



Porneia (πορνεία) in Acts 15:20.29; 21:25. The meaning and origin of the theme of fornication in the apostolic decree²

**Porneia (πορνεία) w Dz 15,20.29; 21,25. Znaczenie
i pochodzenie motywu rozpusty w dekreście apostołskim**

Key words: prostitution, fornication, *porneia*, meat sacrificed to gods/idols, the Septuagint, biblical apocrypha, 1 Corinthians, Acts, apostolic decree.

Słowa kluczowe: Prostyucja, rozpusta, *porneia*, mięso ofiarowane bogom/bożkom, Septuaginta, apokryfy biblijne, 1 Kor, Dz, dekret apostołski.

Abstract

This article answers questions about the content and sources of the so-called apostolic decree in Acts 15, and in particular about the meaning of the term *porneia*. Starting with a brief presentation of the meaning of its Hebrew equivalent, the root *zn^h*, it continues with a discussion on the use of the root word *πορν-* in the Septuagint, the deuterocanonical and apocryphal writings and those by Philo of Alexandria. Since its association with meat sacrificed to gods (idols) only appears in connection with the apostolic decree, 1 Cor. and the later Rev. 2, Paul's statements in 1 Cor. 5-10 regarding fornication and eating meat sacrificed to idols are examined. The following conclusions can be drawn from the study: 1) Paul understands the word *porneia* broadly, probably following TestXII above all; 2) the content of the decree

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is only substantiated by 1 Cor. 5-10 – Paul's criticism of fornication and the eating of meat sacrificed to idols is combined with an ban on eating blood and meat of unknown origin, which was important for Judeo-Christians.

Streszczenie

Artykuł odpowiada na pytania o treść i źródła tzw. dekretu apostołskiego z Dz 15, w szczególności o sens terminu *porneia*. Przedstawiono najpierw skrótowo znaczenie jego hebrajskiego odpowiednika – rdzenia זנה, a następnie użycie źródłosłowa πορν- w Septuagincie, pismach deuterokanonicznych, apokryficznych i u Filona Aleksandryjskiego. Ponieważ powiązanie z mięsem ofiarowanym bogom (bożkom) pojawia się tylko w związku z dekretem apostołskim oraz 1Kor i późniejszą Ap 2, przeanalizowano wypowiedzi Pawła z 1Kor 5-10 dotyczące rozpusty i jedzenia mięsa złożonego w ofierze bożkom. Badania prowadzą do następujących wniosków: 1) Paweł szeroko rozumie słowo *porneia*, podążając najprawdopodobniej przede wszystkim za TestXII; 2) treść dekretu znajduje uzasadnienie jedynie w 1 Kor 5-10 – Pawłowa krytyka rozpusty i jedzenia mięsa złożonego w ofierze bożkom została połączona z ważnym dla judeochrześcijan zakazem spożywania krwi i mięsa nieznanego pochodzenia.

1. Introduction

Acts 15 focuses on the problem of the observance of Jewish law by Gentile converts to Christianity, in particular the need to submit to circumcision (v.1.5). A meeting took place in Jerusalem, attended by the apostles and elders (v.6) in addition to Paul and Barnabas (v.2). This meeting is sometimes referred to as the Jerusalem Council during which James put forward a proposal of the requirements that should be placed on Gentile-Christian believers, while rejecting further conditions, especially the need for circumcision (vv.19-21). His proposal was unanimously (v.25) accepted. Hence the term apostolic decree which appears in the literature. It was decided to send a letter (vv.23-29) which repeated James' proposal almost word for word (v.29; cited again in 21:25), i.e. of the Jewish regulations, Gentile Christians were to observe only four

prohibitions: namely, meat sacrificed to idols (v.20: pollutions of idols),³ blood, things strangled and fornication (πορνεία). The avoidance of improperly slaughtered animals, i.e. with blood or strangled, as well as those previously sacrificed to idols, was intended to protect the Christian community not only from what was associated with idolatry, but above all to ensure table fellowship between Jewish- and Gentile Christians (cf. 1 Cor. 8-10, especially 10:20; Gal. 2:12; Acts 10:28; 11:3-17).⁴ If so, what purpose did the requirement to avoid fornication serve then? Why was fornication included alongside dietary regulations and not (in today's perception) much more serious crimes such as murder, violence against a fellow human being and the like?⁵ In the Hebrew Bible, the equivalent to the Greek word πορνεία has a mostly figurative meaning as cultic and religious unfaithfulness to YHWH, often amounting to participation in idolatrous cults (cf. Slawik 2024 and below {2.1.}). If we were to interpret the word "fornication" in the apostolic decree in the same way, the resolution of the apostles in Jerusalem would be limited to avoiding the consumption of blood and anything associated with idolatry.⁶ However, πορνεία is most commonly understood as a term referring to incestuous relationships by reference to the origin of the apostolic decree requirements in Lev. 17-18,⁷ or more broadly to sexual

