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## THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN—IS WOMAN INCLUDED?

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"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind (*adam*) in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion. . . . ' And God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."<sup>1</sup> Gen 1:26-27 clarifies that the Hebrew term *adam* stands for the generic species of humanity which is composed of men and women. If there is any doubt on this interpretation, Gen 5:2-3 declares and defines again: "When God created humankind, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them humankind when they were created." The "image of God in man and woman" opens us to transcend both the masculine and feminine metaphors for God which abound in the Bible and to transcend our historical selves and social institutions in recognition of the Holy One. It would appear that whatever one's interpretation of the "image" and "likeness" of God, one would have to recognize that the biblical text makes explicit that in our resemblance to

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<sup>1</sup>Gen 1:26-27:

ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו וירדו כדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל-החיה ובכל-הרמש הרמש על-הארץ : ויברא אלהים את-האדם בצלמו אלהים ברא אתו זכר ונקבה ב  
תם

ὁ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, καὶ χέτωσαν τῶν ἰχθύων τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν κτηνῶν ἰπάσης τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἑρπετῶν τῶν ἑρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ ἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν τοὺς.

ait: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram: et praesit piscibus ris, et volatilibus caeli, et bestiis, universaeque terrae, omnique reptili quod movetur terra. Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam: ad imaginem Dei creavit illum: masculinum et feminam creavit eos.

*The Hexaglot Bible* (6 vols.; ed. Rev. Edward Riches de Levante; London: Dickinson and Ham, 1874). RSV trans. with אדם following Phyllis Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Intimacy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978). For an excellent multidimensional elucidation of the centrality of Gen 1:27 for contemporary understanding of the Bible, see Tribble, *Rhetoric of Sexuality*, esp. 12-23. Another significant interpretation is forthcoming in Phyllis Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them,' Gen 1:27 in the Context of the Early Account of Creation." The major source for medieval knowledge of variant early

the Divinity and in our dominion over the earth and animals, men and women share a common human dignity.

The use of the male pronoun for God, the translation of *adam* as "man," and the question "Is woman included in the image of God in man?" proceed from androcentrism, the masculine perspective of viewing the male human being as generic and normative.<sup>2</sup> Important linguistic work is currently in progress to reduce the androcentric perspective in men and women.<sup>3</sup> In this historical inquiry into traditional Jewish and Christian interpretations of Gen 1:27, I shall conform linguistically to the extensive scholarship on "the image of God in man." My use of the English "man" for the generic *adam*, *anthropos*, and *homo* indicates my openness to listen to traditional texts in their denials, ambiguities, and affirmations and my recognition of and desire to preserve the generic intent of much scholarship on "the image of God in man" and "the dignity of man."<sup>4</sup> We know that "man in our image" (Gen 1:26) is humankind, mankind and womankind inclusively.

In the Renaissance, when the notion of human dignity was integrally linked with the concept of *imago Dei* of Gen 1:26,<sup>5</sup> Gen 1:27 was an essential proof-text for those seeking to defend the status of womankind. A good example is the very first paragraph of Agrippa von Nettesheim's *On the Nobility and Pre-eminence of the Female Sex*, first published in Latin in 1529 (and then reprinted again and again throughout the century in Latin, English, French, Italian, and German). The ideas of this work directly filtered into the debate on the woman

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Greek translations of the Hebrew text was Origen's *Hexapla* (Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1964] 13). The variants noted by Origen preserved the notion of a generic human species divided into two sexes: *Hexapla Origenis*, Gen 1:27 (PG 15. 155-58).

<sup>2</sup>Kari Elisabeth Børresen, "Male-Female, A Critique of Traditional Christian Theology" *Temenos* 13 (1977) 31-32.

<sup>3</sup>Popularizations include Letty M. Russell, ed., *The Liberating Word: A Guide to Non-sexist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), and Alice Hageman, ed., *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church: No More Silence!* (Women's Caucus of Harvard Divinity School; New York: Association, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>Conversations with the following authors: Charles Trinkaus, "In Our Image and Likeness": *Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (London/Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), and Herschel Baker, *The Image of Man: A Study of the Idea of Human Dignity in Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961). In studying the question whether woman was viewed in the image of God, I am attempting to treat at the level of one unit-idea the complex issue of whether the idea of the dignity of man included the dignity of woman. See also, Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Stoic Synthesis of the Idea of Natural Law in Man: Four Themes," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974) 3-16.

<sup>5</sup>Eugenio Garin, "La 'Dignitas Hominis' e la letteratura patristica," *La Rinascita* 1 (1938) 102-46, and Charles Trinkaus (*Our Image and Likeness*) have appropriately emphasized the key role that commentary on Gen 1:26 has played in the development of the idea of the dignity of man.

question throughout the Continent and England.<sup>6</sup> Agrippa's first statement is a praise of God, the father of both sexes, who created humanity in his own likeness: "Male and female he created them." The distinction in sex is only in the bodily parts necessary for generation: there is no distinction between male and female in the nature of the soul. Women have the same mind as man, the same reason and speech, and they are directed to the same final state of beatitude. In the resurrection, there will be both sexes but there will be no sexual functioning. Consequently, in the substance of the soul, neither sex is superior, but both sexes have an innate liberty, which characterizes their dignity. In all other respects, however, the female excels the male: and thus Agrippa ushered in the major portion of his treatise, a proof through biblical exegesis, through classical philosophy and mythology, and through historical example that woman is more excellent a being than is man.<sup>7</sup>

What may a historian deduce from Agrippa's argument that the sexes are equal in God's image? Certainly Agrippa's claims of female "superiority" raise a question on the typicalness and authority of the beginning argument.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Agrippa, author in 1526 of *A Declamation on the Uncertainty and Vanity of the Sciences and Arts*,<sup>9</sup> was a skeptic and may have written his book on the woman question to prove that reason can prove anything, no matter how absurd. Could it be true that Agrippa's argument accurately reflected the dominant Western view on the subject of woman's creation in the image of God?

A recent, respected anthology on women's history has proclaimed by its title that woman was traditionally viewed as *Not in God's Image*.<sup>10</sup> One source that supports that contention is Gratian's *Decretum* (ca. 1140), a founding work of canon law. However, Gratian's proclamation "Woman was not made in God's image" was based on a false rendering of Paul's 1 Cor 11:7-9: "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God: but woman ought to, since she is neither

<sup>6</sup>R. Warwick Bond, ed., *The Nobility of Woman, by William Bercher 1559* (London: Roxburghe Club, 1904) Intro., 45-55, 81. Emile Telle, *L'Oeuvre de Marguerite d'Angoulême Reine de Navarre et la querelle des femmes* (1937; reprint ed., Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969) 45-55.

<sup>7</sup>Henrici Cornelli Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De Nobilitate & Praecellentia Foeminei Sexus* (Cologne, 1567) sib. A6<sup>v</sup>-A7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>That Agrippa's general position of female preeminence was rare in the Renaissance is indicated by Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1956) chap. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium* (Cologne, 1568); Charles G. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1965); and Richard Popkin, *History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (expanded ed.; Berkeley: University of California, 1979) 23-25.

<sup>10</sup>Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, *Not in God's Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

in the glory or image of God."<sup>11</sup>The Vulgate rendered the Pauline statement correctly as "For a man ought not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God: but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."<sup>12</sup> The source of Gratian's misreading of Paul was the work *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*. This work which he thought was Augustinian is now thought to be of pseudo-Ambrosian origin.<sup>13</sup>

A source more frequently cited as a denial of God's image in woman is Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1125-1274): "In a primary sense, God's image is found in man as in woman as regards that in which the idea of 'image' principally consists, namely an intelligent nature. . . . But in a secondary sense, God's image is found in man in a way in which it is not found in woman; for man is the beginning and end of woman, just as God is the beginning and end of creation" (*S.T.* 1.93.4 ad 1).<sup>14</sup> This is a good example of the tension in Christian exegesis between Gen 1:26-27 which supports Thomas' "primary sense" and 1 Cor 11:7-9 which supports his "secondary sense." To read Thomas' passage in context, however, one must recognize that the stress is on the primary sense, and that the article, an answer to the question "Is the image of God found in every man?" is contending that all men, male and female, are created in the image of God. Furthermore, in the preceding question 92 on "The Production of Woman" Thomas argued that Genesis 1 implied the possibility but not the necessity of woman's production through Adam's

<sup>11</sup>Gratian's *Decretum* (ca. 1140) states: "Hec imago Dei est in homine, et unus factus sit ex quo ceteri oriuntur, habens imperium Dei, quasi unicarius eius, quia unius Dei habet imaginem, ideoque *mulier non est facta ad Dei imaginem*. Sic etenim dicit: 'Et fecit Deus hominem: ad imaginem Dei fecit illum.' Hinc etiam Apostolus: 'Vir quidem,' ait, 'non debet uelare caput, quia imago et gloria Dei est; mulier ideo uelat, quia non est gloria aut imago Dei' (Italics mine). *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (eds. A. Richter and A. Friedberg; 2 vols. Leipzig, 1879-81) 1.2.33, q. 5, c. 13. Cited in O'Faolain and Martines, *Not in God's Image*, 130.

<sup>12</sup>ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικός, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἀνδρα.

Vir quidem non debet velare caput, quoniam imago et gloria est Dei: Mulier autem gloria viri est. Non enim vir ex muliere est, sed mulier ex viro: Etenim non est creatus vir propter mulierem, sed mulier propter virum (*The Hexaglot Bible*, 1 Cor 11:7-9).

<sup>13</sup>*Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, 127 (CSEL 50). Ivo of Chartres, *Decretum*, 8.95 (PL 161. 603), and *Panormia*, 7.44 (PL 161. 1291).

