

JOHN FOTOPoulos

Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

151

Mohr Siebeck

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Herausgegeben von
Jörg Frey, Martin Hengel, Otfried Hofius

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A Social-Rhetorical Reconsideration
of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1

Mohr Siebeck

JOHN FOTOPoulos, born 1967; 1992 M.Div. at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; 2000–2001 Loyola University Chicago Dissertation Fellow; 2001 Ph.D. at Loyola University Chicago; since 2001 Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana.

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Eleni

Preface

The present volume is a revised and expanded version of my dissertation that was accepted in partial requirement for a Ph.D. in New Testament and Early Christianity at Loyola University Chicago. My deep gratitude is offered to Professor Dr. David E. Aune, my *Doktorvater*, who is a true teacher, mentor, and friend. His academic excellence, unrelenting work ethic, witty sense of humor, unwavering encouragement, and personal kindness stand as models for me to emulate always. From the time that my dissertation was first conceived, Dr. Aune urged me to write with future publication in mind, a reality which he facilitated in numerous ways. For all that he has done for me, and for much else, I am extremely grateful.

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Finally, thanks are given "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 16:27).

Notre Dame, January 2003

John Fotopoulos

Contents

Preface	v
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Chapter 1. Introduction to the Issues and Review of Past Research	1
1. Past Research	4
a) Johannes Weiß	4
b) C. K. Barrett	5
c) John C. Hurd	8
d) Hans Conzelmann	10
e) Gerd Theissen	12
f) Jerome Murphy-O'Connor	14
g) Gordon Fee	17
h) Wendell Lee Willis	21
i) Ben Witherington	23
j) Peter D. Gooch	25
k) Khiok-Khng Yeo	26
l) Derek Newton	30
m) Alex T. Cheung	33
n) Joop F. M. Smit	35
2. Observations and a Way Forward	38
Chapter 2. The Asklepieion in Corinth	49
1. The Cult of Asklepios	49
2. The Corinthian Asklepieion	51
a) The Asklepieion Spring	54
b) The Dining Rooms	59
c) Sacrifices to Asklepios	63
d) The Functional and Structural Connections of the Asklepieion with its Dining Rooms	65
e) Sacrificial Food in the Asklepieion's Dining Rooms	67
3. Were Corinthian Christians Dining at the Asklepieion?.....	69

Chapter 3. The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth	71
1. The Cult of Demeter and Kore	71
2. The Mysteries and Festivals of Demeter and Kore	72
3. Archaeological Survey of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore	76
a) Archaic to Hellenistic Periods	76
b) Roman Period	82
4. Were Corinthian Christians Dining at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore?	86
Chapter 4. The Temples of Isis and Sarapis in the Corinthia and Papyrus Invitations to Dine	93
1. The Cults of Isis and Sarapis	93
2. The Mysteries of Isis and Sarapis	94
3. Festivals and Daily Rites of Isis and Sarapis	97
4. Ritual Dining in the Cults of Isis and Sarapis	100
5. Papyrus Invitations to Dine	102
6. Archaeological, Epigraphic, and Numismatic Survey	114
a) The Anaploga Area	114
b) The South Stoa Shrine	118
c) Kenchreai	121
7. Were Corinthian Christians Dining at Temples of Isis or Sarapis?	127
Chapter 5. Additional Temples in and around Corinth	129
1. The Forum	130
a) Western Terrace of the Forum — Temple D	130
b) Western Terrace of the Forum — Temple K	132
c) Western Terrace of the Forum — The Fountain of Poseidon and the Babbius Monument	133
d) Western Terrace of the Forum — Temple G and Temple F	134
e) Western Terrace of the Forum — Tripartite Early Augustan Building	134
f) Western Extension of the Forum — Temple E	135
g) The Peribolos of Apollo and the <i>Macellum</i>	139
h) Road to Sikyon — The Archaic Temple	142
i) Road to Sikyon — Temple C	142
2. Road to Sikyon: Theater Area — The Sanctuary of Athena Chalinitis	144
3. Road to Sikyon: Area Beyond the Theater — The Sanctuary of Zeus Capitolinus, the Ancient Gymnasium, and the Temple of Zeus	146
4. Acrocorinth — The Temple of Aphrodite	148
5. Kraneion (Craneum)	149

6. Isthmia — The Temple of Poseidon and the Palaimonion	150
7. Lechaion — The Sanctuary of Poseidon	154
8. Kenchreai — The Temple of Aphrodite	154
9. Were Corinthian Christian Dining at Additional Temples in and around Corinth?	155
Chapter 6. Food, Wine, and Sexual Relations —	
Greco-Roman Dining as More than Just a Meal	158
1. Greco-Roman Dining	158
a) The Morning Meal: Τό Ἀκράτισμα — <i>Ientaculum</i>	159
b) The Midday Meal: Τό Ἀριστον — <i>Prandium</i>	160
c) The Evening Meal: Τό Δεῖπνον/Συμπόσιον — <i>Cena/Convivium</i>	160
2. Sexual Relations	169
3. Temple Dining	174
4. Implications for 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1	176
Chapter 7. Social-Rhetorical Issues	179
1. The Apostolic Decree? — Why Did Paul Address the Issue of Idol-Food?	179
2. Divisions Over Idol-Food: Rhetorical-Critical Observations	188
3. Quotations of Corinthian Positions: Rhetorical-Critical Observations	191
4. The Rhetorical Arrangement of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1	195
5. Rhetorical Units	200
6. Social-Rhetorical Conclusions	206
Chapter 8. Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1	208
1. Food Offered to Idols	208
a) 8:1-9 <i>Partitio</i> — Corinthian Knowledge in <i>Propositiones</i> and Pauline <i>Refutaciones</i>	208
b) 8:10-13 — <i>Narratio</i> /Statement of Facts Referring to the Corinthians' Knowledge Based Behavior: Temple Dining	221
c) 9:1-27 — <i>Exemplum as Probatio</i> — Paul's Positive Example of Forsaking Apostolic Liberty for the Advantage of the Weak	223
d) 10:1-13 — <i>Exempla as Probatio</i> from Israel's History and Paul's <i>Conclusio as Refutatio</i> of the Corinthians' Behavior	227
e) 10:14-22 — Paul's <i>Refutatio</i> of the Corinthians' Idolatry	233
f) 10:23-24 — Paul's <i>Refutatio</i> of the Corinthians' <i>Propositio</i> regarding their Liberty	235

g) 10:25-11:1 — Not Raising Questions on the Grounds of Moral Consciousness: Unknown Food at the <i>Macellum</i> and at Private Homes	239
2. Exegetical Conclusions	249
Chapter 9. Social-Rhetorical Conclusions	251
Bibliography	265
Index of Ancient Sources	283
Index of Authors	291
Index of Subjects	294

Διὸ θειότητος ὅρεξίς ἐστιν ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας μάλιστα δὲ τῆς περὶ θεῶν ἔφεσις, ὥσπερ ἀνάληψιν ἱερῶν τὴν μάθησιν ἔχουσα καὶ τὴν ζήτησιν, ἀγνείας τε πάσης καὶ νεωκορίας ἔργον ὁσιώτερον.

"The search for the truth, especially the truth about the gods, is a yearning for the divine. It requires the consideration of sacred subjects for its study and investigation, and it is an action more holy than any form of pure living or temple service."

— Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 351E.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Issues and Review of Past Research

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Paul mentions several contexts in which food offered to idols was encountered by Corinthian Christians: (a) in a pagan temple precinct (*ἐν εἰδωλείῳ*, 8:1-13); (b) at the table of pagan gods (*τράπεζα δαιμονίων*, 10:14-22); (c) at a meal attended by invitation which a pagan was hosting (*εἴ τις καλεῖ ὑμᾶς τῶν ἀπίστων*, 10:27-11:1); and (d) in the *macellum*/market (*ἐν μακέλλῳ*, 10:25). It is possible that (a), (b), and (c) could be a single setting that is referred to by Paul in several ways since, as will be demonstrated in this study, meals attended by invitation at the table of a god could occur in pagan temples which served as a kind of banquet hall. However, meals held in private homes could likewise involve sacrifice to pagan gods and could be attended by invitation, also cohering with Paul's description of (c).¹

One of the fundamental interpretative difficulties presented by 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 is the seemingly inconsistent instructions given by Paul regarding idol-food consumption and the various contexts in which idol-food was encountered. Paul prohibits the Corinthian Christians from eating food offered to idols in pagan temples (8:9-13) and forbids them from eating at the table of pagan gods if they eat at the table of the Lord (10:14-22). However, Paul appears to contradict himself by permitting the Corinthians to consume idol-food by invitation provided that the diner does not know that sacrificial food is being served (10:27-30). His instructions are further complicated by his allowance of idol-food consumption when food is purchased from the *macellum* "since the earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (10:25-26).