³ Ἐἰδωλον literally means "spectre", "phantom", "image", "representation", especially "statue of a deity" (cf. *LSJ*). Even though Schottroff 2021, 146-148, considers the translation of this word (and related ones) as "idols" to be incorrect, as it denotes foreign deities whose presence is demonstrated by their representations, he also admits that in its essence the concept was polemical.

⁴ Cf. Hauck, Schulz 1959, 592 and commentaries such as Boor 1970, 276; Conzelmann 1972, 92; Pesch 1986b, 81; Roloff 1988, 232; Keener 2014, 2258.2259; Kurz 2021, 163; and further literature such as Rakocy 1996, 146 et al.

⁵ This surprising question has occupied scholars for a long time – see already Hauck, Schulz 1959, 592.

⁶ Such an interpretation of πορνεία is noted in Johnson 1992, 266-267, which ultimately refers to all types of πορνεία, which are equally condemned in the New Testament.

⁷ Cf. Hauck, Schulz 1959, 592; Dąbrowski 1961, 521 (although he also takes into

offences, which allegedly originated primarily from the so-called Noahide Laws.⁸ This raises the question of how far such ideas are legitimate, especially since the root πορν-, does not appear in Lev. 17-18 (G), and the concept of the Noahide Laws is only confirmed in Rabbinic Judaism, which is chronologically later. It is therefore necessary to analyse how πορν- was used in Greek-language literature in the days before the Acts, particularly in Jewish-Hellenistic literature, starting with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.⁹

2. Πορν- in the Septuagint

Apart from a few exceptions, the root πορν- in the Septuagint (G) is a translation of the Hebrew root זנה.

2.1. Πορν- in the Septuagint as translation of זנה in the Hebrew Bible

In the Septuagint, all words (without exception) based on the root זנה have been translated as different forms of the root πορν-. When used literally, זנה has several meanings in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁰ First, it may denote illicit premarital intercourse (Deut. 22:21; perhaps also Gen. 34:31) or extramarital intercourse (presumably in Gen. 38:24); second, prostitution (Gen. 38:15; Prov. 6:26; 29:3; Joel 4:3) or a promiscuous

account the reference to sexual laxity in pagan cults); Haenchen 1959, 390; Roloff 1988, 232-233; Callan 1993 (a kind of summary of Lev. 17-18); Fitzmyer 1998, 551; Rakocy 1996, 146-147; Tułodziecki 2008, 153; Haacker 2019, 262 (although the meaning of fornication is not necessarily limited to them); such an interpretation is also confirmed by Loader 2014. It is also considered possible by Bock 2007, 505-506, while excluding that Lev. 17-18 might explain the content of the decree and preferring to tie fornication to sacred prostitution (on sacred prostitution cf. Slawik 2011).

⁸ Cf. Flusser 1994, 583 and Heiligenthal 1994, 585-586; Keener 2014, 2264-2269.2271-2275; as even https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Laws_of_Noah (accessed 2024.06.03) confirms. Holladay 2016, 303, equates it with adultery, and Kurz 2021, 163, sees it as immoral sexual behaviour in general, which is supposed to be the literal meaning of the word πορνεία. Further interpretive models are presented below (4.2.).

⁹ All translations are the author's own.

¹⁰ The entire subsection is based on Slawik 2024.

attitude (perhaps in Lev. 21:7, 14); and third, it may refer to a woman (זונה) deprived of patriarchal protection (Amos 7:17; Judg. 11:1; 1 Kgs. 3:16-28) or living outside such a framework (the innkeeper in Josh. 2; 6), which does not exclude the possibility that she may also have engaged in prostitution or been forced into it. A number of passages suggest the very low social status of a זונה (e.g. Judg. 11:1; 1 Kgs. 22:38, which is also relevant to Rahab in Josh. or the two זונות in 1 Kgs. 3). In a literal sense, this root refers exclusively to the conduct of women, and זונה is a designation of a social category of women. It is only two or three times at most that acts of זנה in a literal sense are described as publishable, and this in texts that are highly questionable: pre-marital intercourse of a priest's daughter (Lev. 21:9) or a young woman (in the late, strongly polemical Deut. 22:21, in which the punishment equates such an offence with adultery – cf. Deut. 22:22,23-24), and the prostitution of Tamar (in a late Halakha of Gen. 38:24).