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ed. Dominican Fathers; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1963) vol. 13. Translation mine. Cited in O'Faolain and Martines, *Not in God's Image*, 131-32. To analyze Thomas' brand of sexism critically, particularly in the context of the pressing issue of women in the priesthood, scholars need to confront critically his absorption of Aristotle's sexist hierarchy. See Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," *Journal of the History of Biology* 9 (1976) 183-213.

rib and that woman was not conceived by Adam but was created directly by God (1.92.4). Woman has her beginning in God: and as a full expression of human nature would be the perfect understanding and love of God, her end would appear also to be God (1.93.4). Thomas' position at worst is ambiguous. The secondary sense in which woman is not in the image of God (very harsh wording indeed) may apply not to her ontological status but to her subordination to man within the family. Generally, Christian tradition handled the Pauline epistle in a way that diminished woman's authority in relation to her husband and to society, but that did not deny her existence in the image of God.<sup>15</sup>

A better proof for the denial of God's image in woman is the argument Thomas was rebutting in making his two-level explanation of image. Someone had claimed "God's image is not found in every man. 'For the Apostle said man is the image of God, while woman is the image of man'" (1.93.4.1). Thomas in his rebuttal gave the proper rendition of the last phrase, *gloria viri*. That the false one-word substitution was important enough to refute is evidenced by its assertion by no less a figure than Peter Abelard (1079-1142): "Certainly man according to the Apostle, is in the image of God and not woman (1 Cor 11:7). Yet just as man is in the image of God, so woman is said to be in the image of man" (*Intr. ad theol.* 1.9).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>See *Glossa Ordinaria* referred to in n. 81. Calvin is particularly clear on this point; John Calvin, *Mosis libri V, cum Johannis Calvini commentariis* (Geneva: Stephanus, 1563) Gen 1:26. For an analysis of 1 Cor 11:7-8, see Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei Geni. 26 fin Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den Paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 292-312. Recent scholarship has made a good case that Paul's negative statements on women, including 1 Cor 11:7-8, are not authentically Pauline but are instead early glosses and interpolations. See William O. Walker, Jr., "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women," *JBL* 94 (1975) 94-110.

<sup>16</sup>Peter Abelard, *Introductio ad theologiam* (PL 178. 991): "'Faciamus hominem,' quam faciam, 'ad imaginem,' inquit, 'et similitudinem nostram' [Gen 1:26]; virum quidem ad imaginem, mulierem vero ad similitudinem. Vir quippe juxta Apostolum, imago Dei est, non mulier (1 Cor. XI, 7). Sed sicut vir imago est Dei, ita et mulier imago dicitur viri." Also see, *Expositio in Hexaemeron* (PL 178. 763-64). For the Christian Church, the earliest document of a denial I have found is based on a correct edition of Paul. Diodore of Tarsus (330-ca. 392), an Antiochene, held that the image consisted in domination, which he thought was not a characteristic of the female since according to Paul, she is subject to man. (PG 33. 1564). H. C. Graef, "L'image de Dieu et la structure d'après les Pères grecs." *VSpir* 22 (1952) 332-33. Diodore's disciple Theodore of Mopsuestia quoted the opinion in *Quaest. in Gen.*, chap. 1, Interr. 10 (PG 90. 107-10). However, the more influential disciple John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407), who passed down to the Latin Fathers Diodore's linkage of the image with domination, clearly asserted that domination was given to the female as well as the male (*Gen. homil.* 10.4; PG 53. 86). There does not appear to be evidence to support the contention of Arnold Williams that "In the early Church it was often thought that woman was not made in the image of God" (*The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527-1633* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1948) 87.

Thus we have evidence that during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, misreadings of Paul were utilized to justify the position that woman is not in the image of God, and that this viewpoint was passed down for posterity by both canon law and theology. However, as is shown by Robert Javelet's thorough study of the image of God in twelfth-century theologians, a study which is unusual in that it raises the question of this paper, the bulk of theologians from Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1033-1109) to Alain de Lille (ca. 1116-1202) considered both man and woman as beings created in the image of God.<sup>17</sup> Thus, although the High Middle Ages produced denials that woman was in God's image, that viewpoint was a minority viewpoint even then.

It is the contention of this paper that the argument that woman was created in God's image has historical roots deep within the Jewish and Christian religious traditions and was well represented in the literature of biblical commentary available to the European reader during the Renaissance and Reformation. I would like to make this literature equally available to the twentieth-century reader in order to indicate that there is a usable tradition for women within the Judeo-Christian heritage.<sup>18</sup> The paper will focus on the formative ancient and early medieval period of Western thought because this period provided the major texts for later exegesis of the Bible. Emphasis will be on writers who not only had an impact on religious circles of their day, but who

<sup>17</sup>Robert Javelet, *Image et ressemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselme à Alain de Lille* (ca. 1128-1202) (2 vols; Strasbourg: Letouzey & Ane, 1967) 1. 236-45; 2. 206-11.

<sup>18</sup>In women's studies of the Judeo-Christian tradition there is a tension between what I label "feminist reinterpretation" and "feminist outrage": this tension existed in the late medieval and renaissance debates on women as well. Critically examining the outrageous biblical statements on women is a necessary part of scholarly women's studies but would require popular communication of a complex and subtle hermeneutics in order to improve the position of women among people who consider the Bible authoritative. In the religious ages, "feminist reinterpretation" was recognized as the better tactic. As an example, see Maire de Gournay, "L'Egalité des hommes et des femmes" (1622) and "Grief des dames" (1626) in Mario Schiff, *La Fille d'alliance de Montaigne, Marie de Gournay* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1910). In the former she lined up classical and religious authorities to prove the equality of man and woman; in the latter she expressed grief and outrage at how men, particularly her contemporaries, had scorned women. The decline of religious belief in the last few centuries has provided the backdrop to the rise of the "feminist outrage" school, and that approach has further advanced the decline of religious belief. As a prominent example of "feminist outrage" driving a woman out of a church, see Mary Daly, "Feminist Post-Christian Introduction," *The Church and the Second Sex* (2d ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1975). A classic work which set the tone for both modern "feminist reinterpretation" and "feminist outrage" and whose history reveals the danger that women's studies on religious subjects may alienate from its ranks religious women is Elizabeth Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* (1895; reprint ed., New York: Arno, 1972). A current theoretical presentation of "feminist reinterpretation" is Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *JAAR* (1973) 30-48.

continued to be respected during the medieval and early modern periods.

The Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabbah will give us insight into the rabbinical tradition. Philo and Origen will show the transition to a multi-layered exegesis of the text. Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa will indicate variety within the Greek Church Fathers. Ambrose and Augustine will represent diversity among the Latin Church Fathers. The selection is intended to reveal a spectrum of the formative traditional interpretations of the female-male dimension of man's creation in the image of God.

#### Talmud and Midrashim

The Babylonian Talmud, which reports discussions in the rabbinical academies of Babylonia between the second and fifth centuries A.D., is a major source of ancient Jewish thought, as well as a major text of the continuing Orthodox Jewish tradition.<sup>19</sup> The portions of the rabbinic tradition which relate to the original nature of mankind are primarily *haggada*, folklore, rather than *halakah*, legalistic controversy. Such stories were often meant to be taken "with a grain of salt," and there was no attempt by rabbis to consolidate contradictory versions of the same story into a clearcut system. From the sixth through the twelfth centuries, *haggadic* amplification of the Hebrew Bible continued to be written down in Midrashim. This study will not chronologically trace ideas of assorted rabbis, a concern of modern higher criticism, but instead will topically analyze the ideas to gain a comprehension of the contrasts between medieval Jewish and medieval Christian views of the image of God in woman.

As the Talmud was heir to the Old Testament concept of the integral physical and spiritual unity of a human being, the "image of God" as it appears in the Talmud sometimes refers to man's spirit, sometimes to the body, but usually to both together, to the full living person. The physical resemblance explains the application of God's command against graven images to making replicas of the human face; man should not make an image of the human face for that object would imply the divine image (*Abod. Zar.* 43a-43b). A physical comparison that excludes woman from the image is Rabbi Nathan's statement "Adam too was born circumcised, as it says 'And God created man in His own image'" (*Abot R. Nat.*, chap. 20; also on Seth, chap. 2).<sup>20</sup> Spiritual

<sup>19</sup>*The Babylonian Talmud*, trans. into English with notes, glossary, and indices under the editorship of Rabbi Isidore Epstein (35 vols.; London: Soncino, 1952). Higher criticism of the Talmud has appeared in scholarly print only since 1973. See Jacob Neusner, "History of Earlier Judaism: Some New Approaches," *HR* 16 (1977) 212-36, and idem, "Comparing Judaisms," *HR* 18 (1978) 177-91.

<sup>20</sup>Menahem Kasher, ed., *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation: A Millennial Anthology* (New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1953) 1. 66, 171.



resemblance between man and God is declared in the following physical analogy: "Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, fills the whole world, so the soul fills the body. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, sees, but is not seen, so the soul sees but is not itself seen" (*Ber.* 10a). Common in the Talmud and in the Midrashim is the folk tale that the first human being had extraordinary size, beauty, and spirit, all of which revealed him to be the image of God (*Sanh.* 38b).<sup>21</sup>

While commentary on the original physical and spiritual perfection of mankind usually referred only to *adam*, generic progenitor of the species, not clarifying whether the first woman was also so extraordinary, one revealing passage did compare the first parents with one another and with later progeny: "I discerned his [Adam's] two heels, and they were like two orbs of the sun. Compared with Sarah, all other people are like a monkey to a human being, and compared with Eve Sarah was like a monkey to a human being, and compared with Adam Eve was like a monkey to a human being, and compared with the *Shechinah* (Divinity) Adam was like a monkey to a human being" (*B. Bar.* 58a). The first woman thus was more in God's image than were later members of degenerated mankind: even Sarah, Abraham's wife, surpassed later people, presumably including males: however, Eve was not as perfect as Adam, and thus not as much a "likeness" of the Divinity. The belief in the physical as well as the spiritual decline of the human race is also found in Philo and Augustine, but for them only the spiritual degeneration, not the physical diminuation, revealed the dimming of God's image in man.<sup>22</sup>

The rabbis of the Talmudic period were aware of the contrasts between the statement "male and female created he them" and the Genesis recounting of Adam's creation from the earth and of Eve's later creation from Adam's rib.<sup>23</sup> The concern was whether God had changed his plans. A passage which resolved the dilemma divided up the sixth day in which God created man and woman in his image into twelve hours. In the first five hours Adam was created, in the seventh hour Eve was created, in the eighth hour they entered the marriage bed from which time Cain and his twin sister were conceived (*Sanh.* 38b).

<sup>21</sup>Kasher, *Encyclopedia*, 66, 254. Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964) 61-62. Folklore on the extraordinary physical appearance of the first man seeped into Christian popular tradition as well (Williams, *Common Expositor*, 71-72).

<sup>22</sup>George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966) 35-36, 52, 76-77.

