is enduring all of the hardships that came with leading the Israelites on their Wilderness Sojourn. In Isa 40:6, cited in 1 Pet 1:24, flesh can possess glory, but only perishable glory.

Christ's glorification does not permit such co-existence, as Peter sees it.⁶² Neither, presumably, will the glorification in store for the addressees.

When Julian talks about the relationship between Christ and Christians in terms of the mother-child relationship, she highlights the weakness of children, encouraging her readers to understand themselves as at once weak and cared for. As members of the audience of First Peter found themselves presented as infant and child, it would be natural for them to ask if Peter's new birth metaphor presents them also as weak. As they heard more of the letter, they would have been able to confirm this potential implicature. Peter calls for his readers to be humble, using words related to *ταπεινός* (3:8; 5:5–6).⁶³ As Elliott notes, "in the highly competitive and stratified world of Greco-Roman antiquity, only those of degraded social status were 'humble,' and humility was regarded as a sign of weakness and shame, an

⁶² The question of whether or not the heavenly Christ can suffer is closely connected with the question of whether there can be suffering in the Godhead. For an important contribution from modern theology to this question, see Elizabeth A. Johnson, C.S.J., *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 259–86. Johnson rejects the apathic God as the projection of a "patriarchal ideal [of] ... being in control, existing self-contained and self-directed, apart from entanglements with others." *Ibid.*, 265. Rejecting also a victimized and helpless God, she finds helpful resources for understanding divine passion in birth and in the kind of love that grieves with those who grieve (cp. Rom 12:15). Johnson stresses that this is not literal description of God, but rather meant analogically. The "is" and "is not" of analogical language may be a more Thomistic approach to Julian's ambivalence.

⁶³ In chapter 5, this call is joined to promises of divine assistance.

inability to defend one's honor."⁶⁴ Similarly, in the household codes, those who are socially and legally less powerful, "Christian wives [and] domestic slaves, are presented ... as poignant paradigms and moral examples for *all* of the believers addressed."⁶⁵ If the disempowered are paradigms for all the addressees, their weakness is thereby highlighted.

In 3:7, a derivative of the word ἀσθενής ("weak") itself is used. Here, it is used comparatively to describe women in general as less physically powerful than the male addressees.⁶⁶ As Jobes argues, this weakness is invoked only to instruct men not to take advantage of it: "Peter teaches that men whose authority runs roughshod

⁶⁴ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 605. See also discussion in Nancy Pardee, "Be Holy, for I Am Holy: Paranaenesis in 1 Peter," in *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 77 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 113–34, 123.

⁶⁵ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 583. Emphasis original. See also Betsy Bauman-Martin, "Feminist Theologies of Suffering and Current Interpretations of 1 Peter 2.18–3.9," in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, FCNTECW (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 63–81, 72–73. She writes: "Like the slaves, wives functioned as an exaggerated example of every Christian's experience in the non-Christian world, being subject to misunderstanding, abuse and injustice." On slaves as paradigmatic of the Anatolian Christian community as a whole, see Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 197.

⁶⁶ "[This verse] refers to the way males in a household deal with its female members, including of course the man's wife but not limited to her.... The point here is not to highlight women's spiritual or moral weakness—3:1–2 counters such an idea—but rather their physical frailty." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 217. For the conclusion that this verse refers to physical weakness, see also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 578; Catherine Clark Kroeger, "Toward a Pastoral Understanding of 1 Peter 3.1–6 and Related Texts," in *A Feminist Companion to the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, FCNTECW 8 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 82–88, 86.

over their women, even with society's full approval, will not be heard by God."⁶⁷

Hence, men among the audience, though reminded of one way in which they are not weak, are in the same breath instructed to act as if they were. Additionally, describing women as weak colors the maternal metaphor for Christ. Christ's acceptance of a state presented as weak is what has brought the addressees their new birth. In light of the cross and resurrection, a paradoxical power can be ascribed to weakness.⁶⁸ Their weakness, which for many of the addressees was intensified by their decision to become Christian, is itself a form of likeness to Christ.

Julian and Peter agree that the world is not as it should be. There is suffering, and God wills that (at least some) humans come to know a suffering-free glorious existence. Julian and Peter both use metaphors of journey and growth to describe this change. However, for Julian, growth is the primary image for this change, whereas, for Peter, it is journey. Growth is primary for Julian because she considers the subject's own sin to be the source of all suffering. Hence, the "route" out of this is to mature and grow into a creature who does not sin. The environment is not the problem, so journey metaphors, while present in her work, are not as prominent.

⁶⁷ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 209. Kroeger helpfully compares Isa 58:4, according to which the prayers of the violent are not heard. Kroeger, "Pastoral Understanding," 86. Similarly, "men who transfer cultural notions about the superiority of men over women into the Christian community lose their ability to communicate with God." Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 218.

⁶⁸ An eminently Pauline idea. See, e.g., 2 Cor 12:10.

This relationship between the two metaphorical systems depicting change tends to emphasize the centrality of God's action in providing food that is fuel for this growth. The only human action that ends up really mattering is the embrace of divine assistance.