Many of the scholars who engage in detailed examination of the exegetical questions of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 do not agree on numerous social-historical issues that are raised by the text. Because there is a wide range of opinion regarding these contextual issues, scholars frequently arrive at very different interpretations of the text when conducting their exegesis. These numerous interpretative difficulties are evident in the lack of scholarly agreement regarding the presence of actual divisions in the

¹ Chapter 6 of this study presents evidence relevant to Greco-Roman dining conventions pertinent to pagan sanctuaries and private homes.

Corinthian church over idol-food consumption. Some scholars (J. Weiß; C. K. Barrett; G. Theissen; J. Murphy-O'Connor; and B. Witherington)² assert that there was a division within the Corinthian assembly between the "Strong" — those who advocated eating food offered to idols, and the "Weak" — those who were opposed to such eating.³

Conversely, there are other scholars (H. Conzelmann; J. Hurd; G. Fee; W. L. Willis; P. Gooch; K. K. Yeo; A. Cheung; J. Smit)⁴ who do not think

² Johannes Weiß, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 211-12; C. K. Barrett, "Things Sacrificed to Idols," *NTS* 11 (1965): 138-53; Gerd Theissen, "The Strong and the Weak in Corinth: A Sociological Analysis of a Theological Quarrel," in *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 121-44; trans. of "Die Starken und Schwachen in Korinth: Soziologische Analyse eines theologischen Streites," *Evangelische Theologie* 35 (1975): 155-72; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Freedom or the Ghetto," *RB* 85 (1978): 544; Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI and Carlisle: Eerdmans Publishing Company and The Paternoster Press, 1995), 186-230.

³ Many scholars refer to those who advocate eating idol-food as the Strong, although this term is not used by Paul in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 in direct reference to the group advocating idol-food consumption. Paul refers to those who advocate eating idol-food as those who possess "knowledge" (8:10). The term "Strong," however, is the logical opposite of "Weak," a term that Paul uses in 8:7, 9, 10, 11, 12 in reference to those opposed to idol-food consumption (e.g. 8:9, τοῖς ἀσθενέστιν). Paul does, though, tell those in favor of eating idol-food that God will not let them be tested beyond their strength (10:13), and he asks them if they are stronger than the Lord (10:22). He also refers to some of the Corinthian Christians as "Strong" in 1:26 (δυνατοί) and in 4:10 (ἰσχυροί), whereas he refers to himself and the apostles in 4:10 as "weak" (ἀσθενεῖς). Those referred to as the Strong in 1:26 and 4:10 seem to be the same group as those who possess knowledge in 8:1-11:1, that is, higher status Corinthian Christians. The term "Strong" may also seem appropriate to some scholars in reference to Corinthians advocating idol-food consumption since Paul uses this term in contrast to the "Weak" in Romans 14 regarding disagreements about meat eating. Alternatively, some scholars refer to those who advocate eating idol-food as "gnostics" since this group claims to have "knowledge." The term "gnostic," however, is problematic since it is subject to misinterpretation and associations with later 2nd century Gnostic movements.

⁴ John C. Hurd, *The Origins of 1 Corinthians* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965; repr., Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 148; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (trans. J. W. Leitch; Hermeneia 36; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 147; Gordon Fee, "Εἰδωλόθυτα Once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8-10," *Bib* 61 (1980), 176-79; idem, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 359; W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Chico, CA: Scholar's Press, 1985), 93-94; Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8-10 in its Context* (Ontario, Canada: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Corporation Canadienne des Sciences Religieuses by Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1993), 62-68;

that divisions actually existed between the Strong and the Weak over idol-food within the Corinthian church. Some of these scholars argue that there were indeed Strong and Weak Corinthian Christians, but no divisions existed between them over idol-food. Others assert that the Strong and the Weak were spoken of hypothetically or rhetorically by Paul. Thus, these scholars maintain that there was generally one unified Corinthian Christian position in favor of idol-food consumption.

Scholars have been largely in agreement that the primary focus of Paul's instructions in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 is idol-food meals occurring predominantly within pagan temples, despite Fee's assessment of past scholarship's "traditional interpretation."⁵ Fee asserts that this "traditional interpretation" understands 8:1-13, 10:23-11:1, and usually 10:1-13, within the context of marketplace idol-food. However, Fee refers to few scholars who hold this "traditional" position. Moreover, my review of the literature suggests that six prominent scholars who reconstructed 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 prior to Fee's work (J. Weiß; C. K. Barrett; J. Hurd; H. Conzelmann; G. Theissen; J. Murphy-O'Connor) do not hold such a "traditional" view of 8:1-13. Fee, however, does accurately report that the "traditional interpretation" generally asserts that there were actual Strong and Weak divisions over idol-food in the Corinthian church, a position which Fee himself does not accept.

Most exegetes who acknowledge actual Corinthian divisions over idol-food interpret 8:1-13 and 10:1-22 as a community conflict over idol-food eaten in a pagan temple, while assigning 10:23-11:1 to the context of idol-food eaten in a home. However, many scholars do not think it necessary to distinguish in 10:23-11:1 between: (a) idol-food purchased from the market and eaten at a home; or (b) idol-food sacrificed at a home and eaten there. In most cases these scholars presume (a) idol-food purchased from the market and eaten at a home since this is the context that they specify for the Corinthian behavior of 10:23-26, without making clear

Khiok-Khung Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese, Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic* (BIS 9; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995); Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: An Examination of Paul's Approach in the Light of its Background in Ancient Judaism and Legacy in Early Christianity* (JSNTSup 176; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 87-88; Joop F. M. Smit, "About the Idol Offerings": *Rhetoric, Social Context, and Theology of Paul's Discourse in First Corinthians 8:1-11:1* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 10.

⁵ Fee, "Εἰδωλόθυτα Once Again," 173-74.

distinctions for 10:27-11:1. A sample of past scholarship on 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 is presented below.⁶

1. Past Research

a) Johannes Weiβ

Johannes Weiβ, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians published in 1910, provided the modern foundation upon which later exegetical studies of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 have been built.⁷ Weiβ asserts that there was an actual division in the Corinthian church over meat offered to idols between the Strong and the Weak.⁸ Weiβ, however, offers a partition theory in his reconstruction of Paul's Corinthian correspondence in order to reconcile what he believes to be Paul's contradictory views regarding idol meat. In Weiβ's reconstruction, he places 10:1-22 within Paul's Previous Letter to the Corinthians (referred to by Paul in 5:9) and states that Paul was instructing the Corinthians not to eat idol meat in pagan temples and hence to flee from idolatry. Weiβ argues that Paul had taken this position because of his Jewish beliefs about idol meat. However, the material in 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1 is considered by Weiβ to be Paul's later and definitive stance on idol meat. In this case, Weiβ understands Paul to have changed his former Jewish understanding of idol meat which prohibited its consumption, the apostle thus being in ideological agreement with the Strong's quotations and theological positions.⁹ However, although Paul is in ideological agreement with the Strong, he still opposes idol meat consumption. He is now against such eating because of the offense taken by the Weak at the Strong's consumption of sacrificial food.

The most obvious difficulty in Weiβ's reconstruction is his partition theory which serves as his rationale for Paul's apparent change in position. Such partition theories of 1 Corinthians, despite some support in modern

⁶ The scholars surveyed below are reviewed in chronological order according to the original publication date of their work which established their respective positions on 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1. I have also tried to retain, as much as possible, each author's terminology referring to idol-food (e.g. idol meat, sacrificial food, idol-food, et al.) when presenting their respective positions since such terminology may indicate something about their understanding of the issues involved in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1.