<sup>23</sup>While for clarity I shall refer to the treatment by the Talmudic authors and by the Church Fathers of the contrasts between "Genesis 1" and "Genesis 2," the reader should note that the division of the Bible into chapters was introduced into the Christian tradition by Stephen Langton (d. 1228) Smalley, *Bible in the Middle Ages*, 222-24).

Another midrash suggested that God created man on the sixth day in God's image but did not on that day bring woman into existence. God first had all the animals pass in pairs before Adam. Jealous, Adam tried coupling with each female but found no satisfaction. God created Eve in fulfillment of Adam's cry "Every creature but I has a proper mate" (*Gen. Rab. 17.4; Yebam. 63a*). The tale accorded with Hebrew scorn for bestiality while stressing God's intention to wait before creating woman until man longed for her. The stress in the recounting of Eve's creation is on her needed role in procreation.

Hebrew willingness to consider the possibility that God changed his plans is revealed also by the extra-Talmudic legends of the creation of two previous women. One was Lilith, the female who asserted her equality with man and was transformed into a demon who harms infants; the other was the first Eve, who was created from Adam with Adam conscious and watching.<sup>24</sup>

A merger of Genesis 1 and 2 occurred in the influential blessing of the bridegrooms, said on the seven days following a marriage. It is a blessing of rejoicing to bride and bridegroom, which commemorates the first human marriage in the Garden of Eden. Its first three blessings, which alter the order of the Genesis narrative, however, inspired a controversy: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe," (1) "who has created all things to his glory," and (2) "the Creator of man," and (3) "who has created man in his image, in the image of the likeness of his form, and has prepared unto him out of himself, a building forever" (*Ketub. 7b*). A separate blessing thus exists for the creation of man and for the creation of man in God's image. It is this third blessing which mentions the image which mentions woman. Eve is traditionally referred to as the building, built from Adam. Herein, in this influential wedding blessing, Eve's creation is seen in its least misogynous light, as a building out of the creature in God's image, and thus in the image herself. However, not all the rabbis were happy with this collection of benedictions; and the Talmud reports that Rabbi Levi, on the wedding of his son, omitted the second benediction. Some thought that this indicated he believed in only one formation, that of man and woman in God's image, and that the traditional double blessing indicated belief in two formations, one of Adam from dust, and one of Eve from the rib. The rabbinical answer was that all agree there was only one formation: by omitting the second benediction Rabbi Levi stressed the intention of God to create man and woman, whereas the traditional benediction indicated not only God's intention, but how it happened—man formed

<sup>24</sup>Graves and Patai, *Hebrew Myths*, 65-69. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913) 1.64-69 and nn. in vol. 7. For a woman's skillful recounting of the first story of Eve, see *Sanh. 39a*.

first, woman after from him. This latter viewpoint of the traditional blessing was supported by Rabbi Judah who asked: "It is written 'And God created man in His own image' (Gen 1:27) and it is written 'Male and female created He them' (Gen 5:2). How is this [to be understood]? [In this way:] In the beginning it was the intention [of God] to create two [human beings] and in the end [only] one [human being] was created" (*Kerub.* 7b, 8a). God originally intended to create two human beings but changed his plans to create one human form out of which the second would be built. This viewpoint seems to have had some influence, for it is repeated under Rabbi Abbahu's name in two other tractates of the Talmud (*Erub.* 18a; *Ber.* 61a). It is significant that in recognizing this shift in God's intention, there is no question whether woman was intended in the original scheme of things; the question was whether two bodies were to be created at once or one from the other.

A repeated Talmudic explanation for the single formation of man and woman is the hermaphroditic one: *adam* was bisexual. The later Christian tradition had nothing but scorn for the Jewish idea that the first human being created by God was both man and woman, a complete generic source for the human species. Probably gaining knowledge of the legend through oral tradition, Augustine (354-430), the most influential single source for commentary on the image of God, briefly dismissed the Hebrew idea of an hermaphrodite.<sup>25</sup> As an example of a Christian scholastic who gained firsthand knowledge of Hebrew sources, Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349) devoted almost a full column of commentary to analyzing and rejecting the Hebrew textual basis for the idea of an original hermaphrodite.<sup>26</sup> Gaining knowledge of the Jewish legend from Nicholas of Lyra and probably from more popular sources which provided him with more "obscene details" (i.e., legend on how the original man-woman performed sex), Martin Luther, despite his utilization of Genesis 1 and 2 to defend marriage, bequeathed to the Protestant world the following: "These are Talmudic tales, and yet they had to be mentioned so that we might see the malice of the devil, who suggests such absurd ideas to human beings."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>J. E. Sullivan, *The Image of God: The Doctrine of St. Augustine and Its Influence* (Dubuque, IA: The Priory, 1963). Frank Egleston Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature. A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1912) 64.

<sup>26</sup>*Biblia Latina cum postillis Nicolai Lyra* (4 vols.; Venice, 1481) I, Gen 1[:26-27], sig. C2<sup>v</sup> col. 2-C3<sup>r</sup> col. 1. Viewing the passage as an anticipation of Genesis 2, he twice declared, "Human nature was first created in the masculine sex alone; and afterwards woman was formed from the side of man" (na[tura] humana p[rimo] sit formata in sexu masculine t[ant]um; et postea mulier sit formata de costa viri).

<sup>27</sup>Martin Luther, *Enarrationes in I librum Mose* (1535-45), WA 42, on Gen 1:27. Translation from *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5* in *Luther's Works* (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; St. Louis: Concordia, 1958) vol. 1, Gen 1:27.

Later Christian scorn for the hermaphroditic interpretation contrasts with a very favorable attitude expressed in Gnostic circles in the early Christian era. Marcus, who prayed to the "Mother," wrote that "humanity, which was formed according to the image and likeness of God (Father and Mother) was masculo-feminine." Theodotus explained Gen 1:27 by "the male and female elements together constitute the finest production of the Mother Wisdom." Gen 1:26-27 was utilized to point out the masculine-feminine dimension of God which corresponded to the masculine-feminine dimension of the original human being. Evaluating these writings which were excluded from the NT collection, Elaine Pagels states, "By the time the process of sorting the various writings ended—probably as late as the year 200—virtually all the feminine imagery for God had disappeared from orthodox Christian tradition."<sup>28</sup>

Within the Jewish tradition, the tale of the "hermaphrodite" was *haggada*. However, as I shall show, the legend harmonized well with a stress on the male-female dimension of generic man *adam* (a view that is completely distorted by Bible translations which consistently capitalize the term as a proper name "Adam"), a belief that God intended human beings to live in marital union, and a belief that a human being can become truly in the image of God only when united with another in a procreative human couple. In the doctrine of the Kabbalah, the medieval mystical teaching that acquired an ever-increasing influence in Jewish thought from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries and had strong impact on Christians during the Renaissance, the notion of *adam* as a hermaphrodite was expanded to include the corresponding notion that the God in whose image *adam* was formed, has both a male and a female dimension.

The Talmudic explanation for the single formation of man and woman as a hermaphrodite is based on textual analysis of the description in Gen 2:20-21 of Eve's formation from Adam's rib, yet it has some resemblance to the speech of "Aristophanes" in Plato's

<sup>28</sup>Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, 1.18.2, and Clement of Alexandria, *Exc. Theod.*, 21.1, cited in Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979) 89. Also, see Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs: A Journal of Women and Society* 2 (1976) reprinted in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (ed. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow; New York: Harper & Row, 1979) 107-19; Rose Arthur, "Feminine Motifs in Eight Nag Hammadi Documents" (Th. D. diss.; Graduate Theological Union, 1979).

<sup>29</sup>*The Zohar* (1280-86), trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (5 vols.; London: Soncino, 1931) I. *Ber.* 21b-22a, 34b, 37b; "Kabbala," *Encl. Lud.* 10. 638-46; Joseph Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University, 1944); Elizabeth Stanton (*Woman's Bible*, 106-12) recognized that the *Zohar* could be utilized by those seeking to de-masculinize the Western language for describing God.

*Symposium*.<sup>30</sup> The term "rib" (*tsela*) is sometimes rendered as "side" in accordance with Exod 26:20, sometimes "face," and sometimes "tail" (*Ber.* 61a). The crux is that it is an extra part intended to become woman: adam contained both sexes until Eve was separated out. It was as if there was a pair of Siamese twins subsequently sawed in two. Rabbi Jeremiah, son of Eleazar (third century), thought the translation as "face" implied that Adam originally was two-faced, one at front and one behind, in accordance with the Psalm "Behind and before has Thou formed me" (Ps 139:5). Rabbinical discussion ensued on which face went in front. The conclusion was that man's face did, for a man should not walk behind a woman, even his own wife, especially on a bridge. Support came from the homily "Whoever crosses a river behind a woman will have no portion in the future world," and from Gen 24:61, "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode the camels and followed the man" (*Ber.* 61a-b; *Erub.* 18a-b).

The dominance of the hermaphrodite view of the being created in God's image is indicated by reports that, in the LXX commissioned by King Ptolemy (285-47 B.C.), the seventy-two elders wrote in Greek, "Male and female he created him." They wrote "him" instead of "them" to prevent anyone from thinking they were created separate at the beginning (*Meg.* 9a). The language is important, for, from Augustine on, the Christian tradition grounded its argument against the hermaphrodite on the plural pronoun. However, it is also reported in a fifth-century Palestinian Midrash that in King Ptolemy's LXX, female (*n'kebah*) was changed to (*n'kubaw*), apertures, and the third clause of Gen 1:27 was rendered "Male with his apertures created he them," indicating man with his body parts was created (*Gen. Rab.* 8-9).<sup>31</sup> The editor indicates the change was made to avoid the implication that God was male and female and to explain the plural "them." Such a version would qualify as bypassing, if not denying, the biblical implication that the female is also in God's image. However, the "hermaphrodite" interpretation of the LXX translation was more in the mainstream of ancient Jewish thought. The views attributed to Rabbi Jeremiah, son of Eleazar, were most often quoted. The influential Midrash Rabbah cited the rabbi for deriving the view that Adam was originally a hermaphrodite from "Male and female created he them and called their name Adam" (Gen 5:2-3; ~~Gen 5:2-3~~ 8).

The notion of the unity of man and woman as the image of God led the rabbis to consider men and women fully human and in God's blessing when they were united as husband and wife. Thus Rabbi Eleazar ben

<sup>30</sup>Plato, *Symposium*, 189C-193E.

<sup>31</sup>*Midrash Rabbah*, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncino, 1951) vol. 1.