Peter agrees that the subject's own sinful desires do cause suffering for the soul (2:11). However, unlike Julian, Peter repeatedly states that some suffer unjustly.⁶⁹ For Julian, unjust suffering does not exist (except, presumably, in the case of Christ), as one's sin is always sufficient justification for one's suffering. For Julian, while Christians enjoy solidarity with Christ in suffering, Christ's suffering is unique in being unjust. For Peter, the solidarity runs deeper. As Kraftchick puts it, "unmerited suffering is intrinsic to discipleship, not simply because of social friction but because it is an element of Christ's own existence."⁷⁰ For Peter, injustice in the world is a significant source of suffering, and journey metaphors depict salvation as a process of removing the Christian from this unjust world. The cause of suffering is metaphorically described as being in the wrong place: diaspora. The properties of diaspora life relevant to this overarching metaphor for First Peter include the

⁶⁹ See, e.g., 2:19; 3:14; 4:14. On the unjust suffering of slaves, see Elliot's comments. "Aristotle denied that a master's relation to chattel (slaves, property, children) was a matter of justice (*Eth. Nic.* 5.10.8), but not so Israel (see Philo, *Spec.*, 3.136–43) or the early Christians.... [The] experience of suffering unjustly ... will be stressed again in regard to Christ and all the believers." Elliott, *1 Peter*, 520.

⁷⁰ Kraftchick, "Reborn," 96.

“temporal aspect of Diaspora as a road to be traveled or a journey to be undertaken and the threatening aspect of Diaspora as a dangerous place.”⁷¹

In First Peter, the growth metaphor of 2:2–3 forms a grace note that qualifies somewhat the force of the dominant motif of journey. The journey images on their own downplay the extent to which the addressees need to be reshaped, not merely relocated. The formative and mimetic power of food, especially breastmilk, suggests this reshaping as an ongoing process, begun in the new birth and still ongoing in the life of the addressees. The process of salvation can be described both as Christians walking in Christ’s footsteps and as Christians drinking Christ’s milk. Green understands Peter’s frequent instructions to “do good” as an approach to character formation whereby virtue is inculcated through practices that habituate a godly *habitus*.⁷² Actions can form their agent. The metaphor of Christians walking highlights a Christian’s role as a genuine agent in her own salvation. The drinking and growth metaphors highlight the formative impact of that action, continuing to form likeness to Christ, and Christ’s ongoing role of close, tender self-gift that sustains the process.

⁷¹ Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 274. On suffering as an “unavoidable feature of diaspora life,” see also Smith, *Strangers to Family*, 166.

⁷² Virtue ethics “helps us to map the chasm between ethical discourse and formation.” Green, *1 Peter*, 267.

Putting First Peter in dialogue with Julian's writings enriches our reading of the biblical text in several ways. By prompting attention to the question of whether the heavenly Christ can suffer, this dialogue draws our attention to some of the "negative space" of First Peter, showcasing a path pointedly not taken. The different relationship between growth and journey metaphors in the two works clarifies by contrast how this relationship works in First Peter. Julian's emphasis on the weakness of children in her mother-child metaphors is a property of children left unstated by Peter. While he portrays his addressees as weak in other ways, seeing this as an entailment of the extended new birth metaphor clarifies what kind of weakness is in play. The addressees are weak, but it is the weakness of children who are wanted and cared for.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to unpack a metaphor. Building on recent studies establishing that the new birth metaphor in First Peter presents Christ as the mother,¹ the present investigation has sought to understand what work this maternal image does for the letter's Christology, soteriology, and ethics. In summarizing my findings, it will be helpful to begin by reviewing what a metaphor is.²

With Lakoff and Johnson, I regard metaphor primarily as something conceptual: "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."³ The author of First Peter understands becoming Christian in terms of being born. "Being born" is referred to as the "source domain;" "becoming Christian," the "target domain." A metaphor can be described in terms of what "slots" in the source domain are mapped to what "slots" in the target domain, and what properties and relations of the source domain slots are preserved by the mapping. Lakoff and his collaborators use the term "entailment" for the process by which someone transfers inferential structures from the source domain to the target

¹ Martin, "Christians as Babies"; Martin, "Tasting"; Bennett, *Labor of God*; Myers, *Blessed Among Women*.

² See section one of the Introduction.

³ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.

domain.⁴ Recall, for instance, the example from the introduction of understanding Herod in terms of a fox, and Jesus as his prey. An aspect of the predator-prey source domain is that prey should avoid predators. A potential entailment in the target domain is that Jesus should change his travel plans to avoid Herod. The reader should be surprised and impressed to see the Lukan Jesus explicitly reject this entailment.

As described in the introduction, when a reader encounters a text that arises from a novel conceptual metaphor, she embarks on creative journey of her own, constructing a metaphorical mapping that seeks to make sense of the text. This is an inductive process, characterized by guessing and testing the guesses.⁵ Readers intuitively select a target domain to which to map the explicitly referenced elements of the source domain, ask what properties of the mapped slots transfer, ask if elements of the source domain not explicitly referenced are important, and start generating entailments. As they do this, they may confirm or reject and revise their initial guesses.