⁷ Weiβ, *Der erste Korintherbrief*.

⁸ Weiβ, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 211-12.

⁹ Weiβ, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 212-13.

scholarship,¹⁰ have not employed a methodology utilizing rhetorical analysis of Greco-Roman prose compositions¹¹ in order to assess issues of compositional integrity. Furthermore, the lack of substantial textual evidence to support such partition theories of 1 Corinthians makes Weiβ's partition theory and reconstruction of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 problematic. Also objectionable is Weiβ's assessment that Paul held an earlier Jewish "superstitious" understanding of idol meat which he later changed.¹² Such a negative view of the Jewish thought and identity of Paul is unacceptable, not being rooted in sound historical-critical method and in careful assessment of the historical Paul.

b) C. K. Barrett

C. K. Barrett contends in his reconstruction of 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1¹³ that the issue of idol-food has been raised in two ways: (a) by the Corinthians who responded to Paul's Previous Letter (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-13) which instructed them to "cut themselves off from the immoral and idolatrous life of Corinth"¹⁴; and (b) by an attempt from envoys, "made by or at least under the aegis of Peter, to introduce into the Church at Corinth the Jewish-Christian orthopraxy" of the Apostolic Decree referred to in Acts 15.¹⁵

Regarding (a), the issue of idol-food having been raised by the Corinthians responding to Paul's Previous Letter, Barrett maintains that in 1 Corinthians, Paul corrected Corinthian impressions about their relations with outsiders. He sums up Paul's response by stating, "There is to be no Christian ghetto."¹⁶ Hence, Christians are free to buy whatever is sold in

¹⁰ For example, Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock; London: Epworth, 1962); Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); Hans-Josef Klauck, *1 Korintherbrief* (Die Neue Echter Bibel 7; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1984); Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction*, 76-83.

¹¹ A foundational work demonstrating the compositional unity of 1 Corinthians based on rhetorical analysis of Greco-Roman compositions is Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

¹² Weiβ, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 264. Weiβ's thesis is also rejected by Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 139.

¹³ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 138-153; idem, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

¹⁴ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 144.

¹⁵ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 150.

¹⁶ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 147.

the market and might eat with non-Christians, "provided no other Christian was hurt thereby."¹⁷ Barrett asserts that Paul's position was a "view of extraordinary liberalism, the more striking in that it led Paul into almost verbal contradiction of Exod. xxxiv. 15."¹⁸ In this regard, Barrett maintains, Paul may have done a "*volte-face*" regarding idol-food, but it was "in a liberal rather than conservative direction."¹⁹

Regarding (b), that the issue of idol-food was raised by an attempt to introduce the Jewish-Christian orthopraxy of the Apostolic Decree under the "aegis of Peter," Barrett argues that this meant that there was the "existence of a counter-mission, following the geographical lines of Paul's activity and undermining his authority"²⁰ in Corinth. Barrett contends that 1 Cor. 9 can then be understood as Paul's defense of his apostolic authority. As such, 1 Cor. 9 explains why Paul has not made use of his apostolic authority and why he has changed his position regarding idol-food. Barrett asserts that "Paul's attitude with regard to εἰδωλόθυτα brought him into uncomfortable controversy with the Cephas group; it also brought him into at least equally uncomfortable alliance with the Corinthian 'gnostics'."²¹ By "gnostics," Barrett refers to a group in the Corinthian church who gave great significance to γνῶσις, which he proposes is "practical," "monotheistic" on a "rationalistic basis," and "strictly dualistic," leading to "moral indifferentism."²² In Corinth, Barrett perceives Paul as having "had to walk the tightrope between the legalism of Jewish Christianity and the false liberalism of gnostic rationalism."²³

According to Barrett, Paul's instructions regarding idol-food contradict the Apostolic Decree.²⁴ Barrett concludes this because Paul allows the consumption of idol-food when it is purchased from the market "since the earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (1 Cor. 10:25-26), and when idol-food is eaten in a private home (1 Cor. 10:27).²⁵ However, Barrett recognizes that Paul forbids idol-food consumption when it involved participating in

¹⁷ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 147.

¹⁸ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 147. Exodus 34:15 states, "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice."

¹⁹ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 144.

²⁰ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 150.

²¹ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 150.

²² Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 151-52

²³ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 152.

²⁴ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 149.

²⁵ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 146-47.

idolatry (8:1-13; 10:1-22).²⁶ Barrett argues that if Paul's instructions regarding the consumption of idol-food seem confused or inconsistent, it is because Paul still retained the Jewish association of idol-food with idolatry, despite the fact that he was no longer a strict Pharisee.²⁷ According to Barrett, Paul's views also stem from his "new eschatological circumstances which gave him a completely new outlook on the demon world."²⁸ Because Paul believes that demons still exist in these new eschatological circumstances, argues Barrett, he prohibits idol-food consumption which constitutes idolatry. However, because demons are no longer inimical toward people, Paul allows idol-food consumption provided that no Christian is hurt by it.

Barrett's reconstruction is problematic for several reasons, not least of which is his assertion that the introduction of the Apostolic Decree is at the heart of the matter. This reconstruction is untenable because there is no evidence in 1 Corinthians indicating that the Apostolic Decree was being implemented, much less that Jewish-Christian orthopraxy was at issue under the "aegis of Peter." There is not even evidence of a Jewish faction involved in the Corinthian dispute, much less such a faction under the auspices of Peter. If any Jewish Christians, or according to Barrett, a particular group of Jewish-Christians imposing orthopraxy under the "aegis of Peter," are those opposed to idol-food consumption, why, then, would they have been present inside an idol's temple, able to see libertine 'gnostics' eat (1 Cor. 8:10)? Rather, as scrupulous Jews, it seems improbable that they would enter into a pagan temple complex. Moreover, Paul does not argue against a counter-mission connected with Peter that is undermining his apostolic authority. If that were the case, we would expect a vehement apostolic defense in 1 Cor. 9 using the kind of apologetic rhetoric that Paul uses in Galatians. Rather, 1 Cor. 9 uses deliberative arguments promoting the renunciation of acceptable apostolic rights for the sake of common advantage.

Another difficulty with Barrett's reconstruction is his perception that Paul masterfully walks "the tightrope between the legalism of Jewish Christianity and the false liberalism of gnostic rationalism."²⁹ Paul is able, according to Barrett, to successfully walk this tightrope because of his Jewish beliefs and the new eschatological circumstances in which he finds himself due to the death and resurrection of Jesus. I agree with

²⁶ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 150.

²⁷ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 148.

²⁸ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 148.

²⁹ Barrett, "Things Sacrificed," 152.

Barrett's conclusion that Paul does allow idol-food consumption when purchased from the marketplace "since the earth and its fullness are the Lord's," while prohibiting idol-food consumption in a pagan temple when constituting idolatry. However, it is my position that Paul allows the consumption of marketplace idol-food only because there does not seem to have been any clear way to identify it as such.³⁰ This allows Paul to instruct the Corinthians that no questions should be raised on the grounds of moral consciousness regarding the origins of food sold at the *macellum*. However, I disagree with Barrett that at issue was Jewish Christianity versus liberal gnostic rationalism. Rather, I contend that Paul is opposed to idol-food consumption in temple contexts because of the religious *koinonia* with pagan gods that constitutes idolatry and stands in opposition to the exclusive religious *koinonia* with Jesus in the Lord's Supper.

c) John C. Hurd

John C. Hurd effectively argued in his monograph *The Origins of 1 Corinthians* that a chronology of Paul's letters and life must be based primarily on the evidence presented by Paul's own writings.³¹ Ironically, when dealing with food offered to idols in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1, Hurd deviates from this methodology and asserts that the immediate context for the issue stems from Corinthian opposition to Paul's attempt to impose the Apostolic Decree, referred to in Acts and prohibiting idol-food consumption. Hurd proposes that the Apostolic Decree prohibiting the consumption of idol meat was a compromise forced upon Paul by the leaders of the Jerusalem Conference since Paul himself had not taken a previous position against eating idol meat during his first visit to Corinth.