The root זנה is most often used in a figurative sense. Even the oldest texts in the Hebrew Bible attest to such a use of this root word (Hos.). It is by far the most frequent metaphor for cultic and religious unfaithfulness to YHWH (Hos., Jer., Ezek., Trito-Isa., Pentateuch, Judg., 2 Kgs., 1-2 Chron., Ps. 106). However, whereas metaphorical prostitution or promiscuity in Hos. and Jer. was limited to cultic and religious offences (illicit or idolatrous sacrificial worship, procuring oracles, divination and sorcery), from Isa. onwards they also referred to other iniquities. Prostitutes are personified cities: Jerusalem, full of social iniquity (violence) (Isa 1:21); the worn-out and unattractive prostitute Tyre (Isa. 23:15-16), trading with the whole world (Isa. 23:17); Nineveh, using terrible violence against the peoples (Nah. 3:1-4), and playing political games with the powers of the time, Samaria and Jerusalem (Ezek. 23 and the additions in Ezek. 16). Finally, prostitution becomes a metaphor for all iniquity and the denial of God's activity in the world (Ps. 73).

In addition to the verb, there are several nouns based on the root זנה: זְנוּנִים, זָנוּת, and תְּזוּנוֹת (the latter only in Ezek.). Apart from זְנוּנִים in Gen. 38:24, they are used exclusively in a figurative sense.

2.2. Πορν- in the Septuagint when it is not a translation of זנה

The root πορν- appears in G a few more times than זנה in the Hebrew Bible.

In Gen. 38, Tamar is referred to both as זוֹנָה, and, surprisingly, in this context, as קְדֵשָׁה. (vv.21-22). The latter is also expressed as the word “prostitute”, making the text easier to understand.

In Ex. 34:16, the accusation of indulging in prostitution (certainly understood figuratively here as participation in idolatrous cults) made against the recipients’ sons is extended to “your daughters”, whereas the issue of the daughters of foreign peoples prostituting themselves “with their gods” is not mentioned.

If some of the G manuscripts of Deut. 22:21 do not contain an error in the Greek (When copying the Greek text, instead of writing πονηρία [“evil”, “wickedness”], the copyist may have written πορνεία.), then רע (ה) was interpreted as pornei,^a certainly because the context refers to illicit, premarital intercourse (cf. Slawik 2024, 25-26).

According to Deut. 23:3, exclusion from the assembly also applies to מְזוּמָר, or bastard child, which is expressed in G by the word ἐκ πόρνης. If the TM referred only to the child of a prostitute and not of a woman without a husband (cf. Judg. 11:1-2; cf. Slawik 2024, 33), then the translation would be semantically identical to the Hebrew word.

Deut. 23:18 includes a double translation or double interpretation of the Hebrew text. In one of these, קְדֵשָׁה (“consecrated female”) is rendered as πόρνη, “female prostitute”, and קְדָשׁ (“consecrated male”) as πορνέω, “male prostitute”, perhaps a young man prostituting himself to an older man. However, the Hebrew text is rather translated as τελεσφόρος (“sorceress”)¹¹ and τελισκόμενος (“one introduced [to a secret

¹¹ Cf. *LSJ* and Rehkopf 1989, deriving such a translation from the meaning in

cult]”),¹² while “female prostitute” and “male prostitute” constitute alternative interpretations by the translator.

In the G^A, Judg. 2:15 includes an additional explanation of God’s wrath, which is identical to the accusation of prostitution in v.17, referring to the worship of foreign gods (v.13; cf. Slawik 2024, 175). So there is a minor, clarifying extension in line with the context.

In G, 1 Kgs. 12:24 is significantly expanded. The reader finds out that Jeroboam’s mother Zeruah (Σαρῖρα) was a “female prostitute”, which could mean that she was an unmarried woman living outside patriarchal control. Most likely, such information was intended to discredit the origins of Israel’s first king (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:26).

The words of 1 Kgs. 22:38 were added to 1 Kgs. 20:19 (TM 21:19), thus aligning the announcement of Ahab’s misfortune with the account of its fulfilment.

In Isa 47:10, which speaks of the illusory confidence of Babylonia, the word πορνεία appears once or twice.¹³ The first time only in some of the G manuscripts as translation of נִצְרָה (cf. Deut. 22:21), but it can may also be a mistranscription of the Greek word ποιηρία. The second time (in almost all G manuscripts) πορνεία seems to refer to the secret (in TM: “no one sees me”) wisdom and knowledge of Babylonia, i.e. magical practices (cf. vv.9.12-13). Its use is an interpretation of such activities in the spirit of prophetic criticism (cf. Nah. 4:3; and also Hos. 4:12; cf. Slawik 2024, 69-70.117-119).