In this concluding chapter, I give a cluster of *termini* to which that journey could have led the earliest skillful readers of First Peter. In the preceding chapters, many common beliefs about birth and child-rearing were observed in the texts under

⁴ Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 64.

⁵ See Bowdle and Gentner, "Career."

discussion, yet there were also points of contestation (e.g., the relative importance of nature over nurture). This is why I use the metaphor of a “cluster” of readings. There is a solid core of a reading that can be stated more confidently, but when it comes to the contested, the conclusion must be conditional: if a reader believed *X*, reading *Y* would be available to her. In what follows, I first give a basic slot-to-slot mapping of the metaphor and then consider the entailments that are available for a reader to draw.

1. The mapping

In chapter one, I identified seven verse-length units that refer to things associated with birth (1:2; 1:3; 1:14; 1:18–19; 1:22c–23; 2:2–3; 2:9b). New birth is explicitly mentioned in 1:3 and in 1:23. In 1:23, we also find mention of seed. Blood is mentioned in 1:2 and 1:19. In chapters two, three, and four, we saw that blood was associated with gestation in a wide range of texts, medical and nonmedical, pagan and Jewish. The addressees are referred to as obedient children (1:14), extending the new birth image through time, to envision a later period in the child-rearing process. Redemption features in 1:18, part of the same sentence as 1:19, and I argued in chapter one that understanding this verse in terms of the redemption of firstborn children makes good sense of the text. In 2:2, the addressees are described as infants, and we hear of milk and growth, extending the new birth image to infant

care. The movement from darkness to light features in 2:9, and I showed that this movement was sufficiently strongly associated with birth that, in the wake of so many more explicit birth references, this could plausibly be understood as another birth reference. These verses are all concentrated within the first chapter and a half of the epistle, spanning the prescript, blessing, and the first of three metaphorical clusters in the letter body.⁶

At the close of the first section of chapter two, after analyzing the account of conception, gestation, birth, and neonatal care in several Hippocratic texts, I presented an initial mapping. In 1:2, Peter writes to the addressees that they have been sprinkled with Christ's blood. This is not literally true; while Christ's blood was shed on the cross, the Anatolian Christians were not on Calvary hill. This suggests trying to understand this sprinkling as arising from a conceptual metaphor. The next verse describes the addressees as having received a new birth. My study of the Hippocratic Corpus shows that these medics believed that a mother is her child's blood donor during gestation. Hence, we tentatively map the mother, who gives blood to her child, in the pregnancy-birth source domain to Christ, who shed his blood. This metaphor builds the kind of "new understanding" Soskice claims novel metaphors can provide.⁷ How could the shedding of Jesus' blood benefit later

⁶ See the structural analysis in Martin, *Metaphor and Composition*, 271.

⁷ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 57–58.

Anatolian Christians? As metaphors try to “understand one thing in terms of another” (as Lakoff and Johnson put it), this metaphor understands this soteriological claim in terms of something more familiar and embodied: the way a pregnant woman’s blood benefits her child prior to birth. In this mapping, the mother slot of the birth metaphor is mapped to Christ. This is an implicit slot (the word “mother” does not appear in the text). Peter often develops his Christology in such an implicit way. For instance, as John Elliott argues, “without once identifying Jesus Christ as ‘servant,’ [Peter’s] Servant of God Christology ... is one of the most developed and moving expressions of this Christology in the early Church.”⁸

As readers continue through the epistle, they find more references to things that are part of the birth source domain, extending the image by talking of the addressees as children and as infants. As the references to birth pile up, this tends to reinforce the notion that the blood language should be understood as part of this birth metaphor, as it shows how thoroughgoing the influence of that metaphor is in the early part of the epistle. When the reader reaches the reference to lactation in 2:2, this provides confirmation that the mother slot of the birth metaphor should be mapped to Christ. As we saw, the Hippocratics understood breast milk as a form of blood given by a lactating woman to a child. As Christ is the one who provides blood (1:2, 19), it is consistent to also understand him as the nursing woman implicit in

⁸ Elliott, *1 Peter*, 151.

2:2. This gives a simple mapping: birth ← becoming Christian; fetus/infant/child ← person who becomes Christian;⁹ God ← father; Christ ← mother.

Over the course of the rest of chapter 2, I confirmed that these beliefs about blood and milk were not unique to the Hippocratic corpus but were broadly held by medics who disagreed among themselves on other matters. As demonstrated in chapter 4, there were also nonmedical Jewish texts that spoke of a pregnant woman's donation of blood to her child. As these views were common, we can be confident that many among the early audiences of First Peter would have held them and could have developed this conceptual metaphor in their heads as they sought to make sense of the epistle.