In his reconstruction, Hurd maintains that Paul's first attempt to enforce the Apostolic Decree occurred in Paul's Previous Letter (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9), to which the Corinthians objected in their letter to Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1). Paul then answered these Corinthian objections over his previous idol meat prohibition with 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1.³² Hurd envisions a Corinthian community unified in favor of idol meat consumption without actual divisions between the Strong and the Weak. Rather, Hurd asserts that the "weak brother appears to have been a hypothetical construction of Paul's, created for the purpose of argument."³³ Rather, Hurd argues that there is

³⁰ See Chapter 5 of this study on the Peribolos of Apollo and the *macellum*.

³¹ Hurd, *Origins*, especially 1-42.

³² Hurd, *Origins*, 240-62.

³³ Hurd, *Origins*, 148.

one united position, that of the Strong, a position that was consistent with Paul's own personal stance when he first evangelized Corinth. However, Hurd asserts that when Paul went to Jerusalem he accepted a compromise from the Jerusalem leaders prohibiting idol meat in order to retain his control over the Corinthian church, a prohibition he then attempted to impose in his Previous Letter (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9) and in 1 Corinthians.³⁴ Hurd proposes that in their letter to Paul, the Corinthians utilized principles from Paul's own earlier preaching in Corinth, placing him in a dilemma since he could not affirm or attack these principles, leaving Paul only to qualify them and to limit them.³⁵ However, because Paul was not in personal agreement with the Jerusalem leadership regarding idol meat, Hurd maintains that in 10:1-22, "Paul's condemnation of idolatry is equally as hypothetical as his argument concerning the 'weaker brother'."³⁶

Hurd understands the "concrete" situations to which Paul is responding to be found in 10:23-11:1. Hurd maintains that this section addresses the consumption of idol meat purchased from the meat market and "table fellowship of the Corinthian Christians with their non-Christian neighbors."³⁷ He understands 10:23-26 as referring to marketplace idol meat, while 10:27-11:1 is directed at temple meals.³⁸ Hurd views 8:1-13 and 10:1-22 as addressing idol meat meals in a pagan temple which constitute idolatry, a hypothetical context that Hurd alleges simply serves Paul's greater strategy of argumentation.³⁹ Hurd concludes that in 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1, "Paul appears to have permitted the Corinthians to continue their current practices concerning idol meat virtually unchanged," so long as the Corinthians did not offend a weaker Christian and did not consider themselves to be committing idolatry.⁴⁰

There are several problems with Hurd's reconstruction, the most obvious of which is that the Apostolic Decree of Acts is never alluded to in 1 Corinthians. If Paul was imposing the Apostolic Decree on the Corinthians, why would he need such a lengthy and complex argument to support his case? Rather, we might expect Paul to at least mention that the prohibition of idol meat originates from Cephas, James, and the other apostles, especially since Paul does not refrain from mentioning Cephas

³⁴ Hurd, *Origins*, 244-70.

³⁵ Hurd, *Origins*, 244.

³⁶ Hurd, *Origins*, 143.

³⁷ Hurd, *Origins*, 143-45.

³⁸ Hurd, *Origins*, 129, n. 2.

³⁹ Hurd, *Origins*, 143.

⁴⁰ Hurd, *Origins*, 148.

and the other apostles when they serve the benefit of his argumentation in 1 Cor. 9.

Furthermore, if there were no actual divisions in Corinth, as Hurd maintains, Paul would be undermining his own instructions by arguing for the Weak's benefit when, in actuality, there were no such people. In that case it is difficult to make sense of Paul's argumentation. Rather, rhetorical-critical analysis of 1 Corinthians conducted by Mitchell has demonstrated from the letter's *propositio* (thesis statement) in 1:10 that Paul is appealing to common advantage, urging that the community lay aside their numerous divisions and become united.⁴¹ The compositional function of the *propositio* in 1:10 is reinforced throughout the entire letter as Paul appeals for unity and urges against factional behavior. It seems unrealistic that a letter whose fundamental purpose is to unite a community that is divided over numerous issues would address, in one of its most extensive sections, an issue over which no division actually existed.

Finally, Hurd concludes that Paul allows the Corinthians to leave their behavior basically unchanged regarding the consumption of idol meat. However, Hurd's conclusion suggests, in essence, that Paul has created hypothetical situations regarding hypothetical divisions over temple dining and has condemned hypothetical idolatry for a united community whose behavior Paul does not wish to change.

d) Hans Conzelmann

Hans Conzelmann's work on food offered to idols is contained within his classic commentary on 1 Corinthians.⁴² Conzelmann regards the primary location of idol-food consumption to be in a pagan temple (8:1-13; 10:27-11:1), while also possibly including a private home (10:27-11:1).⁴³ Conzelmann views 10:23-26 within the context of idol-food purchased from the marketplace and understands these verses as dealing with a separate issue not directly connected with 10:27-11:1. Conzelmann asserts that "there is no trace of a rejection or circumvention of the apostolic decree on Paul's part" and neither Paul nor the Corinthian community had any knowledge of the Apostolic Decree.⁴⁴ Otherwise,

⁴¹ Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric*, see especially 68-80, 197-200.

⁴² Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 139-80.

⁴³ Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 177.

⁴⁴ Conzelmann, *First Corinthians*, 138.

Index of Ancient Sources

1. Old Testament		Philo <i>Adversus Flaccum</i>	
<i>Genesis</i> 9:3-6	184	17	103
<i>Exodus</i> 32:6	229, 231		
34:15	6, 184, 260		
<i>Numbers</i> 11	229	15	5, 23, 181, 182, 186, 206
14:1-38	232	15:3-12	182
16:41	232	15:7-11	181
		15:12	181
		15:13-21	181
<i>Deuteronomy</i> 6:4	213	15:13-33	182
32	234, 235	15:20	180, 186
32:6	229	15:22-35	181
32:21	235	15:29	180, 186
		21:25	180, 183
<i>Psalms</i> 24:1	239	<i>Romans</i> 1:18-32	186
77	229	3:30	213
77:31	230	14	2, 189
105	229, 230	16:23	28, 156, 240, 257
105:25	232		
105:39	229		
2. Jewish Literature		<i>I Corinthians</i> 1:5	210, 232
<i>Pseudepigrapha</i> <i>Jubilees</i> 7:20	184	1:10	10, 19, 196, 207
		1:11	196, 236
		1:18-15:58	19
		1:26	2, 12, 189
		2:1-16	232
		1-4	247
<i>Josephus</i> <i>Antiquities</i> 18:65-80	113, 169	2-4	218
		3-4	19, 177, 258
		3:10-17	239
		4:1-5	232
		4:4	215
		4:10	2, 12, 189, 234

4:18	210		236, 237, 244,
4:19	210		245, 249, 251
5:1	236	8:1-10:21	219, 220
5:1-7:40	196	8:1-10:22	24, 36, 70, 130,
5:1-11:1	196, 199, 207		236, 243, 251,
5:2	210		253
5:9	4, 8, 9, 181, 183, 194, 259	8:1-11:1	1-5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 22, 25-28, 30,
5:9-10	91, 177, 235, 246, 258		32, 34-38, 47,
5:9-13	5, 187, 188, 241, 243, 250, 262		48, 87, 103, 114,
5:10-13	194		127, 179-181,
5:11	194, 196		183, 184, 186,
5:12	196		187, 189-192,
6:1-5	232		195, 196, 199,
6:1-8	186		200, 206, 207,
6:9	196	8:2	247, 251, 254,
6:9-10	187	8:4	255, 259-262
6:9-11	178, 186, 259		232
6:12	218, 224, 225, 237, 247	8:4-5	15-17, 32, 191,
6:12-13	178, 192, 194, 259	8:4-6	192, 194, 235,
6:12-20	194, 243		245, 253
6:13	192	8:5	69, 199, 249,
6:15	196		255, 261
6:18	178, 192, 196, 259	8:5-6	33, 36, 37, 87,
7:1	8, 193, 196	8:6	229, 249
7:7-8	196		17, 32, 114, 191,
8	26, 28	8:7	193, 252
8-10	17, 34		127
8:1	15, 32, 33, 37, 68, 69, 191-194, 199, 229, 232, 235, 249, 261	8:7-13	17, 32, 69, 191,
8:1-3	36, 37, 229	8:7-9:27	192, 235, 239,
8:1-6	36, 37, 199		249, 252, 261
8:1-8	33, 225		229, 231, 245,
8:1-9	37, 193, 199, 200, 208-220	8:9	261
8:1-13	1, 3, 4, 7, 9-11, 15, 17, 22, 24, 25-28, 30, 31, 38, 44-46, 208- 223, 231, 233,	8:9-13	19, 37, 243
		8:10	36, 37, 229
			15, 16, 32, 37,
			69, 191, 192,
			229, 235, 249,
			252, 257, 261
			2, 189, 190, 224,
			226, 231, 232,
			238, 243, 249
			1, 11
			2, 7, 21, 30, 68,
			70, 91, 103, 127,
			139, 159, 189,