The passage in Isa 57:3-13, a very enigmatic text, criticises the abominable cultic practices that Jerusalem was committing on and around the Temple Mount. The word πόρνη appears in G as early as v.3 – the addressees were insultingly called “children of iniquity, offspring of

classical Greek: “fulfilment”, “bearing fruit/harvest”. In *SD* it is rendered as “introduced into a mysterious (esoteric?) cult”.

¹² Cf. *LSJ* and *SD*; whereas in Rehkopf 1989 as “fulfilling”.

¹³ For more details cf. Hermisson 2003, 151-152.

adulterers and a prostitute”¹⁴ The expression in v.9: “And you journeyed to the king (Molech?) with oil, and multiplied your ointments (and sent your enjoys very far, and descended as far as Sheol)”, is translated in G as follows: “And you have multiplied your prostitution with them, and made those far from you numerous”.¹⁵ The Hebrew text may speak of sending child sacrifices (“envoys”) to the ruler of the underworld, Molech (cf. Koole 2001, 73-75; Goldingay 2014, 130). The translators of G probably took the phrase from Ezek. 16:25; 23:19, especially since the second part of the verse seems to be related to Ezek. 23:16.40 (cf. Lau 1994, 163). It is probably an attempt to deal with an elusive text by referring to the criticism of the alliances with Egypt in Ezek.¹⁶

In Jer. 3:7, the translators probably made the text more specific, indicating that Israel’s (“the Faithless”) deeds involved prostitution (as in v.6).¹⁷

In Ezek. 16:24.31.39, the obscure word זֶבֶח (podium, cultic installation) is rendered, in reference to the context in which Jerusalem is accused of prostituting herself to foreign gods and foreign powers (cf. Slawik 2024, 127.135-136), as a brothel ($\tau\acute{o}$ πορνείου) or room of a prostitute ($\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\kappa\eta\mu\alpha$ πορνικόν).

In G, the foreign woman of Prov. 5:3 is equated with a prostitute: “Do not approach an evil¹⁸ woman, for honey drips from the lips of a prostitute woman or anoints your throat in time”. The text was expanded to include a directly expressed warning against a woman who is not a stranger but is evil and lures a young man like a prostitute (cf. Sir.^A 9:1-9).¹⁹ On the other hand, in Prov. 23:21 the glutton is replaced

¹⁴ On this passage of the Hebrew Bible cf. Slawik 2024, 100-104.

¹⁵ According to Goldingay 2014, 96 fn. 26, ointment or perfume (מִשְׁחָה) has been read by the translator of G as a form of the root מָחַךְ .

¹⁶ On Ezek. 23 cf. Slawik 2024, 142-161.

¹⁷ On Jer. 3,6-11 cf. Slawik 2024, 108-111.

¹⁸ Or: worthless (φειδύλη).

¹⁹ On Sir.^A 9:1-9 cf. Slawik 2024, 43-44. In Prov. 5:3, the behaviour of the evil woman was probably equated to the vividly described luring by πόρνη. If this was not

by the one engaging with a prostitute (the only time in G πορνικόπος).²⁰ Such a translation seems to be an interpretation in the spirit of Prov. 29:3; Sir.^A 9:6: not only drunkenness but also engaging with prostitutes leads to poverty.

In summary, whenever the root πορν-, appears in G, even though it lacks an equivalent in the Hebrew text, it is mainly a smoothing out or an alignment and an interpretation of the Hebrew text, generally in keeping with the context (also further as in Isa 57:6; Prov. 23:31). In 1 Kgs. 12:24 and Isa 47:10 such interpretations reinforce the negative judgement of the characters or actions depicted. Note that πορν- was then used both literally and figuratively, depending on the context and the meaning of the Hebrew Vorlage.

2.3. In the deuterocanonical (apocryphal) books

Πορν- also appears in books of the Septuagint not found in the Hebrew Bible, most often in Sir. The root זנה appears four times in fragments preserved in Hebrew: Sir.^A 9:3(b).6, where it warns against engaging with or even conversation with a prostitute (in G v.6 *pl.*), with no translation of the second part of v.3 in G; Sir.^B 41:17, speaking of the shame that comes from prostituting oneself (זניה), presumably being a male prostitute; Sir.^B 42:8, where one is perhaps encouraged not to be reluctant to rebuke older men who try to give advice encouraging activity as a (male) prostitute. In this case, the phrase of interest and textual difficulty is rendered differently in G: “an old man on trial for young men / because of prostitution (fornication)”.²¹

a comparison, then the concept of πόρνη would have to be understood more broadly than just in relation to a prostitute, for otherwise it would be difficult to explain why it should be a matter of life and death (vv.4-5; for the interpretation of these verses cf. Sæbø 2012, 85-86, which also applies to the slightly differently translated passage in G).