We can then ask whether and, if so, how other parts of the text fit in with this metaphor. I noted in chapter one that the genitive noun in the phrase ἐν ἁγιασμῷ πνεύματος in 1:2 may grammatically be either subjective (sanctification by the Spirit) or objective (sanctification of the spirit). However, as the data in chapter 2 show, the Hippocratics, Soranus and Galen all assign an active role to *pneuma* in gestational formation. In the Hippocratic texts, the *pneuma* that operates is explicitly stated to be the mother's. This suggests that the subjective reading is to be preferred,

⁹ The addressees in their current state can be described as at once infants and children capable of obedience or disobedience. The metaphor collapses these two states, distinct in the source domain, onto one in the target domain. Their gestation, though, lies in the past.

especially as the phrase in question appears a verse that also contains a reference to Christ's donation of blood. To selectively paraphrase 1:1–2, God has chosen the addressees through¹⁰ the Spirit's work of sanctifying. Reading with the Hippocratics, this Spirit is Christ's Spirit, an identification made explicit by the text in 1:11.

The data of chapter two also help clarify the meaning of *λόγος* in 1:23. In chapter one, I argued, with LaVerdiere, that *λόγος* should not be taken as an explanation of *σπορά*; this verse does not seek to explain that seed in the source domain is mapped to “word” (variously understood as either Christian preaching or Jewish prophecy) in the target domain.¹¹ Rather, whereas *σπορά* (sowing and hence, metonymically, seed) gives the source of the new birth, *λόγος* is the means. It is possible to take this to mean Christian preaching or prophetic testimony that brings someone to a moment of conversion, but there are other options. Achtemeier contemplates, only to reject, the possibility that this is a reference to Christ as *λόγος*, as in Johannine literature.¹² Understanding Christ as mother in the new birth metaphor gives additional reason to disfavor this reading, as mothers are usually referred to in statements about birth with *ἐκ* rather than *διὰ* (as in Matt 1:16). On the basis of his reading of Aristotle's embryology, Martin proposes that we instead take

¹⁰ For an argument for this reading of the preposition *ἐν*, see my chapter one and Jobses, *1 Peter*, 69.

¹¹ LaVerdiere, "1 Pet 1:23."

¹² Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 140.

λόγος as the plan or pattern of fetal formation, functionally equivalent to DNA in more modern parlance.¹³ My study in chapter two shows that Galen also used λόγος in this way, despite some serious disagreements with other aspects of Aristotle's embryology. This shows that such a use of the word λόγος in embryological contexts was common, whereas we have no such evidence that λόγος Christology was at all common by the early eighties. To paraphrase, then, the source of the addressees' new birth was imperishable seed and they have been refashioned through the fetal formation plan (or DNA) of the living and enduring God.

This raises the question: to what in the target domain should seed be mapped? The matter is complicated by the proliferation of diverse medical views about how seed functioned. While all of the medics surveyed in chapter two believed in female seed, as did the Jewish texts considered in chapter four, they differed on its function. For Aristotle, menses are female seed. For an Aristotelian, it would be odd to describe the "sowing" of female seed as a cause of conception. For Soranus, female seed is expelled from the body and plays no role in conception. However, for the Hippocratic authors surveyed in chapter two and for Galen, a woman's seed is distinct from menses and is emitted into the uterus; as such, female seed is indeed sown, and it does contribute to conception. First Peter does not work to clarify

¹³ Martin, "Translating λόγος." For Martin, ῥῆμα in 1:25 does refer to preaching; ῥῆμα being an individual instantiation of the whole λόγος.

which of these diverse understandings of women’s seed is operative in the source domain. Hence, different readers would likely construct different mappings here, based on their prior embryological understanding. For some, “seed” should be mapped to some contribution of God the Father; for others, to contributions from both God the Father and Christ. Galen taught that optimal female seed was pliable and docile to male seed, yet still had formative power over the *conceptus*. For a reader who shared these beliefs, whatever Christ’s contribution to their metaphorical new conception was, it would be docile before God the Father’s contributions. Such a mapping would likely be accepted by a reader who already considered Christ an obedient Son.

The data of chapter two also contribute to our understanding of the adjective ἄδολος, modifying milk in 2:2. I suggest that this is a brilliant pun on the part of Peter. The word can mean unadulterated or pure (*LSJ*, II, *s.v.*). Both Galen and Soranus, two medics who disagreed on many aspects of embryology and neonatal care, agree that good quality milk should be unmixed, uniform or homogeneous.¹⁴ While the vocabulary does not precisely match either between these two medics or with First Peter, the meanings are synonymous: milk that is ἄδολος is milk that is good for the infant receiving it. Ἄδολος, as the *α*-privative of δόλος (guile), can also mean guileless or honest. In 2:1, Peter states that the Christian life should be

¹⁴ Συμμιγές, Galen, *Hyg.* 1.9 L 66–68; ὁμαλόν, συνεχές ἑαυτῷ, Soranus, II 22.

characterized by a lack of guile (δόλος; this is repeated in 3:10). The polysemy of the word ἄδολος, then, means that in the source domain it can mean good milk while simultaneously suggesting in the target domain that the action metaphorically described as suckling will help them remain guileless. In 2:22, Christ is said to be without guile. As we have seen in the previous chapters, there was a widespread belief that breastfeeding formed the infant in the likeness of the nurse.

Understanding Christ as the nursing mother in this passage provides a way to understand how Christ remains active in forming Christians in Christly virtues: Christ is without guile, so his “milk” transmits that property to those who receive it.