Pedat (d. 279) was reported as saying, "Any man who has no wife is no proper man; for it is said, 'Male and female created he them and called their name Adam'" (*Yebam. 62b-63a*). However, he directly went on to add that a man is not a true man if he owns no land; this addition indicated that having a wife was analogous to a property possession. Also, he then interpreted "help meet," of which the Hebrew (*ezer k'negdo*) may also be translated "help against him," as that if he is worthy she helps him; if unworthy, she is against him. This view has been popularized by Rashi of the twelfth century.<sup>32</sup> The idea that a human being needs a spouse to fulfill the image of God was a theme running through Jewish tradition which frowned on celibacy. Biblical commentary thus joined the third phrase of Gen 1:27 with Gen 1:28: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply. . .'" An example is: "The sages observed: a man without a wife lives without blessing, without life, without joy, without a helpmate, in want of all that is good, and without peace, without a blessing, for it says, 'God blessed them'—only when they were a pair" (*Midr. Psalm 59*; also see *Yebam. 62b*).

As we shall see, the Church Fathers, with their insistence on the superiority of celibacy to marriage, thought man had a greater potential to grow fully in the image of God if he or she had no spouse. The rejection of the notion that only together do man and woman fulfill the image of God is particularly interesting in Martin Luther and John Calvin, who, with their rejection of a celibate clergy, came close to the Jewish tradition in utilizing Genesis as a justification for the divine institution of marriage. In their commentaries on Gen 5:2, both pointedly clarified that their view must be distinguished from that of the Jews, who do not call a man *adam* until he has a wife.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup>*The Pentateuch and Rashi's Commentary* (eds. Rabbi Abraham ben Isaiah and Rabbi Benjamin Sharfmin; Brooklyn, NY: S.S. & R., 1949) vol. 1, Gen. 2:18. Rashi's commentary has been a classic Jewish introduction to the Bible and is still widely distributed within the Jewish community. Its influence on Christian exegesis is evidenced by the contact of Hugh of St. Victor (ca. 1141) and Andrew of St. Victor (1110-75) with the schools at Troyes founded by Rashi (1041-1105). He was the "Rabbi Solomon" often quoted by Hebraicist Nicholas of Lyra, and his works were available in the 16th and 17th centuries in Latin printed editions ("Rashi [Rabbi Shelomoh ben Yisshaq]," *NCE* 12, 85-86, and Smalley, *Bible in the Middle Ages*, 83-195, 365-66). For John Milton's (1608-74) extensive use of the helpmeet vs. the help-against-him theme, see Harris Francis Fletcher, *Milton's Rabbinical Readings* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1930) 174-75, and John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and Paradise Lost* (New Haven: Yale University, 1970) 59-97.

<sup>33</sup>*Mosis libri V, cum Johannis Calvinii commentaris*, Gen 5:2: "Quod nugantur Judaei, solos coniuges vocari Adam, refellitur ex creationis historia, nec sane aliud voluit spiritus hoc loco quam post ordinatum coniugium, fuisse virum & uxorem instar unius hominis." Calvin, however, in his commentary of Gen 1:27, approached the Jewish view when he indicated that the male is half of human nature, and that together with the female,

While for the rabbis there was no dispute that marriage was the proper state of the human species, there was debate on whether the command to multiply was given to woman as well as to man. One practical reason for this concern was the desire to excuse a woman for whom no marriage match had been made from the obligation to procreate. The Mishnah around which Talmudic debate ensued had declared that "A man is commanded concerning the duty of propagation, but not a woman" (*Yebam.* 65a-b). One argument for this view was that, unlike woman, man's nature was to subdue; thus both the command to multiply and to subdue the earth were given to man alone. Again, Rashi popularized the misogynist side of a Talmudic debate.<sup>34</sup> In rebuttal, other rabbis took their stand on the plural form of the two Hebrew commands and argued that both man and woman are obligated to procreate. An example they cited wherein the Mishnah was taken too literally was the case of a woman who experienced the painful birth of twins, one birth three months after the other. She dressed as a man before her husband, Rabbi Hiyya, and asked whether a woman is commanded to procreate. On hearing his recitation of the traditional Mishnah, she drank a sterilizing potion, much to his regret (*Yebam.* 65b-66a).

The command to procreate was important, for it led to the perpetuation of beings in the image of God, duplicating for each generation the passing down of the image from Adam to Seth (Gen 5:3). A Mishnah said, "A man shall not abstain from the performance of the duty of propagation of the race unless he already has children. [As to the number] Beth Shammai ruled: two males; and Beth Hillel ruled: male and a female; for it is stated in the scripture, 'male and female created He them.'" Beth Shammai took his idea of two males from Moses' two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, but Beth Hillel took his view of the duty to give

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he becomes one: "Acsi virum dixisset esse dimidium hominem, hac lege additam fuisse illi sociam mulierem ut ambo unum sint. . . ." Luther's commentary on Gen 5:2 is based on Nicholas of Lyra, Gen 5:2.

<sup>34</sup>Gen 1:28 is the command to Adam and Eve to multiply and to subdue the earth. Rashi, Gen 1:28, pointed out that the Hebrew word which has been read "and subdue it," may be read "and he shall subdue her." He drew the moral that the man masters the female that she may not be a loose woman, and thus implying that both the command to be fruitful and to subdue were given to man alone. Rashi justified subordination in marriage as part of the God-created state before mankind's fall. That Rashi's interpretation was only one among several medieval Jewish interpretations is indicated by Nachmanides (1195-1270) who stressed the image in man and woman and stated that the command to have dominion over the earth applied to both man and woman (Rambon [Nachmanides], *Commentary on the Torah*, trans. Rabbi Charles Chavel [New York: Shilo, 1971] Genesis 1-2.) Note the development within Christian exegesis of the minority view that the command to dominate was given to man alone in n. 16 above.

birth to a male and a female from the narrative of the creation (*Yebam.* 61b-62a). As the policy became incorporated into the *Shulhan Arukh* of 1565, a man was obligated to beget a son and a daughter. If the son is a eunuch or the daughter is incapable of conception, a man is obligated to have more children.<sup>35</sup> Thus "created he male and female" is to be repeated for each generation, allowing for continued propagation of the species in the image of God. Such a viewpoint prevailed despite derogatory attitudes to the birth of female offspring (*Nid.* 31b).

The encouragement of procreation of both a male and a female child conformed to the biblical passage "male and female created he them" (*Gen* 1:27). However, there was a difference of opinion on whether, in the act of procreation, man and woman were acting in the image of God. Several rabbis had said that man was in the image of God in that he stands upright, speaks, understands, and sees, as do the ministering angels, and that he is like lower animals in that he eats and drinks, procreates, excretes, and dies (*Gen. Rab.* 8.3-11). Celestial beings thus are also in the image of God: "Said the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Behold I will create him [man] in [My] image and likeness [so that he will partake] of the [character of the] celestial beings'" (*Gen. Rab.* 8.11). No explicit mention is made of woman's creation in the image of God; by implication, however, "male and female created he them" is linked to the command to procreate rather than to the creation in God's image.

The ancient and medieval Hebrew tradition therefore posed several interpretations of *Gen* 1:27. One translation tried to change the passage in a way that omitted a separate "female." Some rabbis related woman's creation not to the image of God but to procreation. Other rabbis denied that dominion over the animals was given to woman as to man and viewed man alone as an exemplar of God's commanding nature. Tradition emphasized that Adam and Eve were more in the image of God than succeeding generations. However, the dominant thread running through the Talmudic commentary was that the image of God in man is not complete until man and woman are together in the married, procreative state. The emphasis on the need of man for woman and of woman for man explains the rabbinical legend that *adam* was a hermaphrodite, having a side that was to become the male and a side that was to become the female. For those rabbis who held that view, all their statements about original *adam* applied equally to woman and man. Through that legend, they emphasize that in the unity of man and woman there is the image of God.

<sup>35</sup>Joseph Caro, *Code of Hebrew Law (Shulhan 'aruk)*, Hebrew text and English trans. by Chaim Denberg (Montreal: Jurisprudence, 1954) chap. 145.



## Philo and Origen

Philo (20 B.C.—ca. 50 A.D.) was an Alexandrian Jew who reinterpreted the OT in the light of Pythagorean, Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic thought. On one hand, his works reveal the eclectic, assimilationist culture of the hellenized Jew in the period preceding the compilation of the Talmud and preceding the rise of Christianity; on the other hand, the influence of his works on Christian authors such as Origen forms a bridge between ancient Judaism and Christianity.<sup>36</sup>

To some extent, Philo already found a hellenized Judaism in the Greek OT which he used. In the translation of "image" from the Hebrew *zelem* to the Greek *eikon*, a term which contained anthropomorphic, corporeal imagery was transformed into an abstract term for which there was a previous Greek philosophical tradition.<sup>37</sup> In his *De opificio mundi*, an account of the world's creation, Philo interpreted the image of God in man to be a purely spiritual resemblance between human nature and God: "Let no one represent the likeness as one to a bodily form; for neither is God in human form, nor is the human body God-like. No, it is in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul, that the word 'image' is used."<sup>38</sup> His major break with rabbinic tradition is the Platonism of his sharp, unbiblical split between body and soul; however, Philo's view of the "image" was to be duplicated by Jewish medieval philosophers such as Moses Maimonides who also reacted against the anthropomorphism of rabbinic *haggada* (*Guide of the Perplexed* 1.1).<sup>39</sup> However, Jewish adoption of a purely spiritual concept of "image" revealed the influence of Christianity which, partly under the immediate impact of Philo, had long before opted for a non-corporeal concept of the "image of God in man." It is ironic that the Jewish tradition which accepted the physical and spiritual resemblance of human nature with God forbids iconographic anthropomorphism, while the Christian tradition which rejected a notion of physical resemblance encouraged art which visually portrayed Adam and Eve as in the image of God.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University, 1947) 1. 3-115.

<sup>37</sup>N. W. Porteous, "Image of God," *J.D.S.* 682-84; Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris: Aubier, 1956) 33-40.

<sup>38</sup>Philo, *Op. Mund.* 23.69.

<sup>39</sup>"Anthropomorphism" and "Man, Nature of," *Enc. Jud.* For the most influential Jewish de-anthropomorphizing statement, see Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963) 21-23.