²⁰ In the Hebrew Bible, the glutton or the prodigal still appears in v.20 and 28:7; Deut. 21:20; Sir.^C 18:33, always next to a drunkard (cf. *HATHAT*).

²¹ Rahlf's 1982, II: κρινομένου πρὸς νέους; GS: κρινομένου πρὸς πορνείας (in *SD* translated as follows: “for the youths/and because of the fornication whom/which the ancient ones have chosen”). For structures with the preposition πρὸς cf. Hos. 2:4. For

In the Hebrew text of Sir. 19:2 (“Wine and women weaken reason, and strong lust²² ruins the one who possesses it”)²³ the word נִינֵן does not appear. In G, however, we read: “Wine and women will mislead²⁴ the wise, and the man pining for prostitutes will become shameless”. The translation in G may be an interpretation of v.2b, which may not have seemed clear in the literal wording, in the spirit of 41:17.

There is also a difference between the Greek text and the Hebrew text in the case of Sir. 46:11. In G: “And judges, each in his own name, whose heart has not prostituted itself and who have not turned away from the Lord, they are remembered in blessings”, while in the Hebrew text: “And the judges, each in his own name, each one who has not lifted up his heart and has not turned away from God (לֵאלֹהִים), will be remembered in blessings”. Lifting up one’s heart can be understood as in 2 Kgs. 14:10, which is interpreted in 2 Kgs. 25:19 as rising in pride (cf. *HAHAT*; *JSHRZ* III, 662). The expression can also have the positive meaning of lifting one’s heart (in one’s hands) to God (cf. Lam. 3:41) or eager action (cf. Ex. 35:12.26; 36:2). Here with the negation, it probably means the absence of pride.²⁵ The translator surely understood the act of lifting up one’s heart in supplication combined with turning away from God as idolatry, which was referred to in the Old Testament as prostitution, fornication (cf. Slawik 2024).

The Hebrew text of the other places in Sir. where we find the root πρῶν- is generally unknown (cf. Beentjes 2006). Sir. 23:17²⁶: “A desire as

these Hebrew passages cf. also Slawik 2024, 43-45.

²² Literally: “a hard soul ruins its owners”; on the above translation cf. *HAHAT* and Sauer 2000, 151.

²³ According to Sauer 2000, 152, v.2b refers to the fact that strong desires bring doom to those who are guided by them.

²⁴ Or: make unfaithful (cf. *SD*; *APAT* I, 324).

²⁵ Cf. translation in Sauer 2000, 316; *HAHAT*.

²⁶ Numbering according to Rahlfs 1982, II 417; and in *APAT* I, 350; *JSHRZ* III, 562, these are vv.16b-17. Vv.16-17 are a numerical parable (cf. v.16) – cf. Sauer 2000, 175. The font in the translation in Sauer 2000, 174 (as the marking in *JSHRZ* III, 562,

hot²⁷ as a burning fire will not be quenched until it burns out; a debauched man (πόρνος) will not be appeased in the flesh of his carnality until he has kindled the fire; to a debauched man (πόρμος) every bread is sweet (very pleasant),²⁸ he will not be appeased until he dies". The poem is presumably meant to make one aware of how dangerous sexual passion can be (cf. Sauer 2000, 175). But how should we understand the term ἄνθρωπος πόρμος? G. Sauer sees the second part as a criticism of incest (cf. Ruben in Gen. 35:2 and Amnon in 2 Sam. 13), and the third part as engaging with prostitutes.²⁹ But could the same expression be interpreted so differently? Could relations with prostitutes be so pernicious as to lead to death (cf. loss of property and dignity in Prov. 23:27; 29:3; Sir. 19:2[G])? In Greek, πόρμος referred to a young man who was the sexual object of a man, usually an older man,³⁰ which does not fit the context. Perhaps the term needs to be understood more broadly: a promiscuous male driven by sexual passion. Then it would not be appropriate to link these statements to specific sexual misconduct.