What in the target domain could correspond to milk in the source domain? The reception of Christ’s blood in the Eucharist provides a powerful embodied ritual experience with which the addressees could connect this image. Anecdotally, though, I have heard modern Christians express sentiments such as, “The preaching in my church has really improved recently; I go away feeling so much more fed.” The addressees of First Peter similarly may have recognized Christ as nourishing them powerfully in the Eucharist without limiting this metaphor to that context.

2. Entailments

Having constructed a basic mapping and used it to clarify a few ambiguous terms, I now present several entailments of this way of mapping the metaphor.

Recall that an entailment takes some kind of inferential structure that “works” in the source domain and transports it into the target domain. “Works” in the previous sentence means, “works within the conceptual framework that the initial audience would have held.” As in the previous section, I strive here to find commonly held beliefs and, when what is common is contestation, give conditional readings (“if a reader believed *X* about mothers, she would conclude *Y* about Christ”). Metaphors rarely map everything in the source domain. Putative claims about the target domain (the relationships between Christians, Christ, and God) that arise from such entailments must be tested against claims made about these matters elsewhere in the letter.

2.1 The quality of the relationship between Christ and Christians

Through the previous four chapters, the data presented have showcased various features of valorized relationships between mothers and their children. For instance, we have seen in a wide variety of sources that such relationships were praised when they were close and affectionate. Importantly, these qualities were not siloed off in a separate sphere from the transfer of bodily fluids to which Peter explicitly refers. In chapter three, we saw that Seneca refers to the affection joining parents and children as a “bond of blood” (*Phaedra*, 1114–16) and that the only thing that makes Aeschylus’ Orestes think twice about his planned matricide is a

reminder that she breastfed him (*Choe*. 876–78). Such a bond is often portrayed as leading to practical action. For instance, in his *Consolatio*, Seneca describes a woman metaphorically as having acted maternally towards him and illustrates this by pointing out that she cared for him while he was sick. In chapter five, we saw that Chrysostom, when he introduces maternal language to talk about Christ’s proffer of blood in the Eucharist, uses this occasion to remark on the superlative quality of Christ’s love for Christians. Language about the materiality of parenthood in general, and motherhood in particular, functions in these authors to lead to claims about the affective relational quality of parenthood/motherhood. This point is also made, using different texts, by Myers, who, in her analysis of 1 Pet 2:2–3, points out that nursing was seen to reinforce the mother-child bond.¹⁵ The maternal language in First Peter has the power to portray the relationships between Christ and Christians as close, loving, and affectionate.

In addition to Myers, some other scholars also identify intimacy as part of the content of 1 Pet 2:2–3. For instance, Jobs points out that “of all the sensory metaphors, tasting is the most intimate.”¹⁶ However, without the identification of Christ as the mother in the new birth metaphor, this ascription of intimacy lacks concreteness. Tite, on the other hand, downplays the importance of intimacy in this

¹⁵ Myers, "*Pater Nutrix*," 87.

¹⁶ Jobs, *1 Peter*, 139.

image.¹⁷ By not identifying Christ as mother, he concentrates on texts concerning wetnurses and thereby misses the associations of maternal nursing with intimacy.

Other Christological images in First Peter do not highlight as clearly these kinds of qualities of the Christ-Christian relationship, though the shepherd image may come closest. As Dille points out, when one text uses two different metaphors that map different source domains onto the same target, common properties of the two source domains are highlighted and contradictory properties are downplayed.¹⁸ Confirmation that an intimate, close relationship is a property of the source domain that a reader should map to the target domain is also to be found in 1:22. Here, the addressees are summoned to love one another actively from the heart. Such a call makes more sense if the readers can rely on already having such a relationship with Christ.

In the previous chapters, we also saw many texts that associated motherhood with the protection of children. In Greek texts, this goes back as far as metaphors in Homer and extends to epic narrative in Statius. Various biblical texts associate maternal metaphors for God with protection, especially those featuring a mother bird. Chrysostom assigns protective properties to Christ's blood. First Peter portrays the addressees' situation as replete with danger, from both human and diabolical

¹⁷ Tite, "Nurslings," 374–75.

¹⁸ Dille, *Mixing Metaphors*, 16, 67–69. See also Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 25.

(5:8) agents. The addressees will know suffering, but they should not be anxious, because God cares for them (5:7). The emphasis on suffering means that the protective function of mothers cannot be transferred to Christ in a way that would result in the addressees avoiding all pain in this world. Julian of Norwich provides a much later elegant reflection on how a loving mother can allow her children some suffering in order to educate them properly. Understanding Christ, though, as in some measure protecting them, even as they press on in an arduous and dangerous journey, provides a cognitive resource to aid the readers in shedding the anxiety mentioned in 5:7.

While various texts present mothers as loving, caring for, and protecting their children, this did not mean they were pushovers. Biblical Mother God is a disciplinarian, and *severitas ac disciplina* were qualities valued in mothers by many Roman authors, including Tacitus. As we saw reflected in the Roman Comedies, children owed their mothers *pietas*. This often required serious personal sacrifice (as Pliny was willing to make). Peter issues numerous burdensome moral demands to his readers. Portraying Jesus as a disciplinarian shows that Peter does not stand alone, but operates as an agent of Christ, whose superlative love is sometimes tough.