<sup>40</sup>It is Gernot Ladner's stimulating thesis that as the Church Fathers freed themselves from a corporeal notion of *imago Dei*, Christian art took on its unique spiritual qualities which distinguished it from classical art, and that the Romanesque trend towards naturalization of human features corresponded to the reawakening of the notion of the unity of the body and soul. Ladner's passages from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do

Philo viewed the being referred to in Gen 1:27 as *anthropos*, the genus of mankind. Philo made a distinction between genus and species. Genesis 1 referred to the "creation" of genera, orders of different kinds of beings, a purely incorporeal creation. Genesis 2 referred to the simultaneous "formation" of species, that which has a material existence.<sup>41</sup> Referring to Gen 1:27 Philo wrote, "And when Moses had called the genus 'man,' quite admirably did he distinguish its species, adding that it had been created 'male and female,' and this though its individual members had not yet taken shape" (*Op. mund.* 76). This passage has led to two interpretations of Philo's view of sex in generic man: one that *anthropos* was androgynous; the other that *anthropos* was asexual. The first interpretation is supported by his allegorical interpretation of Genesis, in which he states: "Having first fashioned man as a genus, in which the prophet says that there is the male and female genus, he afterwards makes Adam, the finished form or species" (*Leg. alleg.* 2.13).<sup>42</sup> However, Philo ridiculed the androgynous myth as found in Plato's *Symposium*, and he generally presented a philosophical, non-mythological approach to the creation. Another discussion of the first man indicated that it was the archetype of man, one which transcended sex distinctions: "He that was after the [Divine] image was an idea or type of seal, an object of thought [only], incorporeal, neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible" (*Op. mund.* 66.134). Emphasizing this passage, one would see that Philo denied that categories "male" and "female" exist in the part of man that is in the image of God.<sup>43</sup> This latter asexual view of first man is what influenced the founders of the Christian Church.

Genesis 2, for Philo as for many other Hebrew and Christian writers, was the opening for his derogatory comments on female human nature (*Questiones et solutiones in Genesim*, 1.23, 25-29). The essential point is that while rejecting a literal interpretation of woman's creation from man's side, he created an allegory in which man is *nous*, "reason," and woman is *aisthesis*, "sense-perception" (*Leg. alleg.* 2.11.38). Mixing

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not come from discussions specifically on the "image of God." Gerhart Ladner, *Ad Imaginem Dei: The Image of Man in Medieval Art* (Latrobe, PA: Archabbey, 1954). For reference to exceptional Jewish medieval visual portrayals of God and of Adam and Eve see "Anthropomorphism," *EncJud.* 3: 57-58.

<sup>41</sup>Emile Bréhier (*Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* [Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1925] 121-26) indicates Philo's confusions between the two concepts of man.

<sup>42</sup>C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935) 151. Coincidentally, androgynous views appear in speeches of "Philo" to "Sophia" in Leone Ebreo, *Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'amore, 1501-2)*, trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and John H. Barnes, intro. by Cecil Roth (London: Soncino, 1937) 348-65.

<sup>43</sup>Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Philo's Use of the Categories of Male and Female* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970) 20-21, 83-84, 87-88.

theoretical discussion with disparaging comments about actual women, he regularly associated the female with the lower parts of the soul, with the irrational and the sensual and with a whole range of ignoble activity. In this distinction, sexuality is attributed to the female, and her creation, which aroused desires for bodily pleasure in the first man, was the beginning of evil (*Op. mund.* 58.151-52). Philo thus diverged from rabbinical tradition, which had viewed man and woman together as completing the image of God; Philo saw the union of first man with woman as a departure from man's previous clinging to God. With a strong asceticism, Philo saw the growing in God's image as "becoming a virgin" or "becoming a man"; these two phrases were to be linked also in the thought of Jerome.<sup>44</sup> "Becoming a man" is to let the masculine element, reason, dominate over the feminine element, sense-perception and desire. Thus, to the extent one departs from bodily sexual existence, one enters in relationship with the Divinity and one grows in the image of God. No man should be alone: while earthly man seeks an earthly helpmate, woman, archetypal man created in the Divine image is in union with the Logos (*Leg. alleg.* 2.2.4). While Philo allowed the possibility that both woman and man would through ascetic life approximate the Logos, or image, of God, the association of actual women with derogatory notions of woman as sense-perception made it less likely that they would be in the image of God. Those women who become in the image of God have forsaken "all that is after the manner of women" (Baer, *Philo's Use of Categories*, Appendix 1). Christianity would refer to such women as the sisters of the Church, married to the Divine Logos, Christ.

In turning to the Christian tradition, one must recognize that much of the Christian commentary on the "image of God" and the historical work on that commentary has focused on the NT concept of Christ, the Divine Logos, as the second Adam and the NT promise of renewal of the "image" through Christ.<sup>45</sup> In our focus on the relatively neglected topic of whether the patristic tradition viewed woman as in the image of God, we shall be focusing the discussion on the treatment of prelapsarian man and woman. We shall see that the development of a multilayered

<sup>44</sup>"From a spouse, she has become your sister, from a woman, a man, from a subject, an equal . . . under the same yoke she hastens with you towards the kingdom of heaven." Jerome, *Ep. 71 ad Lucinum*, quoted in Eleanor Commo McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Women in Medieval Theology," *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. Rosemary Reuther; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) 73. Early origins of the linking of virginity with manliness and spirituality trace to Philo as well as to Gnostic sources extant in his time (R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* [New York, 1959] 125).

<sup>45</sup>John 1:14, 12:45, 16:9; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15, 3:14-15. See, e.g., Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1949) 53-60, 83-107, 185-203; David Cairns, *The Image of God* (London: SCM, 1959).

exegesis of biblical works contributed to a variety of interpretations of the meaning of Gen 1:27. An author important in innovating in the area of biblical exegesis and in transmitting Philonic interpretation to the Christian world was the Christian Alexandrian Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254).

An Origenist controversy raged at the end of the fourth century. Later, the condemnation of fifteen anathemata by Justinian's Council of 553, precisely on the issue of speculative Platonizing of creation, incarnation, and resurrection of the body, led to the destruction of most of Origen's writings. Yet, his homilies on Genesis, along with other of his works, had been translated into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia (345–410). Origen was read seriously by the fourth-century Cappadocian Fathers: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa; by fourth-century Latin Fathers such as Jerome and Ambrose; by twelfth-century theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St.-Thierry; and by the Renaissance authors Pico della Mirandola and Erasmus.<sup>46</sup>

Like Philo before him, Origen considered man in the image of God to the extent of man's spiritual likeness to the Logos. Earlier Christians who had viewed the image of God as corporeal as well as Christians who had viewed the image of God as both corporeal and spiritual came under Origen's attack, for he thought that such Christians would of logical necessity also view the Archetype of the image, God, as a corporeal or as a composite being (*Hom. in Gen.* 1.13).<sup>47</sup> Rufinus' translation of Origen bequeathed to posterity a Philonic distinction between "fecit Deus hominem" (Gen 1:27) and "Plasmavit Deus hominem" (Gen 2:7), between man "made" or "created" in God's image and man "formed" from the earth (Origen, *Hom. in Gen.* 1.12; Philo, *De op. mund.* 46.134). In the first account, God created an invisible, immortal essence—man's soul; in the second account, God formed from the ground and from Adam's rib corporeal beings. The image of God does not exist within the bodies of the beings formed, but only within their created souls, within the interior human being.

Original to Origen was the notion that the formation of man and woman did not take place until mankind sinned. God in his foreknowledge saw that man would sin and thus in his creation of mankind in the image of God allowed for the distinction between male

<sup>46</sup>H. Crouzel, "Origen and Origenism," *NCE* 10. 767–77; Henri de Lubac, *On First Principles—Origen* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973) intro.

<sup>47</sup>Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim* (PG 12. 146–262); Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image*, 66–70, 153–56.

For other references in Origen's corpus to the double creation, see Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image*, 148 n. 8.

and female (*Comment. in Joan.* 20.20).<sup>49</sup> Unlike Philo, Origen thought the pure intelligences created in God's images were dressed in ethereal bodies, like the bodies in which mankind will be resurrected. The different terms for the sexes in the Hebrew text of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 allowed Origen to point out that the sex distinction of corporeal beings was not the same as that in ethereal beings (*Comment. in Matthaeum* 14.16). That the beings in God's image are plural and that they have distinction of sex is indicated by his statement that Adam and Eve at first saw the world through spiritual eyes but that after the fall they saw it through carnal eyes.<sup>50</sup>

Origen gave several interpretations to Gen 1:27. On the literal level, male and female were mentioned to explain how after bodily formation, mankind was to increase and multiply. The last phrase of Gen 1:27 thus explained Gen 1:28. Also Scripture indicated that, like other works of God's creation, the sun and the moon, the heavens and the earth, man was created with a complement—woman (*Hom. in Gen.* 1.14). On the allegorical level, Origen compared the male to the *spiritus*, and the female to the *anima* in the interior human being. If concord exists between them, then the human being engenders good sons, that is, good deeds, which fill the earth. Such a human being controls his flesh, not allowing any rebellion of flesh against *spiritus*. If, however, the *anima* which is married to *spiritus* gives in to sensual desire, she commits adultery of the body and engenders illegitimate offspring, that is, evil deeds. She will accordingly be punished (1.15). Origen extended the allegory to explain that the animals over whom mankind is to have dominion are the carnal desires (1.16). Like Philo, Origen distinguished higher and lower parts of the soul by the symbol of the male and the female respectively, and thus instituted a sexist vocabulary by which both men and women are praised for their spiritual "masculinity" and rebuked for their spiritual "femininity."<sup>51</sup> On a third level, what was to be called the "anagogical" or "spiritual" level, Origen viewed the male as typifying Christ and the female as typifying the Church (*Comment. in Matth.* 14.17). This interpretation followed quite logically from his insistence that man created in God's image of Gen 1:26 was no other than the Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose resemblance mankind was made (*Hom. in Gen.* 1.13) and from NT analogies between husband and wife

<sup>49</sup>*Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Joannum* (PG 14. 619-30); Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image*, 114-52, particularly n. 23; idem, *Virginité et mariage selon Origène* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962) 17-18, 26.

<sup>50</sup>*Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum* (PG 13. 1227-30); Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image*, 150-52, particularly n. 23; idem, *Virginité et mariage*, 17-18.