Sir. 23:22-23 sharply condemns the unfaithful wife: "Likewise also the wife, having forsaken her husband and having delivered an heir from a stranger: firstly, she was disobedient to the law of the Most High; secondly, she offended her husband (acted wickedly against her husband); thirdly, through prostitution (ἐν πορνείᾳ) she committed adultery and delivered children from another man."³¹ He points out that the wife abandons her husband, not the other way around (cf. Deut. 24:1). Πορνεία may refer to promiscuous intercourse with multiple strange

although the list of Hebrew passages in the introduction, 485-486, does not include it), suggests that the second part of this text is available in Hebrew (a mistake?).

²⁷ Literally: "a hot soul".

²⁸ According to APAT I, 350 fn. d, sweet bread is supposed to be a euphemism for intercourse (cf. Prov. 9:17; 30:20).

²⁹ According to Sauer 2000, 175-176, whereby intercourse with prostitutes was supposed to be an ordinary practice in the Hellenistic world.

³⁰ Cf. *LSJ*: catamite.

³¹ Literally: "presented" (the same verb appears twice).

men, and not necessarily have a generalised meaning of sexual iniquity.³²

Sir. 26:6-9(10) contains a list of women to be avoided as they draw misfortune upon a man. It turns out that “a woman’s prostitution can be known by the lifting up of her eyes and by her eyelids” (v.9). The author is apparently convinced that a prostitute or a promiscuous woman can be recognised by the movement of her eyes³³ and by her eyelashes.

A long passage in Wis. 13:10-14:31 criticises pagan idols and the consequences of worshipping them.³⁴ In 14:12 the author states: “And the beginning of harlotry³⁵ (was) the thought of (inventing?) statues of gods”. He probably employed an Old Testament metaphor of idolatry (cf. Hos. 2:7.15; Ezek. 6:9; Ex. 34:15-16 etc.).³⁶

The worship of idols is also criticised in Letter of Jeremiah (Let. Jer.) 7-14 (in the Vulgate, which in this case includes the Old Latin translation, it is Ba. 6; cf. Stachowiak 1968, 110; Kratz 1998, 73). The priests of the gods, i.e. the idolatrous cult, steal the gold and silver of the gods “...use it for themselves, they also give of it for prostitutes in the brothel³⁷”

³² It is less likely that πορνεία refers to her intercourse after abandoning her husband, for why would it be an act directed against her husband? According to Hauck, Schulz 1959, 587, in Sir. 23 pornei, a is synonymous with adultery.

³³ *APAT* I, 364: brazen eyes; *JSHRZ* III, 569: look in the eyes; Sauer 2000, 193.195: a sparkling gaze (translation) or beautiful eyes (and dyed eyelashes – in the commentary).

³⁴ Cf. Hübner 1999, 170-177; and according to Gilbert 2002, 178-179, verses 14:11-31 are a separate part.

³⁵ Gilbert 2002, 178: faithlessness, and *APAT* I, 499, interprets it as abandoning God.

³⁶ Similarly, Romaniuk 1969, 209 and Ponizy 2012, 394, although they write about metaphorical adultery. On the Old Testament texts mentioned cf. Slawik 2024, 81-88.120-122.165-167. A different interpretation especially in Hübner 1999, 177-178: unlike in many Old Testament texts, fornication must here be understood in a literal sense – moral perversion arises from false thinking, erroneous theology. However, this is a reading of the words in the light of Rom 1, which is explicitly alluded to in *JSHRZ* III, 452 (fn. 12a).

³⁷ Literally: “roof”, or possibly “on the roof” – translation following Kratz 1998, 91 and fn. 53, according to which this meaning of τέγος is well attested in late Greek; *JSHRZ* III, 187; *SD* (1359 and fn.). According to Kratz 1998, 93, reference is made to temple prostitution, for which roof terraces were to be used in Syrian-Mesopotamian temples;

(v.9[10]). So they were to use the gold and silver intended for worship for their own pleasure, which was as extreme as intercourse with prostitutes. This may be an echo of Mic. 1:7.³⁸

The noun *πορνεία* appears twice in Tob. 4:12 (G^I)³⁹: “Beware, child, of all fornication, and take for yourself above all women from the offspring of your fathers! Do not take a foreign woman who is not of your father’s tribe, for we are children of the prophets!” 8:7⁴⁰: “And now, O Lord: it is not for fornication that I take unto myself this sister of mine (to be my wife), but based on faithfulness.”⁴¹ The context leaves no doubt that it is considered fornication to marry a woman of foreign lineage.⁴² Reference is made to the Old Testament criticism of bonding with foreign nations,

similarly, Wojciechowski 2016, 131-132, who believes that the simplest assumption is that the flat upper terraces of houses were used for prostitution (both sacred and secular). Stachowiak 1968, 141, translates it as house of unchastity.