	200, 210, 231,	10:1-11:1	223
	239, 255	10:6	192
8:10-13	12, 45, 89, 91, 201, 210, 221-	10:7-8 10:7-14	159, 178, 243 178, 259
	223, 249	10:8	178, 192, 196
8:10-11:1	200	10:13	2, 189
8:11	226, 231, 239, 245, 249	10:14	178, 196, 250, 259
8:11-13	89, 253	10:14-22	1, 176, 187, 190,
8:12	239, 245, 249		200, 204, 205,
8:13	27, 28, 30, 190, 196, 208, 218, 223, 232		226, 228, 233- 235, 251
9	6, 7, 10, 15, 18, 19, 27, 28, 190	10:19 10:19-22	225 16 212
9:1	27, 28	10:20	249, 258
9:1-2	19	10:21	21, 87, 91, 103,
9:1-6	200		176, 177, 208.
9:1-27	16, 196, 201- 203, 239, 222- 227, 233, 243, 246, 248, 249	10:22 10:23	253, 258 2, 189, 231 27, 28, 69, 191, 192, 194, 224,
9:3	27		226, 247, 261
9:4-5	196	10:23-24	205, 236-239,
9:9	200		250
9:10	192	10:23-26	3, 9, 10, 22, 26,
9:12	218, 248		43-46
9:20-23	248	10:23-11:1	3, 4, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24,
9:22	12, 19		26-28, 30, 36,
9:23	27, 28, 249		38, 44-46, 236-
9:24	27, 28		250, 260
9:25	192		27, 28, 248
9:27	19	10:24	1, 16, 141, 142,
10	26, 28	10:25	251
10:1	192		1, 6, 45, 130,
10:1-13	3, 17, 20, 190, 200, 203, 204, 224, 227-233	10:25-26	140, 157, 188, 200, 208, 239-
10:1-22	3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14-17, 22, 24-26, 30, 36- 38, 43-47, 187, 191, 194, 217, 221, 227-236, 243, 249, 250, 259, 260, 262	10:25-30 10:25-11:1 10:27	241, 257, 262 31 205, 206, 239- 250 6, 16, 21, 103, 127, 159, 188, 255
10:1-24	31, 45	10:27-30	1, 45

10:27-11:1	1, 4, 10, 11, 22, 25, 38, 43-46, 130, 195, 200, 208, 236, 241- 251, 262	4:3-5 <i>1 Timothy</i> 4:3	185 186
10:28	21	<i>1 Peter</i>	
10:28-29	188	2:11	186
10:29	21		
10:30	21	<i>Revelation</i>	
10:31-32	188	2:14	180, 186
10:32	190	2:20	180, 186
10:33-11:1	188, 191, 196, 247-250		
11:2	192	4. Early Christian and Patristic Literature	
11:21	168		
11:22	105		
11:31-32	105	Clement of Alexandria	
11:34	105	<i>Protreptikos</i>	
12:1-3	168	21.2	73
12:1-14:40	232		
12:12-31	37, 229	John Chrysostom	
13:14	168	<i>1 Cor. Homiliae</i>	
13:1-4	210	25.2	245
14	247		
15:34	210		
		5. Greek and Latin Literature	
<i>Galatians</i>			
2	182-185, 206, 260	Apuleius	
2:2	182	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	
2:6	182	2.19	166
2:10	182	4.22	168
3:20	213	11.5	98
5:19-21	186	11.11	98
5:20	32	11.16	98
5:21	186	11.18	102
		11.20	100
		11.23	95, 96, 102
<i>Ephesians</i>		11.24	101, 102, 160
5:5	186		
<i>Colossians</i>		Aristides	
3:5	186	<i>Orationes</i>	
		26, 105	50
		45, 17	97
<i>1 Thessalonians</i>		45, 27	113
1:6-9	185	48, 27	69
1:9	32, 211	<i>The Sacred Tales</i>	
4:3	186	3.45	100

Aristophanes		Epictetus	
<i>Fragments</i>		<i>Fragments</i>	
354	171	17	177
<i>Ploutos</i>		<i>Herodotus</i>	
1.670-690	63, 113	2.41	100
Aristotle		<i>Herondas</i>	
<i>Rhetorica</i>		<i>Mimiambi</i>	
1.1.2	200	4.19	69
1.2.7-22	234		
1.7.36	248		
3.9.7-10	238	<i>Homer</i>	
Artemidoros		<i>Iliad</i>	
<i>Oneirocritica</i>		2.729-31	50
2.39	95		
5.66	63	<i>Homeric Hymn to Demeter</i>	
Athenaeus		1-460	71
<i>Deipnosophistae</i>			
2.479	169		
4.129	169	<i>Horace</i>	
4.134	169	<i>Epistulae</i>	
4.149	162	1, 17.36	171
5.179	162	<i>Odes</i>	
5.192	162	4.11	162
11.478D	73		
13.573C-574E	173	<i>Juvenal</i>	
15.675B-C	160, 168	<i>Satires</i>	
		6.540-41	100
Athenagoras of Athens		11.162-70	171
<i>Apologia pro christianis</i>			
22.5-6	95	<i>Lucian</i>	
Cicero		<i>De mercede conductis</i>	
<i>De Inventione</i>		15	169
1.31.22	199	<i>Parasite</i>	
<i>Pro Murena</i>		15	161
13	171	<i>De sacrificiis</i>	
Dio Cassius		13-15	163
62.6.4	170	<i>Symposium</i>	
Dio Chrysostom		13	161
<i>Orationes</i>		46	169
7 (<i>Euboicus</i>)	163		
38, 21	227	<i>Martial</i>	
		<i>Epigrammaton libri</i>	
		3.60	167
		<i>Pausanias</i>	
		1.2.4-5	174
		1.44.7-8	150

2.1.3	150	<i>Non posse suaviter vivi secundum</i>
2.2.3	51, 154	<i>Epicurum</i>
2.2.4	149	1102A 164
2.2.6	130, 133, 134	<i>Quaestiones conviviales</i>
2.2.8	132, 133	45 167
2.3.3	139	141 167
2.4.1	144	613C 168, 169
2.4.4-6	115	613D-614E 168
2.4.5	55, 57, 144, 146	614F-615A 169
2.4.6-7	77	615A-C 168
2.5.1	148	615B 168
2.5.1-3	148	615D 165, 242
2.21.2	59	616A 169
2.21.8	59	616D 165, 248
2.26.9	63	617C 167
2.27.1	64	642F 162
2.27.2	62	643 164
7.27.11	59	644C 167, 169
10.880	100	644C-D 171
		645D-648 168
Petronius		673B 169
<i>Satyricon</i>		693F 105, 162
1.31-41	166	696E 162
		697C 158
Plato		707A 161
<i>Symposium</i>		709A-E 161
176A	168	716D-E 168
		726E 164
Pliny the Younger		
<i>Epistulae</i>		
2, 6.2	166	
10, 96.10	141	
Plutarch		
<i>Amatorius</i>		
767F	174	4.2.31 221
<i>De amore prolis</i>		4.4.1 197, 200
486B	227	4.5.1 199, 208
<i>De esu carnium orationes ii</i>		4.5.8 199
997B	169	5.1.1-3 200
<i>Fragment</i>		5.10.11-14 234
95	112	5.13.53-55 200
<i>De Iside et Osiride</i>		6.1.1 ff. 247
351E	93	9.1.21 237
355-358E.	93	9.2.15-20 235
366D-F	99	9.2.30-37 246
		9.2.37 246
		9.3.30 238, 246
		9.3.45 238