<sup>51</sup>Crouzel, *Virginité et mariage*, 136-39. I disagree with Crouzel's interpretation of the equivalence of the female element with the flesh (p. 137), for Origen in this allegory was making both male and female stand for spiritual faculties of the "interior homo."

and Christ and the Church (Eph 5:22-23). Thus, within the OT Origen found a prefiguration of the ultimate restoration of mankind in the image of God through Christ.

Philo and Origen thus bequeathed to posterity a variety of points of departure for explaining "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The view that the image of God is only in the soul encouraged the development of the belief that men and women may both grow spiritually in the image of God, a belief which we shall see best expressed by Basil of Caesarea and by Augustine.<sup>52</sup> The division of the soul into a higher masculine and a lower feminine part imposed a hierarchical sexist vocabulary, foreign to the text of Gen 1:27, which helped explain Eve's role in the fall of Adam and helped to justify subordination in marriage.<sup>53</sup> Particularly since the allegory was to become a commonplace in European thought, it should be stressed that the original allegory implied that both men and women could and should be "masculine" in their control of their soul and body. And lastly, the beginning of mankind was linked to the end of mankind: Origen saw the creation of man and woman as a prefiguration of the final resurrection when the Church would be unified with Christ. The defense of the view that sex distinctions, though modified, would exist in the final days became an important component in both Augustine's and Thomas Aquinas' view that man and woman are in God's image.<sup>54</sup>

#### Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa

A rare direct confrontation with the question "Is woman in God's image?" is found in the tenth homily on the *Hexaemeron* (*Six Days of Creation*) attributed to Basil of Caesarea (ca. 329-79) or to Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335-94). In dialogue form, the fourth-century Greek Father, Basil, I believe, has a woman assert that the creation of man doesn't concern her, for by the term *anthropos* the male only is intended. Then the Father suggested that in order that an ignorant person, as in his example, would not mistake the term *anthropos* for the masculine sex alone, Scripture added "Male and female created he them." Women therefore cannot claim they are too weak, for they have full strength in their soul which, like the male's, resembles God. Equally they share the privilege of creation in God's image, and thus equally can they be virtuous and do good works, and equally can they deserve reward or punishment for their deeds. For both sexes, those who are virtuous most

<sup>52</sup>For numerous authors who accepted the Philonic view that the image is only in the soul, see Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature*, 32-33, n. 4.

<sup>53</sup>For multiple examples of the allegory, see Katherine M. Proppe, "Reason and Sensuality: Patristic Psychology and Literary Aesthetic Theory in the Late Medieval Period," (doctoral diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974).

<sup>54</sup>*City of God*, 12.17 (PL 41. 778); S.T. 3.81.3, 4.

nearly possess God's image. The fact that such distinctly different corporeal forms could be in the image of God supported the author's overall contention that the image is spiritual, not corporeal.<sup>55</sup>

While stating female spiritual equality, Basil the Great attributed to women physical weakness and a likelihood not to take on the full challenge of Christianity; however, what is more important is his clear-cut confrontation with a possible woman's perspective, and his declaration that the "image of God" is a spiritual gift shared equally by men and women. When the scholar and writer Marie de Gournay (1566-1645) sought traditional support for her contention that men and women are equal, she utilized Basil's homily to declare: "Thus speaks the great Saint Basil: The Virtue of man and of woman is the same thing, since God has bestowed upon them the same creation and the same honor: 'male and female he created them.'" The argument was an important one, for she concluded her essay with the declaration that since woman is worthy to be created in the image of God, it would be blasphemy for man to upstage the Divinity by declaring that she is not worthy of the advantages and privileges of man.<sup>56</sup> And within the mainstream of Latin Church tradition, the Venerable Bede of the eighth century, like Basil, recognized that not everyone would grasp the implications for women of Gen 1:27. Therefore, in his influential biblical commentary, he declared, "For woman also was created in the image of God, in as much as she has a rational mind; but the Scripture did not think it should add this about her, which it left to be understood was in her also, because of the oneness of the union."<sup>57</sup> A similar statement, attributed to Augustine, was included within the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the

<sup>55</sup>"Paris dignitatis amborum formati sexus, paresque sunt horum actiones, paria praemia, par eorum damnatio. . . . Quandoquidem igitur feminae pari viris dignitate accipere ut ad Dei sint imaginem, pari dignitate virtute pollent, bonorumque operum edunt specimen. . . ." [κβ'] "Και ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα."—"Τὸν ἄνθρωπον, φησὶν ἡ γυνή, τί πρὸς ἐμέ; ὁ ἀνὴρ ἐγένετο· οὐ γὰρ εἶπε τὴν ἄνθρωπον, φησὶν, ἀλλὰ τῆ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου προσθήκη τὸ ἀρρενικὸν ἐπέφηεν." "Ἄλλ' ἵνα μὴ ἀμαθῶς τις τῆ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου προσηγορίᾳ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἢ μόνου κεχρημένος, προσέθηκεν· "Ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτοὺς." Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἔχει τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ γεγενῆσθαι, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ. Ὁμοίως ὁμοίμοι αἱ φύσεις, ἴσαι αἱ ἀρεταί, ἄθλα ἴσα, ἡ καταδίκη ὁμοία. Μὴ λεγέτω." Basil the Great, *De hominis structura oratio 1* (PG 30. 34-35). A good critical edition is *Basile de Césarée: Sur l'origine de l'homme (Hom. X et XI de l'Hexaemeron)* SC 160. 213-17.

<sup>56</sup>"Ainsi parle apres le grand Saint Basile: La vertue du l'homme et de la femme est mesme chose, puis que Dieu leur a descerné mesme creation et mesme honneur: 'masculum et foeminam fecit eos.'" Marie de Gournay, "L'Egalité des hommes et des femmes," 70, 77. See n. 18.

<sup>57</sup>"Et femina enim ad imaginem Dei creata est secundum id quod et ipsa habebat mentem rationalem; sed addendum hoc de illa non putavit scriptura quod propter unitatem coniunctionis etiam in illa intelligendum reliquit." Bede, *Liber quattuor in principium Genesis* (CChr) Gen 1:27, 28. (PL 91. 30 gives a slightly different punctuation.)

twelfth-century biblical "textbook" utilized in the medieval and renaissance universities.<sup>58</sup>

Brother and disciple of Basil, Gregory of Nyssa expressed a strikingly different interpretation of "male and female created he them" in his *De hominis opificio* (*On the Making of Man*), a treatise officially written to honor the deceased Basil.<sup>59</sup> On the question under discussion, however, Gregory of Nyssa in fact contradicted Basil; this contradiction makes it highly unlikely that Gregory of Nyssa was also the author of Homily 10 of the *Hexaemeron*, as many medieval and renaissance authors and some recent scholars have thought.<sup>60</sup> First of all, Gregory of Nyssa was very hesitant to give an opening to the heretical viewpoint which had seen propagation as a characteristic of the Trinitarian Godhead; thus he did not like the notion that the image was male and female, which to him implied the prototype was male and female. Consequently, Gregory of Nyssa, in an unusual interpretation, viewed Gal 3:28 as a contradiction of Gen 1:27: "Then it makes a resumption of the account of creation and says 'male and female created he them.' I presume that everyone knows that this is a departure from the Prototype: for 'in Christ Jesus,' as the apostle says, 'there is neither male nor female.' Yet the phrase declares that man is thus divided" (*De hom. op.* 16).<sup>61</sup> To reconstruct this apparent contradiction, he views the last phrase of Gen 1:27 as separate from the previous discussion of God's image. In the compound nature of man, the rational and intelligent element is in the image of God; while the irrational element, our bodily form and structure, in which we find male and female, is like the animals.

Thus while Basil had thought the last phrase of Gen 1:27 indicated clearly that woman was in the image of God, Gregory of Nyssa, while viewing woman as in an asexual sense in the image of God, thought the last phrase of Gen 1:27 was added to indicate the way in which mankind, despite its resemblance to God, resembled the animals. God, foreseeing that man would fall from the state of the angels who multiplied asexually, implanted in man the distinction of sex which allowed for the

<sup>58</sup>Gloss attributed to Augustine: "Masculum et feminam creavit eos: noluit addere imaginem Dei quod unitate coniunctionis etiam in femina intelligendum reliquit." *Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria Walafridi Strabonis* (4 vols. in 3; Strassburg: Rusch, 1481) vol. 1, Gen 1[:27], sig. A8<sup>r</sup> col. 2. A gloss attributed to Bede is also included.

<sup>59</sup>Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* (PG 44. 126-27).

<sup>60</sup>Migne included Homily 10 and 11 under Gregory (PG 44. 257A-298B) and under Basil (PG 30. 9A-61D). For the debate on authorship, see Roger Leys, *L'image de Dieu chez Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Rome: Pontifica Universitate Gregoriana, 1951) 130-38, and Javelet, *Image et ressemblance*, 2.13, n. 12.

<sup>61</sup>"Quod autem post haec redit ad expositionem opificii divini, cum ait, 'Fecit eos marem ac feminam': id opinor omnes homines perspicere, ab exemplo principe removendum esse. 'In Christo enim Jesu,' ut Apostolus inquit, 'neque mas neque femina est.' At vero Litterae sacrae diserte affirmant, hominem in marem feminamque divisum esse" (PG 44. 182).



animal and irrational mode of procreation by which mankind now multiplies (*De hom. op.* 17).<sup>62</sup> Like Origen in his literal interpretation, Gregory of Nyssa thought the mention of woman was a forecast of sin and of the need for an animal mode of procreation. This viewpoint was accentuated by the ninth-century Latin translator of Gregory of Nyssa, John Scotus Erigena, who in his work *On the Division of Nature* declared that "if man had not sinned, he would not have been subject to a division of his simplicity into bisexuality. This division is entirely devoid of the image and likeness of the divine nature and would by no means have existed. . . ."<sup>63</sup>

From the great Cappadocian brothers, there were passed down two interpretations of the last phrase of Gen 1:27: one which declared forthrightly that woman is equal in dignity to man and one that viewed the mention of woman as a forecast of sin and procreation. Given medieval acceptance of a multilayered biblical text and the Philonic idea common to both versions that God's image exists in mankind in an asexual sense, the contradiction in attitude towards womankind was not seen as a problem; instead the MS tradition often intertwined the writings of the two brothers.