³⁸ On Mic. 1:7 cf. Slawik 2024, 46-47.

³⁹ According to Wojciechowski 2005, 18, the longer text of G^I, unpurified of Semitisms and extensions and with later adaptations, is closer to the Aramaic original preserved fragmentarily in Q. Schüngel-Straumann 2005, 39-40, rightly argues that the interplay between the two versions is not one-sided and that the textual history is strongly complicated (except for 4:7-18 and 13:6-10, he takes G^{II} as the basis for the translation).

⁴⁰ G^I, but similarly G^{II}, though without addressing God – cf. Rahlfs 1982, I 1023; *JSHRZ* II, 974 (and fn. 8,7a).

⁴¹ ἀληθεία – Grzybek 1963, 112; *JSHRZ* II, 974; understand it as pure intention, and according to Rabenau 1994, 142, in Tob. it always means obedience to the commandments.

⁴² Nevertheless, *πορνεία* has been interpreted here as sexual desire – cf. Fung 1963, 90 and Rabenau 1994, 46(.142; also in *JSHRZ* II, 947 [fn. 12a]), who separate fornication and the imperative of endogamous marriage, and consider any intercourse outside marriage as fornication; Schüngel-Straumann 2005, 134: pure sexual lust; Wojciechowski 2005, 84.112, according to whom “it [applies] not only to any serious sexual transgression, according to the general sense of the word, but also to marrying for the sake of physical desire (v.8:7)”, and here it is “an introduction to [...] the positive command to marry in one’s own lineage” and that “Tobit, by taking Sarah, also physically, does not seduce her, but wants to be with her faithfully and sincerely”.

which used the equivalent of πορνεία – the root נגז (Ex 34:15-16; also Gen. 34:31).⁴³

Summary. In the deuterocanonical (apocryphal) books, the meaning of πορν- largely corresponds with נגז in the Hebrew Bible. This root word is used both literally and figuratively. One is warned of the consequences (shame) resulting from engaging with prostitutes (Sir. 9:3; 19:2, which also seems to apply to a male prostitute – Sir. 41:17) and criticises the attitude of promiscuous women (Sir. 23:22-23) and men (Sir. 23:17; also 19:2). In Tob., it is considered fornication to marry women of another lineage, and in Let. Jer. the cultic iniquity of pagan priests consists in stealing gifts for the gods to pay for the services of prostitutes. Sir. also uses the word metaphorically (Sir. 46:11 G: idolatrous turning away from God), as does Wis. 14:12.

3. Πορν- in pre-New Testament Greek-language literature

3.1. In Hellenistic literature

In (classical) Greek literature the root in question was very rare (cf. Hauck, Schulz 1959, 580-581; Reißer 1993, 1506). The situation changes with the appearance of the Septuagint and Jewish and Christian literature in Greek.⁴⁴ Dictionaries state that, with the exception of Jewish-Christian literature, the meaning of the root πορν- is limited to prostitution, with πορνεῖον being a brothel and πόρνος being a young man who was the sexual object of a male, usually an older, homosexual lover.⁴⁵ The term comes from πέρνημι, “to sell”⁴⁶. However, according to *TWNT*, πορνεία is

⁴³ Which is recognised by Schüngel-Straumann 2005,103: In addition to Ex. 34, she also cites Deut. 7:1-4; Prov. 7. On Gen. 34:31 cf. Slawik 2024, 38-39. Perhaps one should also see in this an echo of the warnings against the foreign woman in Prov. 1-9 (2:16; 5:3,20; 7:5).

⁴⁴ Cf. statistics available at <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/stat.jsp> (accessed 2024.04.24).

⁴⁵ Cf. primarily *LSJ*.

⁴⁶ Especially slaves, female slaves were used as prostitutes – cf. Hauck, Schulz 1959, 580.

not just prostitution but more broadly fornication, with πόρνος perhaps referring to a man who consorts with prostitutes or offers his favours for money. Even so, this interpretation raises objections.⁴⁷

On the other hand, in the Septuagint and Jewish-Christian literature, the meaning of πορν- was to include adultery, fornication, debauchery, all kinds of forbidden sexual acts or bodily impurity in the broadest sense, and metaphorically idolatry⁴⁸ and political enmity towards God.⁴⁹

Simply reviewing dictionaries suggests that the world of Jewish and Christian imagery, with its roots primarily in Old Testament criticism of illicit and idolatrous religious practices, in which metaphorical prostitution or extreme promiscuity was invoked (cf. Slawik 2024), not only led to the spread of the root word πορν- in ancient Greek literature, but also to a significant expansion of its semantic field.