9.3.75-76	237	113, 114
9.3.77	238	
<i>Scholion to Lucian</i>		<i>The Michigan Papyri</i>
73.13.205b	75	4686 96, 101 6877 100
Seneca		<i>The Milano Vogliano Papyri</i>
<i>Epistulae</i>		68.57 104, 109, 114
47, 7	167, 170	
83, 6	160	
95, 24	170	<i>The Noviomagensis Papyri</i>
		4 104, 109, 114
Servius		<i>The Oslo Papyri</i>
<i>Commentarii in Georgica</i>		157 104, 107, 114
2.380	63	
Strabo		<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
8.6.15	50	110 104, 106, 114 523 104, 106, 114
8.6.20	148	1484 104, 106, 114
8.6.20C	173	1755 104, 106, 114
8.6.21	148, 172	2592 104, 106
14.1.39	50	3693 104, 107 3694 103, 113
Tacitus		4339 104, 107
<i>Agricola</i>		4539 103, 110, 104
21	169	4540 104, 107 4542 104, 110
Xenophon		4543 104, 110
<i>Lacedaemonians</i>		
4	227	<i>The Yale Papyri</i>
		85 104, 108

6. Papyri

<i>The Collectanea Youtie Papyri</i>	
51	104, 108, 114
52	103, 104, 109, 114
<i>The Fiorentini Papyri</i>	
7	104, 108
<i>The Fouad Papyri</i>	
76	103, 104, 110
<i>The Kölner Papyri</i>	
2555	103, 104, 108,

7. Inscriptions

<i>The Inscriptions of Corinth</i>	
Kent	
50	138
152	135
194	135
195	135
196	135
198	135
203	135
232	156, 240, 257
321	140

West		<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae (SIRIS)</i>
68	138	20
124	140	44
125	140	120
132	133	265
<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum (SIG)</i>		275
3.1106C.95-101	111, 112, 175	291
		294
		720
		101
		101
		101
		101

Index of Authors

- Amundsen, L., 104
Anderson, R. D., 198
Askew, H. E., 135, 139
Arndt, W. F., 209, 215
Aune, D. E., VII, 20, 160, 162, 167,
 168, 171, 184, 198, 228, 260
- Barrett, C. K., 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 41,
 46, 181, 183, 188, 209, 210, 217,
 223, 228, 231, 232, 236, 244-246
- Bauer, W., 209, 215
Behr, C. A., 97
Bellinger, A. R., 148
Betz, H. D., 31
Blass, F., 192, 233, 234
Blegen, C. W., 148, 149, 172
Bockmuehl, M., 184, 260
Bookidis, N., 71, 77-80, 82, 84-86, 88,
 90, 115, 116
Booth, A., 171
Borgen, P., 219, 220, 238
Bornkamm, G., 182
Bradley, K., 159, 167
Bronner, O., 118, 120, 144, 148, 150,
 152
Bruce, F. F., 194
Brumfield, A., 71-75, 80, 87, 88
Burkert, W., 30, 59, 64, 70, 72, 75, 95,
 97, 98, 101, 163-165, 168, 174
Byrskog, S., 192
- Cadbury, H., 141
Capps, E., 120
Carpenter, R., 144
Cheung, A., 2, 3, 23, 24, 25, 33, 34, 35,
 41, 46, 65, 177, 181, 184, 186,
 189, 209, 212, 213, 217, 222-
 229, 233-235, 237, 239, 244-247,
 260
Classen, C. J., 198
Clinton, K., 73, 75
- Collier, G. D., 195, 228, 229
Conzelmann, H. 2, 3, 10, 11, 18, 38, 41,
 46, 148, 173, 182, 189, 194, 209,
 213, 214, 216, 222, 223, 228,
 234, 242, 244
- Dahl, N. A., 185
Danker, F. W., 209, 215
D'Arms, J. H., 161, 166, 167, 170
Dawes, G. W., 195
Debrunner, A., 192, 233, 234
Delobel, J., 195
DeMaris, R. E., 86
Denaux, A., 212
Dinsmoor, W. B., 135, 147
Dunand, F., 98, 99, 115
Dunbabin, K. M. D., 161, 162, 167
- Edelstein, E., 50, 57, 63
Edelstein, L., 50, 57, 63
Edwards, C., 171
Eitrem, S., 104
Engberg-Pedersen, T., 31
Engels, D. W., 84, 156, 178, 257
Eriksson, A., 187, 192, 194, 195, 199,
 209, 212, 213, 217, 221, 223,
 234, 236, 244, 247
- Fee, G., 2, 3, 17, 18, 19, 20, 28, 42, 46,
 189, 194, 195, 209, 210, 214-
 218, 221, 222, 225, 227, 228,
 231-234, 236, 237, 244-249
- Fisk, B. N., 236, 237, 244
Fitzmyer, J. A., 180, 182, 183
Fowler, H. N., 144
Freeman, S. E., 135, 146
Frey, J., VII
Funk, R., 192, 233, 234
- Gardner, P. D., 209, 215, 217, 223, 231,
 235, 244, 247

- Gebhard, E. R., 150, 152
 Giannini, O., 104
 Gill, D. W. J., 111, 112, 140, 141, 174,
 175
 Gilliam, J. F., 103, 104, 113
 Gingrich, F. W., 209, 215
 Gooch, P., 2, 5, 25, 26, 35, 38, 42, 46,
 58, 59, 62-69, 86-91, 105, 162,
 163, 184, 189, 209, 210, 215,
 217, 236, 241, 242, 244, 251-254
 Gowers, E., 169
 Graf, F., 49, 50
 Grenfell, B. P., 104
 Griffiths, J. G., 95, 96
 Grosheide, F. W., 210, 214
 Guthrie, W. K. C., 49, 50

 Habash, M., 74
 Head, B. V., 57, 149, 172
 Hengel, M., VII
 Héring, J., 5
 Herter, H., 173
 Hester, J. D., 197, 198
 Hofius, O. VII, 211, 214
 Hohlfelder, R. L., 126
 Horsley, G. H. R., 103, 111, 112, 175
 Horsley, R. A., 213-215, 217, 218
 Hunt, A. S., 104
 Hurd, J. C., 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 25, 38,
 42, 47, 179-185, 189, 191, 192-
 194, 209, 215, 217, 236, 237,
 242, 244, 259, 260

 Ibrahim, L., 51, 121
 Isenberg, M., 141, 162

 Jones, C. P., 169

 Kamm, A., 101
 Kim, C.-H., 102
 Kent, J. H., 135, 138, 140, 156, 240,
 257
 Klauck, H.-J., 5
 Koenen, L., 104
 Kondratieff, E., 133, 134

 Lang, M., 54, 64, 66

 LiDonnici, L. R., 50
 Lietzmann, H., 210, 222, 223, 244-246
 Lindemann, A., 209, 221, 222
 Lisle, R., 133, 134, 144

 MacMullen, R., 70, 162, 176
 Malherbe, A. J., 195
 Martin, L. H., 50, 93, 114
 Meeks, W. A., 13, 156, 158, 185, 228,
 229, 240, 257
 Meggitt, J. J., 14
 Merkelbach, R., 114
 Merklein, H., 188, 194, 195, 209, 211-
 213, 215, 223, 224, 244
 Miller, S. G., 178
 Milne, J. G., 103
 Mitchell, M. M., 5, 10, 19, 27, 32, 35,
 189, 190, 193-198, 208, 215,
 223, 226-229, 231, 232, 236,
 238, 248, 249, 261
 Morgan, C. H., 144
 Murphy-O'Connor, J., 2, 3, 14, 15, 16,
 18, 43, 47, 54, 149, 154, 171-
 173, 178, 188, 217, 244
 Mylonas, G., 72-74, 87

 Nabers, N., 140
 Newton, D., 30, 31, 32, 33, 43, 47, 65,
 192, 210, 211, 217, 223, 225,
 244, 247, 254
 Nilsson, M. P., 49, 50, 71, 93, 114

 Oats, J. F., 104
 Olgivie, R. M., 163

 Pemberton, E. G., 78
 Perry, B. E., 141
 Price, S. R. F., 138, 139

 Richter, H.-F., 209, 211, 214, 220
 Robertson, D. S., 95
 Robinson, H. S., 116, 118
 Robinson, T. L., 50
 Roebuck, C. A., 49, 51, 54-59, 60, 62,
 64, 67, 70, 147
 Rothaus, R., 154