However, scholars interested in the issue whether the idea of the dignity of man applied to woman would do well to attempt to isolate the influence of the disputed homily on human nature. In the patristic period Basil's *Hexaemeron*, the first of a genre important for ideas of man's origin, circulated in Greek and Latin without the last two homilies, but sometimes with Gregory's *De opificio hominis*. Later medieval MSS and renaissance printed editions, such as Erasmus' of 1532, gave a continuous rendition of the eleven homilies of the *Hexaemeron*.<sup>64</sup> Whether a reader's copy of the *Hexaemeron* ended with the tenth and eleventh homilies or instead with *De opificio hominis* would have made a significant difference on the topic of the origins of the natures of man and woman. Gregory of Nyssa has been recognized as one of the major contributors to the idea of the dignity of man; "his works" influenced such theorists of human dignity as the fifteenth-

<sup>62</sup>J. T. Muckle, "The Doctrine of St. Gregory of Nyssa on Man as the Image of God," *Medieval Studies* 7 (1945) 62-63, 69; Leys, "L'image de Dieu," 106-11.

<sup>63</sup>"Et si homo non peccaret, in geminum sexum simplicitatis suae divisionem non pateretur. Quae divisio omnino divinae naturae imaginis et similitudinis expers est, et nullo modo esset, si homo non peccaret, sicut nullo modo erit post restaurationem naturae in pristinum statum, qui post catholicam resurrectionem cunctorum hominum manifestabitur." *De divisione naturae* 4. 12 (PL 122. 799). John Scotus Erigena goes beyond Gregory of Nyssa in denying female bodies in the resurrection and thus differs from the mainstream Christian tradition (see n. 54).

<sup>64</sup>Smets and Van Esbroeck, *Sur l'origine de l'homme*, intro., 21-42, 127-52.

century Pico della Mirandola.<sup>65</sup> Often, however, MSS and printed editions of *De opificio hominis* contained also the tenth homily, either attributed to Gregory of Nyssa under the title *De hominis structura* or treated as a Basilian or disputed work.<sup>66</sup> The extent of the influence of that homily on Western notions of female and male human dignity remains to be fully determined.

Furthermore, the tenth homily's appreciation of a woman's perspective and its affirmation of equally high standards of religiosity for women and men may reflect the importance of Basil's and Gregory's sister Macrina. As presented in Gregory's biography of Macrina, Macrina's choice of an ascetic life and her noble example of living such a religious life led Basil into asceticism.<sup>67</sup>

#### Ambrose and Augustine

Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, based on Basil's nine homilies on the *Hexaemeron*, is an example of commentary on Gen 1:26-27 which, like Jerome's, does not discuss the implications of "Male and female created he them."<sup>68</sup> I pick this example of the common omission of discussion of the subject because of its obvious masculine bias and because of the contrast of Ambrose (ca. 339-97) with his "student" Augustine (354-430). After arguing that the image referred to man's soul, not his body, Ambrose made a statement based on 2 Cor 2:18 that man's unveiled face reflects the image and glory of God (*Hex.* 6.8.45). His first mention of woman appears after stating that man, fortunate to have God as his craftsman, should not erase the Divine painting:<sup>69</sup> women he criticized for applying rouge to their faces and leaving an image of ugliness and deceit (6.8.47). In this backhanded way, Ambrose recognized that woman was also created in God's image. He continued his discussion from a male-centered perspective. Utilizing 1 Cor 11:7-8, again without making any mention of woman, he declared that man (*vir*) ought not to cover his head. As he went on discussing the danger of temptation by

<sup>65</sup>See article by E. Garin, "Dignitas hominis," 112, and Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness*, 1. 185-87, 395-96, nn. 17, 22. Pico della Mirandola utilized the homily and cited Basil, but not Gregory, as one of his sources (Trinkaus, *Our Image and Likeness*, 2. 507, 794, n. 12).

<sup>66</sup>Smets and Van Esbroeck, *Sur l'origine de l'homme*, 21-42, 127-52.

<sup>67</sup>Gregory of Nyssa, "Life of St. Macrina" (*Ascetical Works*: FC 58); Rosemary Ruether, "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age," *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979) 73-74.

<sup>68</sup>*Hexaemeron libri sex* (PL 14. 134-288). Jerome (ca. 345-420) also did not comment on the subject in his *Liber Hebraicarum questionum in Genesim* (PL 23. 988).

<sup>69</sup>The influence of Origen on Ambrose's concept of a divine painting is pointed out by Gerald A. McCool, "The Ambrosian Origins of St. Augustine's Theology of the Image of God in Man," *TS* 20 (1959) 67-68.

women, the reader perceived that "man" for him was the masculine sex (6.8.49-50). If there is any doubt that the Church Father's perspective is masculine, one finds in his description of the beautiful human body, based on classical sources such as Galen and Apuleius,<sup>70</sup> that he gave only one description of the genitals, one modelled on the male (6.9).

In the *Confessions*, Augustine claimed that he learned the spiritual, non-corporeal meaning of the "image and likeness of God" from Ambrose.<sup>71</sup> It is likely that during the Holy Week of the year 386, Augustine, accompanied by his mother Monica, listened to Bishop Ambrose's nine sermons of the *Hexaemeron*. This detail has been utilized to point out Ambrosian origins for Augustine's concept of the image of God.<sup>72</sup> However, in the treatment of God's image in woman, Augustine, who viewed his mother as a model of an ideal Christian (*Conf.* 9.8), differed significantly from his "teacher."

In contrast with Ambrose, the illustrious Augustine frequently utilized Gen 1:27 in full. For Augustine, the last clause signified that God created both man and woman together in potentiality on the sixth day, existences of which were actualized later (*Gen. ad lit.* 6.2.5). There is no doubt for Augustine that woman was intended for creation, although the method God chose, that of using Adam's rib, was only one possible way for the Divine Being to have brought her to actualization (*Gen. ad lit.* 9.17-18). Thus, unlike Ambrose, he did not dwell on Adam's existence in Paradise before the appearance of woman and rejected any suggestion that her creation was a change of plan. Rejecting the view expressed by Gregory of Nyssa and others that in Paradise there would have been no marriages and that the human race would have been fruitful in an asexual manner, Augustine declared on the authority of Gen 1:27-28 that God instituted marriage when he created male and female. Sin did not bring about the necessity of marriage, as Gregory of Nyssa had thought, but brought about the necessity of lust in marriage. If our two parents had remained in Paradise, they would have begot offspring in the ordinary way, however, without concupiscence and consequently without shame. The sexes would have existed but not sex as mankind now knows it. Augustine rejected allegorical interpretations of the text which he probably knew from Origen; he did not think that the text implied by male and female the rational soul which rules and the irrational desire which is ruled, or man as the spirit and woman

<sup>70</sup>Robbins, *Hexaemeral Literature*, 59.

<sup>71</sup>Augustine, *Confessions*, 6.3-4 (PL 32. 720-22). Other works to be cited are *De Genesi ad litteram* (PL 34. 246-66), *De civitate dei* (PL 41. 13-804), and *De trinitate* (PL 42. 819-1096). For Augustine's positive attitudes toward the body and for analysis of the development of his views, see Margaret R. Miles, *Augustine on the Body* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979)

<sup>72</sup>McCool, "Ambrosian Origins," 65-66, 80.

as the body, but he stated that God intended plainly the matrimonial union and that "the first men were created, as we see and know them to be now, of two sexes, male and female" (*De civ. dei* 14.22).

Not surprisingly, therefore, Augustine, like most of church tradition, viewed God's image in man in a sense that transcended bodily activity. Man and woman are in the image of God in relation to the highest aspect of themselves, their rationality, their will, and their capacity to share in the Divine life (*De trin.* 14.8.11). Unique among animals, man has a "soul endowed with reason and intelligence" (*De civ. dei* 12.23). Augustine's innovation was the clarification that the divine plural in the Gen 1:26 referred to the Trinity, and his allegorical elaboration of the resemblance between man and the trinitarian Godhead. In his attempt to give a totally spiritual meaning to the image of the trinitarian God in man, Augustine was led to reject some of the heresies of his day which were based on Gen 1:27.

One such heresy viewed the Trinity as a divine family. The Holy Ghost was the wife of God; the Holy Ghost and God the Father were the parents of Christ, the Son of God. His argument against this "heresy" was that it implied that man was not fully in the image of God until he had a wife and had procreated a son. Whether or not he knew of the similar rabbinical rationale for marriage, Augustine gave to his Christian posterity an argument that could be used to refute the rabbis as well as the "heretics." As three is one in the Godhead, three is one in each individual human being. Man by himself can fulfill the full image of God. Another view Augustine rejected was the idea that Adam was a hermaphrodite. His official argument was the grammatical one: one refers to such a being by a singular pronoun, but God said, "Male and female created he them" (*De trin.* 12.6.8). Augustine's argument rejecting the view that man needs woman to complete the image of God was further aided by Paul's 1 Cor 11:7-9 which distinguished man in God's image from woman in man's glory. However, more importantly, Augustine was perplexed at the passage and tried to take his stand on Gen 1:27.

Augustine's several suggestions for reconciling Gen 1:27 and 1 Cor 11:7-8 have led to some recent misinterpretations of Augustine's position on women. The passage that in some degree reminds one of the pseudo-patristic source of Gratian's denial that woman is in God's image and that also is the basis for some contemporary confusion is the following one:

For this text [Gen 1:27] says that only human nature itself, which is completely [only] in both sexes, was made in the image of God; and it does not separate the woman from the image of God which it signifies. For after saying that God made man in the image of God, "He created him," it says, "male and female": or at any rate, punctuating the words otherwise, "male and female created He them." How then did the apostle tell us that the man is the image of God, and therefore he is

forbidden to cover his head; but that woman is not so, and therefore is commanded to cover hers? Unless, forsooth according to that which I have said, when I was treating of the nature of the human mind, that the woman together with her own husband is in the image of God, that the whole substance may be one image; but when she is referred to separately to her quality of "help-meet," which regards the woman herself alone, then she is not the image of God; but as regards the man alone, he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman too is joined with him in one. As we said of the nature of the human mind, that both in the case when as a whole it contemplates the truth it is the image of God. . . . But on that side whereby it is directed to the cognition of the lower things, it is not the image of God. (Italics mine)<sup>73</sup>

Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines in their anthology, *Not in God's Image*, quote Augustine out of context, including in their deletions the above italicized sentences which indicate that Augustine was making an allegorical rather than a literal statement about woman; also there is little commentary to explain Augustine's overall meaning.<sup>74</sup> With important subtlety, Rosemary Ruether, while recognizing the allegorical implications of the text, utilizes the literal interpretation to claim that Augustine had an androcentric concept of the image: "Inexplicitly, Augustine must also affirm that Eve, too, has a rational nature, being likewise a compound of spirit and body. Yet in relation to man she stands for body *vis-à-vis* male spirit. Moreover, Augustine persists in calling this later her 'nature,' not only with a view to sin but in order of nature as well. Augustine defines the male as, alone, the full image of God. Woman, by herself, is not this image, but only when taken together with the male, who is her 'head.'"<sup>75</sup> Later her stress on Augustine's literal meaning becomes explicit: "But he [Augustine] thinks that what she thus symbolizes, in the eye of male perception, is also what she 'is' in her female nature."<sup>76</sup>

In context, Augustine was not referring to the two sexes literally but to the allegory which we have seen in Philo and Origen which identified the male with higher reason and the female with lower reason (*De trin.* 12.7.9). The human mind is thus divided into two parts: the higher reason needs the lower reason, its helpmeet, for issuing orders into action: "And as the two are one flesh in the case of male and female, so in the mind one nature embraces our intellect and action" (*De trin.* 12.3.3).<sup>77</sup> Thus his allegorical interpretation of Paul implies that action without reason is not in God's image, while reason without action is in

<sup>73</sup>Translation given is the standard one (NPNF) used by O'Faolain and Martines, *Not in God's Image*; Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.7.10 (PL 42. 1003).