2.2 Resemblance

Tite and Myers have already argued for understanding 1 Pet 2:1–3 in particular as describing an ongoing reformation of the Christian in the image of Christ or God.¹⁹ Martin locates such reformation both in the new begetting itself and in the nutritional image.²⁰ The appropriateness of transferring this property from the source domain to the target can be confirmed from numerous other passages in the text of First Peter that describe Christians becoming like both Christ and God, as outlined in my first chapter. Those scholars who have argued for this reading have mainly done so on the basis of medical texts, or other texts that contain evaluations of wet nurses. The medical evidence is strong. As we saw in chapter two, Aristotle, Soranus, and Galen all associated the transfer of likeness from mother to child with the donation of blood or milk. The story of Faustina and Commodus in the *Historia Augusta* shows that nonmedics also thought that blood could pass on moral qualities to a child during pregnancy. Without usually invoking bodily fluids, in authors as diverse as Aeschylus, Euripides, Seneca, Ezekiel, James, and the Odes, we saw claims or suppositions that children resemble their mothers.

¹⁹ Tite calls the “moral transfer property” the most important aspect of nursing for this metaphor, and Myers talks about the “communication of traits.” Tite, “Nurslings,” 395; Myers, “*Pater Nutrix*,” 87–89.

²⁰ On the nutritional image, see Martin, “Tasting,” 520. In this article, using ancient nutritional theory, Martin shows that what “is similar to their new nature” is what “is to be attracted and assimilated.” That new nature has a likeness to God, as shown in Martin, “Translating λόγος.”

When we look more carefully at such claims outside of the medical authors, we may sharpen our sense of what “resemblance” means, and how it is wrought. For instance, Artemona, the *matrona* in Plautus’ *Asinaria*, cares deeply about ensuring that her son resemble her moral uprightness (and not his father’s lack thereof). She does not simply trust that her body took care of this during his gestation and nursing; she works to form him and actively opposes his father’s attempts at deformation. Pliny’s letters similarly evidence a concern that without proper nurture, the benefits of good nature might not be realized. In Seneca’s *Phaedra*, the nurse recognizes that both Phaedra and Hippolytus must resemble their respective mothers in some way, but she encourages them to be active participants in the project of self-formation, determining what resemblance looks like for them. In this play, resemblance is not identity, and offspring can negotiate their maternally inherited legacy, choosing among a spectrum of possibilities.

How much of this structure in the source domain can be mapped to the target domain? The new birth metaphor, without its development into the obedient child image of 1:14 and the nursing image of 2:2–3, would highlight the work of God and Christ in forming resemblance and locate that work in the addressees’ past. The nursing image portrays Christ as currently active in the formative task, broadening the temporal scope of the work in a way that fits with the emphasis observed in the previous subsection that the letter portrays the relationship between Christ and the

Christian as close and active. The obedient child image also broadens the image to include attention to the addressees' actions in determining to what they are "conformed."

Peter also makes clear that resemblance does not mean identity. For instance, in the stone imagery of chapter two, Christians, like Christ, become stones used to build a building, but they do not become cornerstones as he is. Peter also recognizes a diversity of vocations within the community.²¹ While all are called to holiness (1:16), not all are called to be elders, for instance (5:1–2).

This notion of resemblance, once understood by readers, may help determine how, on a second reading of the letter, they understand the relationship between *ὕπακοήν* (obedience) and *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (Jesus Christ) in 1 Pet 1:2. I note in chapter one that this relationship is grammatically ambiguous. One possible way to construe the phrases is to take *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* as an attributive genitive: God has chosen the addressees for Christic obedience. Given the call for them to be obedient (1:14) and the Pauline tradition of Christ as obedient (e.g., Phil 2:8), the resemblance entailment of the new birth metaphor encourages a reader to understand this obedience as Christic.²²

²¹ "Christians do not mimic Jesus mechanically, but as disciples they make their own creative adaption of the pattern." Kraftchick, "Reborn," 96.

²² Recall from chapter one that many commentators argue against an objective genitive reading on grammatical grounds. See Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 74n51; Achtemeier,

2.3 Suffering and glory

For Schutter, the movement from suffering to glory is the “key” to the Christology of First Peter.²³ Understanding Christ as the mother in the new birth metaphor provides a vivid way to communicate this movement. Almost every text examined in the previous chapters that dealt with birth spoke of suffering or danger. For some Hippocratics, birth may even have been an act of violence perpetrated against the mother by the child being born. Childbirth is metaphorically invoked to describe other forms of pain in such classic texts as those of Homer and Isaiah. Yet the successful delivery of a child was seen as salubrious by Hippocratic authors, Galen, and Plato. The previous chapters have showcased the social honor given to mothers, for instance in texts by Seneca, Plutarch, and various biblical authors. This social honor was legally codified by Augustus, in reforms still operative when First Peter started circulating. Hence, the image of a woman giving birth to a child who

1 Peter, 87; *Jobes*, *1 Peter*, 71. On the obedience of Christ as an example for Christians, see also the following conclusion of De Waal Dryden: “Through his obedience, [Christ] won salvation for his church, but he also left an example of reverent obedience to God’s will in the fact of suffering radical injustice.” Dryden, *Theology and Ethics*, 196.