- Salomons, R. P., 104
Sampley, J. P., 32
Samuel, A. E., 104
Schmithals, W., 5, 213
Schrage, W., 188, 191, 193, 195, 209,
210, 213, 218, 222, 226, 228,
233, 244, 246
Scranton, R., 51, 121, 126, 130, 132-
135, 142, 144, 155
Segal, A. R., 184, 185, 260
Shaw, J. W., 51, 121
Shear, T. L., 144, 178
Slane, K. W., 84, 85, 90
Smit, J., 2, 3, 35-38, 43, 47, 189, 195,
199, 216, 217-218, 221, 223,
229, 236, 244, 247, 248
Smith, D. E., 116, 120, 121, 159, 160,
161, 167, 174
Smyth, H. W., 214, 246
Stillwell, R., 135, 139, 140, 142, 148
Stowers, S. K., 195, 198
Stroud, R. S., 71, 77-80, 82, 84-86, 88-
90, 115, 116
Talber, C. H., 49
Thayer, J. H., 216
Theissen, G., 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 18, 44,
47, 188, 195, 223
Thiselton, A. C., 192, 194, 209, 212,
215, 223, 225, 230, 231, 233,
244, 246, 247
Tomlinson, R. A., 62
Vandoni, M., 104
Vidman, L., 101, 116
de Waele, F. J., 51, 54
Walbank, M. E. H., 135, 137, 138, 146,
147
Watson, D. F., 195, 236-238, 244, 247
Weiβ, J., 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 25, 44, 48, 188,
193, 217, 223, 234, 244, 261
Welles, C. B., 104
West, A. B., 133, 138, 140
White, J. L., 31
Wild, R. A., 96, 118, 120, 126
Williams, C. K., 55, 130, 132-135, 138,
140, 142, 144, 146, 147, 149, 172,
173
Williams, D. J., 31
Willis, W. L., 2, 20, 21, 22, 23, 44, 48,
105, 111, 188, 192, 193, 209,
212, 214, 217, 222, 223, 231-
233, 236, 244
Winter, B. W., 129, 171, 219, 226, 244,
245
Wiseman, J., 55, 135, 146, 147, 178
Witherington, B., 2, 23, 24, 32, 45, 48,
57, 163, 167, 177, 188, 195, 211,
217, 218, 233, 244
Witt, R. E., 105, 126
Worp, K. A., 104
Yeo, K. K., 2, 3, 5, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,
45, 48, 189, 193
Youtie, H. C., 93, 97, 101, 103, 156,
240, 257
Zervos, O.H., 133

Index of Subjects

- Agora, see Forum
- Ammon, 103
- Anubis, 114, 169
- Aphrodite
 - cult of, 77, 115, 134, 171, 172, 173, 174
 - Aphrodite, Temple of
 - on Acrocorinth, 121, 148, 149, 172, 173
 - in forum of Corinth, 132, 134
 - at Isthmia,
 - at Kenchreai, 154, 155, 256
 - at Kraneion, 149
- Apollo
 - cult of, 49, 51, 66, 67, 132, 133
 - Peribolos of, 8, 139, 140, 142, 156, 157, 188, 240, 241, 243, 250, 256, 257
 - Apollo, Temple of
 - in forum of Corinth, 132, 133, 142
 - Clarian (forum), 134
 - Apostolic Decree, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 23, 24, 25, 34, 39, 40, 43, 179-185, 191, 206, 207, 259, 260
 - Apuleius, 94-96, 99, 101, 121, 126, 128, 159, 165, 174, 254, 255
 - Archaic Temple, 130, 133, 142
 - Asklepieion
 - in Athens, 50, 59, 62
 - in Corinth, 26, 29, 34, 35, 49-70, 77, 137-139, 146, 155, 167, 176, 221, 241, 251-253, 257
 - dining rooms, 57-70
 - spring, 51, 54-59, 61, 65-67, 70
 - in Crete, 50, 52
 - in Delos, 62
 - in Epidaurus, 50, 59, 62
 - in Gytheatai, 59
 - in Kenchreai, 51
 - in Kos, 52, 59
 - in Mysaios, 59
 - in Peiraeus, 50
 - in Pellana, 59
 - in Pergamon, 50, 59
 - in Rome, 50
 - in Titane, 64
 - in Troizen, 52, 59, 62
 - Asklepios
 - cult of, 26, 49-70, 97, 112, 212, 221, 253
 - myth of, 49
 - sacrificial food and, 63-70
 - Athena Chalinitis, Sanctuary of, 137, 144, 146
 - Babbius Monument, 133, 134
 - Baptism, 18, 20, 40, 228
 - Bellerophontes, 144, 149
 - Cena, 160, 161, 164, 167, 169, 174
 - Cephas, 5, 6, 7, 9, 39, 181, 202
 - Christ, see Jesus
 - Conscience, see Moral consciousness
 - Convivia, 101, 171, 177, 258
 - Corinthians' Reply Letter, 9, 17, 19, 33, 69, 181, 183, 193, 194, 196, 207, 236, 252, 259
 - Couch, see Κλείνη
 - Courtesans, see Hetairai
 - Daimon, see Demons
 - Δεῖπνον, 101, 111, 114, 160-162, 164, 174, 175
 - Demeter and Kore
 - cult of, 71-92
 - curse tablets and, 85, 86, 90-92
 - mysteries and festivals of, 71-76, 94, 254
 - myth of, 71, 72
 - sacrificial food and, 73, 75, 76, 79, 80, 87-89, 91, 92

- Demeter and Kore, Sanctuary of
 - in Agrai, 72, 87
 - in Corinth, 26, 29, 34, 35, 71, 75-92, 115, 148, 251-254
 - dining rooms, 78-80, 85, 87-92
 - in Eleusis, 72-74, 87, 91, 253
 - in Isthmia, 77
 - in Phrearhioi, 72, 87
 - in Phyla, 72, 87
- Demons, 7, 17, 31, 32, 72, 103, 177, 187, 205, 212, 217, 226, 229, 234, 235, 243, 249, 258, 262
- Dining
 - in *cauponae*, 13
 - in caves, 152-155, 256
 - entertainment, 158, 159, 161, 165, 168, 169, 174, 176, 177, 178
 - evening meal, 160-169
 - in *ganeae*, 14
 - in homes, 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24-27, 31, 36, 38, 43-46, 64, 69, 103, 105, 111, 112, 127, 130, 139, 158, 160, 162, 163-165, 170, 173-178, 188, 195, 200, 208, 216, 236, 237, 241-244, 246, 251, 255, 257-262
 - midday meal, 160
 - morning meal, 101, 159
 - in *popinae*, 13
 - in *tabernae*, 13
 - in Temples, 1, 3, 4, 7, 8-10, 15, 17-26, 30, 31, 36, 38, 43-48, 59-70, 75-92, 138, 139, 152, 154-160, 162, 169, 174-178, 191, 200, 201, 208-235, 236, 238, 240-243, 249, 251-260, 262
- Dionysos, 22, 93, 134, 168, 177, 235, 258
- Dispositio*, 200
- Divisions in Corinthian church, 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 14, 17, 19, 23, 25, 30, 33-35, 37-43, 157, 179, 188-191, 196, 197, 200, 206, 207, 215, 229, 238, 240, 248, 257, 259-261
- Εἰδωλόθυτα, translation of, 23, 24, 208
- Εἰδωλολατρία, see Idolatry
- Epistolary theory, 197, 198
- Erasmus, 28, 156, 157, 240, 241, 250, 257, 262
- Exemplum*, 19, 20, 27, 200, 201, 203, 204, 206, 222, 223, 228, 229, 246, 248, 249, 250
- Exordium*, 197, 210
- 'Ἐξουσία, see Liberty
- Factions, see Divisions
- Fates, Temple of the, 77, 78, 86, 148
- Father, God the, 187, 201, 213, 214, 216, 217, 220, 239, 253, 261, 262
- Force, Temple of, 77, 148
- Forum of Corinth, 51, 77, 78, 95, 115, 129, 130-144, 154, 240, 250, 257, 258
- Fountain of the Lamps, see Lerna
- Freedom, see Liberty
- Glauke Fountain, 142, 144
- Gnostics, 2, 6, 7, 8, 11-13, 27-30, 39, 43, 189, 213
- Gymnasium of Corinth, 55, 57, 58, 77, 137, 138, 146-147, 227
- Helios, Altars to (Corinth), 77, 115, 148
- Hellenistic Judaism, 27-29, 213-215
- Hetairai*, 169, 171, 174, 178, 259
- Heracles, 162, 175
- Hera, Temple of
 - Bounaia in Corinth, 77, 148
 - Akraia in Corinth, 144
- Hermes, 77, 132-135, 168
- Homes
 - in Corinth, 178
- Imperial Cult, 138, 139, 156, 157, 219, 220, 226, 240, 241, 256, 257
- Invitations to meals, 1, 21, 102-114, 127, 161, 169, 177, 212, 219, 227, 235-237, 241-247, 250, 254, 255, 258, 262
- Idolatry, 4, 7-11, 15-17, 20, 22, 24, 30-32, 34, 36, 40-42, 47, 158, 178, 186, 187, 190, 191, 194, 196, 200, 204,