<sup>74</sup>O'Faolain and Martines, *Not in God's Image*, 130.

<sup>75</sup>Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism," 156.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>77</sup>"Et sicut una caro est duorum in masculino et femina, sic intellectum nostrum et actionem . . ." (PL 42. 999).

God's image. He added another allegory: male is the eternal reasons, woman is the lower things. Reason contemplating the eternal reasons in the Godhead is in God's image; but reason perceiving lower things is not in God's image (*De trin.* 12.7.9).

Augustine went on to unveil the mystery of the Pauline statement. He interpreted "man" in the NT text on "Put off the old man . . . put on the new man" (Col 3:9-10) as a generic term indicating the open possibility of mankind's participating in Christ: "We are made sons of God by the baptism of Christ. . . . Who is there, then, who will hold women to be alien from his fellowship, whereas they are fellow-heirs of grace with us" (*De trin.* 12.7.12).<sup>78</sup> He defends his argument with Paul's other statement, that of Galatians, for both men and women, in their renewal of mind wherein lies the image, there is no sex. The uncovering of man's head and covering of woman's consequently becomes symbolic for uncovering reason that contemplates God and covering reason that enjoys temporal things. In case a reader would then literally associate lower reason with woman, he declared that not men only but women also may contemplate the eternal reasons of things (*De trin.* 12.7.12).<sup>79</sup> In case any reader should have taken his allegory as too derogatory to women, he shortly after rejected the view that mind was signified by man and bodily senses by woman, attributing bodily sense instead to the serpent (*De trin.* 12.13.20). Thus Augustine pretty thoroughly took his stand on Gen 1:27 and Gal 3:28 and explained away 1 Cor 11:7-9.<sup>80</sup>

The interpretation of Augustine presented herein accords with the gloss attributed to him in the *Glossa Ordinaria* utilized by medieval and renaissance clerics and scholars. The gloss on Gen 1:27 recognized that man and woman were created in God's image and declared marriage as a natural state with preference given to celibacy. The gloss on 1 Cor 11:7-8 interpreted "woman is the glory of man" as a literal reference to woman's role as a helpmate and as an allegorical reference to man as higher reason and woman as sensuality, qualified later as lower reason. The allegory concluded with the statement that in order that one might not think man alone was made in God's image, Scripture added that mankind was created in two sexes.<sup>81</sup> The recognition that someone

<sup>78</sup>"Efficimur etiam filii Dei per baptismum Christi. . . . Qui est ergo qui ab hoc consortio feminas alienet, cum sint nobiscum gratiae cohaeredites . . ." (*ibid.*, 1005).

<sup>79</sup>"Ut non maneat imago Dei, nisi ex qua parte mens hominis aeternis rationibus conspiciendis vel consulendis adhaerescit, quam non solum masculos, sed etiam feminas habere manifestum est" (*ibid.*).

<sup>80</sup>A compatible interpretation may be found in a source brought to my attention by Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism," 157; Børrensen, *Subordination et équivalence: nature et rôle de la femme d'après Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1967) 34-39.

<sup>81</sup>*Biblia Latina cum glossa ordinaria*, vol. 1, Gen 1[:27], sib. A8' col. 2; vol. 3, 1 Cor 11[:7-8], sig. A3' cols. 1-2. The other gloss on the passage in Corinthians is attributed to

might be misled into denying that woman is in the image of God accords closely with the spirit of the tenth homily of Basil's *Hexaemeron*. Thus, Agrippa von Nettesheim's use of Gen 1:27 to declare the spiritual and asexual unity of men and women before God accorded not only with the tenth homily, but also with the mainstream of Augustinian tradition.<sup>82</sup>

#### Contemporary Implications

Women and men today can look to the positive side of either the Talmudic or the Christian tradition to find an interpretation of Gen 1:27 that recognizes the dignity of female human nature. On one hand, from the Talmudic rabbis, one learns that man and woman need one another to participate fully in the image of God. This interpretation could only be acceptable in a religious tradition that frowned on celibacy. It has been taken up by current Protestant theologians who, through Martin Buber, reach into the Jewish tradition. The image of God in such thinkers as Emil Brunner implies a full relationship and dialogue between man and woman, a dialogue that enables them better to relate to God.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, women and men today may look to Philo, Paul of Galatians, and to the Church Fathers to learn of woman's potential to transcend sex. There one finds a tradition that recognizes that each individual human being alone was created in the image of God. There one finds support for the spiritual equality of man and woman: in a large realm of important activity, one's sex is not relevant.

The notion that woman was "not in God's image" was a rare view within both the Jewish and Christian traditions. One such denial stemmed from changing the text of Gen 1:27, another from viewing the image as domination and again changing the biblical text to attribute domination only to the male. More common was not a denial but a linking of the last clause of Gen 1:27 with Gen 1:28 in a discussion of procreation. While sometimes traditional sources ignored the issue of woman's status in God's image, a greater abundance of discussion

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"Ambrose," a name which often disguised Ambrosiaster or Theodore of Mopsuestia who wrote on the Pauline epistles. See n. 16 above, and Smalley, *Bible in the Middle Ages*, 15-18, 22.

<sup>82</sup>See nn. 7, 55, 57.

<sup>83</sup>Heinrich Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947) 105-7, 346. While his distinctions between man and woman follow many of the traditional stereotypes (352-61), his use of male-female dichotomy in Gen 1:27 to interpret the image of God to be expressed by love and fellowship is significant. On the contrast of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, see Derrick S. Bailey, *The Man-Woman Relation in Christian Thought* (London: Longmans, 1959) 265-75. David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 167-75 (third clause of Gen 1:27 only mentioned in relation to Barth); and Paul King Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975).

ensued than has been included in previous historical works on the "image of God" or on "the dignity of man."<sup>84</sup> Allegorical interpretations of Gen 1:27 and of 1 Cor 11:7-8, while adding to the linguistic symbolic hierarchy between "man" and "woman," do not constitute denials that woman is in God's image. The title *Not in God's Image*, based on an outright misquotation of Augustine, a short ambiguous excerpt of Thomas Aquinas, and a pseudo-Ambrosian statement of Gratian, overstates the misogyny in the Western religious and humanist traditions.

Within the Christian tradition, most of that minority who viewed woman as not in God's image based their claim on an analysis of 1 Cor 11:7-8. Outright denials were very rare and were generally based on a mistranslation of the "Apostle's" text. Today when even the authentic Corinthians passage is considered by some NT scholars to be a pseudo-Pauline collection of glosses and when "in Christ . . . there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28) is one of the few undisputed Pauline statements on women,<sup>85</sup> one might feel even more confident about dismissing uses of "woman is the glory of man" to qualify the egalitarian implications of "male and female created he them."

The history of interpretation of Gen 1:27 over the past four centuries is beyond the scope of this paper, and the presentation herein would be misused if it were applied to perpetuating the limited sphere of lifestyles deemed holy in pre-modern times. Legitimate lifestyles within and outside churches and synagogues in the modern world extend far beyond the procreative married couple or the celibate single.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Gen 1:27 is too insightful a passage to be relegated exclusively to the issues of personal relationships and personal transcendence of sexuality. We live in a politically and socially conscious world, wherein human dignity is perceived as directly related to one's place in the hierarchies of state, economy, church, and home. Ethically committed religionists have incorporated Gen 1:27, as well as Gal 3:28, into the modern movements for the abolition of slavery, for the

<sup>84</sup>On the latter subject, see Charles Trinkaus, "The Renaissance Idea of the Dignity of Man," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (ed. Philip P. Wiener; New York: Scribners, 1973-74); and Herschel Baker, *The Image of Man*.

<sup>85</sup>Within this historical paper, I have labelled "Pauline" what the Church Fathers believed to be Paul's writings. See Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's View Regarding Women," cited in n. 15.

<sup>86</sup>Appreciation extends to students at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, for pointing out that some of their lifestyles are beyond the range of pre-modern Gen 1:27 commentary, and yet were chosen with intention to be "in God's image." See Rabbi Laura Geller and Elizabeth Koltun, "Single and Jewish: Toward a New Definition of Completeness," *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives* (ed. Elizabeth Koltun; New York: Schocken, 1976) 43-49.



granting of full suffrage, and for the ordination of women.<sup>87</sup> Congregations receive visual, symbolically authoritative impressions concerning "the image of God in man" from the persons and words of the rabbis, priests, or ministers who lead them in religious ritual and prayer. Ordained women and men rabbis, priests, and ministers in all the religious denominations would far surpass the power of this paper to convey to us mortals that womankind and mankind are equally in God's image.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup>Krister Stendahl, "Emancipation and Ordination," *The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 38-43; Ruether and McLaughlin, eds., *Women of Spirit*, esp. chaps. 11-13; Ruether, "The Subordination and Liberation of Women in Christian Theology: St. Paul and Sarah Grimke," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 41 (1978) 168-81; and Patricia A. Kendall, *Women and the Priesthood: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography* (Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, 1976).

<sup>88</sup>For evidence of the impact on medieval Judaism and Christianity of non-biblical sexism, see Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," 183-213.