²³ Schutter, *Hermeneutic*, 123.

lives provides a way for readers to appreciate more keenly Christ's movement through suffering to glory and honor.

The most profound moment of suffering in Christ's life was the crucifixion, which John's gospel likely understands as a birth. The new birth can be mapped to temporally separate events in the life of Christ and of each Christian. Christ labored most profoundly in the crucifixion; the Christian is born again at their baptism. Indeed, Paul draws a tight connection between these two events in Rom 6:4–5. Peter never explicitly links birth with crucifixion, but, as Elliott pointed out in connection with Servant of God Christology, important Christological motifs often remain implicit in First Peter. Kraftchick suggests that this is part of a deliberate strategy of using images that do not spell everything out, so that “readers interact *with* Jesus Christ rather than simply receive information *about* Jesus Christ.”²⁴

One might object that, in 1:3, Peter links the new birth not to the crucifixion but to resurrection. However, as noted in chapter one, I consider Jobes to be correct in her argument on grammatical grounds that δι' ἀναστάσεως (“through the resurrection...”) should be taken as clarifying how the hope can be said to be

²⁴ Kraftchick, "Reborn," 84. Emphasis original. The way this letter demands a reader to participate in unpacking it draws a reader willing to make the effort more deeply into its thought world and makes its message more memorable, for memory is “the residue of thought.” Daniel T. Willingham, "Ask the Cognitive Scientist: What Will Improve a Student's Memory?," *American Educator* Winter (2009): 17–25, 18.

“living,” rather than giving the means of the new birth.²⁵ It is also relevant that Peter does not just say resurrection, but writes of the “resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” In the first verse to mention new birth, the reader is reminded that Christ died.²⁶ The hope engendered in the reborn Christian is living because that death was a form of suffering that resulted in glory.

One aspect of the mother-child relationship is definitively negated by the text of First Peter. Aristotle and Soranus both identify nursing as a form of suffering for women, and elite women often employed wet nurses in order to avoid it.²⁷ One might suspect then, that to Christ’s present-tense work of nursing in 2:2–3 corresponds some form of post-resurrection suffering on his part. However, this is explicitly denied by 3:18. While, as discussed in chapter five, some pre-modern Christians did believe that the heavenly Christ could still suffer, Peter teaches against such a view. In general, suffering and glory can co-exist, but, for Peter, Christ’s glorification has already ended all suffering for him. A reader who had considered the heavenly Christ to still somehow suffer and then had this possibility

²⁵ Jobs, *1 Peter*, 84–85.

²⁶ “The introduction of the Christology of 1 Peter is established in 1:3 with the pairing of ‘resurrection’ and ‘dead (ones).’ That formulaic assertion is interpreted by the scheme of sufferings/glories in 1:11.” Sharon Clark Pearson, *The Christological and Rhetorical Properties of 1 Peter*, Studies in Bible and Early Christianity 45 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2001), 85.

²⁷ For more on this, see Tite, “Nurslings,” 83.

denied would have her awe increased at the kind of glorification Christ had received and that was now offered to her as well.

2.4 Ethics

Peter wishes those he addresses to “do good.”²⁸ How can recognizing Christ as mother in the new birth metaphor inform our understanding of what qualifies as good action for Christians? Firstly, the new birth image stands side-by-side with the image from 2:9 of the new people of God as a “royal priesthood,” a status that the text links closely with the movement from darkness to light, typical birth language (as noted in chapter one). The sprinkling of blood in 1:3, in addition to being mapped to the maternal donation of blood to her child during gestation, is also reminiscent of the priestly ordination of Aaron and his sons in Lev 8:30. In texts we surveyed from the Deuteronomistic History and Ezekiel, mothers are portrayed as playing a special role within the royal family, promoting their sons and trying to secure kingship for them. Seeing Christ as functioning maternally provides a way to understand how Christ’s work has brought the addressees to these twin vocations of priest and king associated with status and influence.

²⁸ Ἀγαθοποιέω. 2:15, 20; 3:6, 17. This verb is found in only four verses of the New Testament outside of First Peter.