- 207, 217, 218, 228, 229, 231-234, 237, 243, 250, 251, 259, 262
- Isis**
 - cult of, 93, 94
 - festivals of, 97-100
 - mysteries of, 94-97
 - myth of, 93-94
 - ritual meals of, 102-114
 - sacrificial food and, 100-114
- Isis, Temple of**
 - Egyptian in Anaploga of Corinth, 77, 114-118, 128, 148, 254, 255
 - Pelagian in Anaploga of Corinth, 77, 114-118, 128, 148, 254, 255
 - in Kenchreai, 121-128, 154, 159, 254, 255
 - in Rome, 169
- Isthmian Games**, 150-154, 219, 220, 226, 227, 256
- James**, 9, 181, 183
- Jerusalem Council**, 8, 9, 40, 180-185, 206, 259, 260
- Jesus**, 7, 8, 16, 20, 34, 176, 186, 201-206, 213, 214, 216, 217, 220, 224, 239, 250, 253, 261, 262
- Judaism and idol-food**, 24, 33, 34, 39, 41, 182, 184, 206, 218, 260
- Kashrut**, 34
- Kenchreai**, 121-128, 154, 155, 159, 254, 255
- Kephalea**, 19, 196
- Κλείνη**, 97, 101, 103, 104, 106-109, 111, 113
- Knowledge**, 2, 11, 18, 19, 33, 40, 41, 186-190, 193, 195, 199, 200, 201, 208-222, 225, 226, 230, 232, 234, 244, 245, 248, 249, 252, 253, 261, 262
- Κοινωνία**, 8, 113, 164, 176, 187, 226, 234, 235, 245
- Kraneion**, 149
- Lais**, 149, 174
- Lechaion**, 51, 154
- Lerna (Fountain of the Lamps)**, 55-59, 77, 137, 138, 146, 252
- Libations**, 96, 98, 100, 113, 162, 164, 167, 168, 174, 176, 177, 208, 234, 235, 251, 258, 262
- Liberty**, 11, 16, 18-20, 33, 39, 171, 201, 205, 210, 214, 218-220, 222, 223, 224-226, 235-240, 243, 246-250, 261, 263
- Lord's Supper**, 8, 18, 20, 36, 40, 176, 187, 204, 228, 230, 233-235
- Macellum at Corinth**, 1, 130, 139-142, 156, 157, 177, 239-241, 256-258, 262
- Market**, see *Macellum*
- Melikertes**, see Palaimonion
- Men Tyrannos**, 112, 175
- Moral consciousness**, 8, 15, 16, 188, 201, 205, 206, 215, 216, 221, 222, 231, 235, 237, 239-247, 250, 257, 262, 263
- Narratio**, 200, 201, 210, 221, 222, 249
- Noachide Laws**, 184-186, 211, 260
- Octavia, Temple of**, 135-138, 144, 256
- Osiris**, see Sarapis
- Palaimonion**, 150-155, 256
- Paul**
 - instructions on idol-food, 1-48, 89, 103, 130, 139, 140, 142, 156, 158, 176-263
 - missionary teaching, 29-31, 34, 41, 180-187, 206, 207, 211, 260
 - possible rhetorical training, 197-199
- Paraenesis**, 184, 188, 190, 196, 200, 204-206, 227, 230-237, 247, 248, 259, 260
- Partitio**, 36, 37, 193, 199, 200, 208-220, 249
- Partition theories**, 4, 5, 27, 28, 42, 43, 189, 192, 193, 220, 261
- Peirene Fountain**
 - lower (forum), 139, 144
 - upper (Acrocorinth), 148
- Περὶ δέ**, 193, 194, 200, 208, 210, 249

- Peroratio*, 206, 239, 246-249
 Persephone, see Demeter and Kore
 Peter, see Cephas
 Philosophy, 168, 177, 215, 258
 Poseidon, Fountain of, 133, 134
 Poseidon, Temple of
 – at Isthmia, 150-154, 219
 – at Lechaion, 154
Porneia, see Sexual immorality
 Previous Letter to Corinth, Paul's, 4, 5,
 8, 9, 17, 181, 183, 187, 189, 194,
 207, 243, 259, 262
Probatio, 19, 190, 196, 197, 200-207,
 212, 222-227, 230, 232, 234, 239,
 261
 Proofs, see *Probatio*
Propositio, 10, 19, 37, 196, 197, 199,
 200, 201, 205, 207-210, 214, 218,
 235, 236, 238, 239, 248
Prosopopoeia, 206, 246, 247
 Prostitutes, 148, 169, 171, 173, 174,
 178, 231, 259
 Quotations, see Strong, positions of

 Reclining at meals, 161-162
Refutationes, 37, 199-209, 212, 214,
 218, 227, 233, 235, 236, 238
 Rhetoric, Greco-Roman
 – deliberative, 7, 18, 19, 28, 190,
 195, 196, 199, 215, 223, 227, 261
 – forensic, 28, 223, 227
 – techniques, 35, 190-207, 237, 238,
 246, 247
 Rhetorical theory, 197-199

 Sacraments, magical view of, 18, 20,
 40, 228
 Sacrifice
 – manner of, 163, 164
 – private, 162, 163, 175
 – public, 162, 163, 174
 Sarapis
 – couch of, 102-114
 – cult of, 93-94
 – festivals of, 97-100
 – mysteries of, 94-97
 – sacrificial food and, 100-114
 Sarapis, Shrine of
 – in Anaploga of Corinth, 77, 114-118,
 128, 148, 254, 255
 – Kanobus in Anaploga of Corinth, 77,
 114-118, 128, 148, 254, 255
 – in South Stoa of Corinth, 118-120,
 255
 Sexual relations, 11, 20, 23, 25, 47, 158,
 159, 169-174, 176, 178, 180, 182,
 184-187, 190, 194, 196, 202-204,
 207, 210, 224, 226-234, 243, 249,
 259, 260, 262
 Slaves, 161, 165, 167, 169, 170, 173,
 195, 203, 246
 Slogans, see Strong, positions of
 Spirit (Holy), 186
 Stoicism, 213, 215
 Strong,
 – positions of, 191-195, 199-201, 205,
 208-220, 235-239, 249, 262, 262
 Symposium, 113, 165, 168, 169, 171
 Συνείδησις, see Moral consciousness
 Sisyphos, 150

 Temple C, 142-144
 Temple D, 130-132
 Temple E, 135-139, 146, 256
 Temple F, 132, 134
 Temple G, 134
 Temple K, 132, 133
 Theater, in Corinth, 55, 57, 137, 138,
 144, 146, 147, 156, 240, 257
 Theater, in Isthmia
 – *thiasos* of, dining in caves, 152-155,
 256
 Toga, 164, 169, 171
Topoi, 190, 207, 227, 261
 Τραπέζωματα, 175, 211
 Tripartite Early Augustan Building,
 134, 135
 Tyche, Temple of, 132

 Venus, See Aphrodite

 Weak, identity of, 194, 195
 Wine, 63, 64, 73, 80, 95, 100, 101, 158-

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Alphabetical Index of the First and Second Series

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