This new identity might at first sight seem to be contradicted by the frequent calls by Peter for the addressees to “fit in” with the rest of society.²⁹ They are told to fit in with imperial power, slavery, and the allocation of authority to husbands. At least for some of the community (not all will bear the same burden under these injunctions), they are told that this will (at best) lead to them suffering for doing good. Shively Smith writes movingly of her experience studying these instructions as a scholar of First Peter who is also a woman of color:

There is reason to appreciate the strategic maneuvering 1 Peter exhibits.... It is not the community’s time to revolt, rebel, attack, challenge, and defy the status quo. It is a time to survive the system despite the system. My truth rings clear this moment. As much as I am a daughter of those who fought and declared openly their full humanity and rights as God’s creation, I am also the daughter of those who made an honest assessment of their odds and decided it was more expedient in the moment for them to survive the ungodly, inhumane, and evil systems forced on them.... Many of us are indebted to both decision makers: those who confronted evil disparities as well as those who concealed their critique in the mask of social compliance, cultural performance, and verbal niceties so that their progeny could live to fight another day.³⁰

The new birth image can help the addressees understand one reason why they cannot fight back right now: they are still children. They can be compared with

²⁹ Ὑποτάσσω. 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5. On the translation of this verb as “fit in,” see Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Let’s Look Again at the Biblical Concept of Submission,” in *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune (New York: Continuum, 1995), 135–140.

³⁰ Smith, *Strangers to Family*, 168–69.

infants not just in their “single-minded desire for nourishment,”³¹ or their innocence,³² but also their vulnerability. Soranus taught that delayed weaning would make a child moist and delicate. In Statius’ *Achilleid* and Nicolaus’ *Augustus*, we see the belief that a son should outgrow his mother’s overly cautious protective care at some point. The addressees, though, are called to never leave behind Christ’s nursing or protection. Their new vocation positions them as weak in the world’s eyes.

Yet they can dare to look weak, for they know they are royal and priestly. They can dare to be vulnerable children, for they know they are wanted and cared for children. In Christ, in whose image they being formed, they see how the acceptance of bodily disablement and vulnerability in the cross can lead to glory. The new birth image can help them understand this and lodge this belief deep in their hearts: suffering can be fruitful. Like Christ, they do not resort to violence even to further just causes (2:23), but commit to continuing to do good in the face of injustice (4:19). Following in Christ’s footsteps may well involve suffering, but glory is coming!

³¹ Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 146. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 399.

³² Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 156; Spicq, *1, 2 Pierre*, 79.

3. Implications for future work on First Peter

There are several ways in which the results of dissertation can contribute to future research on First Peter. Firstly, my observations from chapter four concerning Peter's tendencies in how he reuses Pauline material invite further consideration of what other such redactional patterns can be detected. First Peter also has pervasive intertextual connections with James, and a search for common patterns in the variations between these two epistles may also prove fruitful. Such research may prove valuable in elucidating the first generation of reception of Paul's letters and locating First Peter within a tradition.

Secondly, the implicatures described in the previous section provide questions to ask of the other Christological and soteriological metaphors in First Peter. For instance, the metaphor of shepherd is applied to both Christ and certain of the addressees. Entailments of this metaphor that overlap with entailments of the maternal metaphor are highlighted by their co-occurrence in the same text. Using the results of this dissertation to help guide the investigation of these shepherd metaphors, what does the image of shepherd contribute to the letter's Christology and ecclesiology?

Thirdly, this dissertation confirms that studying depictions of family relationships in a broad range of texts popular in the first century helps us read First

Peter. How might such study enrich our understanding of the role that the father metaphor for God plays in the epistle?

Finally, this study has suggested we understand “Spirit” in 1:2 as Christ’s Spirit, as in 1:11, unlike the reference in 4:14, which is to “God’s Spirit.” What is the pneumatology of the letter? How does it develop, nuance or reject Paul’s pneumatology? How does it relate to later developments in Trinitarian theology?

4. A pastoral postlude

For the vast majority of this dissertation, I have endeavored to address any reader interested in investigating how the text of First Peter makes use of first century convictions about motherhood to do its rhetorical work. In this brief postlude, I address those readers who share with me a love for this text not only as a fascinating artefact of Hellenistic literature, but also as canonical scripture, those who wrestle with it to attempt to find a word that can rouse.

Much of the previous subsection of this conclusion provides material ripe for actualization in ecclesial contexts of teaching and proclamation. Here, I wish to highlight an aspect of the metaphor that has been in the background throughout, though rarely the focus of my remarks: the fact that Peter uses a feminine image for Christ.

Here are four responses I have received when discussing this project with people who are not New Testament scholars, all of which have been made by at least one woman:

(1) That's weird;

(2) Well, of course, he feeds us with his body and blood!;

(3) [A high five];

(4) I can see how that could be a very helpful image for men.

For some (1), this image is unnerving. For others (2), it is old hat; the academy is slowly catching up with insights already present in some who live with these texts without writing about them. For others (3), though, it is new, or at least its academic recognition is new, and this is exciting and life-giving.

The response that most surprised me was (4). My interlocutor went on to explain what she meant. She explained that her experience of the presence of Christ in her life was often real to her imagination in terms of (nonsexual) physical intimacy. She knew that many men find physical intimacy with other men difficult and had often worried that they were missing out on a very valuable aspect of her relationship with Jesus. In the image of Christ as mother, she saw a way in which such men (and some women), might claim anew a way of understanding and experiencing how Jesus loves and cherishes them.

All these responses deserve a fuller hearing than I have given them here. Through listening anew to the text of First Peter and listening just as closely to those who receive what we have to say, we might just find that word that can rouse. And maybe Christ will bring us all up together to be worthy daughters and sons of so gracious and glorious a Mother.

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