3.2. Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20/10 BC– 40/50 AD)⁵⁰ was one of the most influential Hellenistic-Jewish thinkers.⁵¹ The root πορν- appears relatively frequently in his works: a total of 32 times, including 26 times as

⁴⁷ Cf. Hauck, Schulz 1959, 580-581, referring to πόρνος the authors invoke passages referring to a young man who was the sexual object of another man (cf. *LSJ*), while giving no example for πορνεία; similarly in Reißer 1993, 1506. Montanari 2015 and Abramowiczówna 1982, who assign to πόρνος meanings such as “debauched”, “fornicator”, “sodomite”, “homosexual”, which is most likely a reference to Jewish and Christian literature.

⁴⁸ Cf. *LSJ*; Bauer 1988 (, 494.1389-1390); Abramowiczówna 1982 (III, 602-603); Rehkopf 1989(, 94.239), who does not consider a figurative meaning; Bosak 2001(, 477); and above all Hauck, Schulz 1959, 581-595; Reißer 1993, 1506-1509. According to Abramowiczówna, πόρνος in G means an “adulterer”, which is not attested, especially since the root πορν- in G – with the exception of Sir. 23:22-23 at best – does not refer to adultery (cf. above and Slawik 2024)

⁴⁹ The latter meaning is given only by *BDAG* and Popowski 1995(, 516): πόρνη in an allegorical sense also means the abodes of people opposing God; Rev. 17-19.

⁵⁰ The dates of his life are an estimate – cf. “Philon von Alexandria”.

⁵¹ Hauck, Schulz 1959, 588, present the occurrence and significance of πορνεία in the works of Philo.

πόρνη,⁵² in most cases in quotations or paraphrases of biblical texts, cited after G, accompanied by an elaboration or (allegorical) interpretation. Some examples follow. In *De specialibus legibus* I 102, Philo elaborates on the prohibition against a priest taking a prostitute as his wife. This theme reappears, among others, in *De fuga et inventione* 114, where the prostitute is also a code for impiety. In *Spec Leg* I 104.280-282, Philo extensively justifies the prohibition of Deut. 23:19a, and in *De vita Moysis* 300-302, fills the “gap” left in Num. 24:13; 31:16. In *De migratione Abrahami* 224, he incorporates the regulation of Deut. 23:18 into his interpretation of Gen. 34(,31). In *Fug* 149.153, he interprets Gen. 38, similarly to *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 124, where he also gives an allegorical interpretation of Tamar’s veil.

It is interesting to note the use of πορν- in two or three characteristic contexts. First, Philo frequently invokes the exclusion of the children of the prostitute from the people of Israel – ἐκ πόρνης (*Spec Leg* I 326.332; *De mutatione nominum* 205; *Legum allegoriae* III 8[correction ἐκ πόρνης]);⁵³ *Migr Abr* 69; also *De decalogo* 8; *De confusione linguarum* 144),⁵⁴ citing Deut. 23:3.⁵⁵ From the statement that such children do not know their father or his name (*Spec Leg* I 326-332; *Decal* 8), one might assume that for Philo πόρνη is an unmarried woman, not necessarily a prostitute, who nevertheless had many lovers. The children of a prostitute receive an allegorical interpretation (cf. *WPA* I, 372 fn. 1). The polytheists, ignorant of God, those who made many into gods, are like the children of a prostitute not knowing their true father, who could have been any of their mother’s lovers (*Spec Leg* I 326-332.344; *De mutatione*

⁵² Based on *PHI*. The full title of the work is given at the first mention and the abbreviation at subsequent mentions.

⁵³ According to *WPA* III, 89 fn. 1. If πόρνους were to be retained, then interpretation would be difficult due to Deut. 23:3. In *PHE*; *EJW* (<http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book4.html>) it has been translated as a panderer.

⁵⁴ Philo writes about many sons of many people – cf. *WPA* IV, 137 fn. 5.

⁵⁵ Cf. above (2.2.): the Hebrew text speaks of bastards – Philo uses the wording of G.

nominum 205; *Conf Ling* 144; *Decal* 8). Similarly, he offers an allegorical interpretation of the exclusion of eunuchs, whom he links to atheists: infertility means the rejection of God in general (*Migr Abr* 69). Therefore, secondly, the Hebrews have an exceptional, he believes, prohibition of consorting with prostitutes and of any sexual relations outside marriage (*De Iosepho* 43) and exclude prostitutes from the community (*Spec Leg* I 326; III 51).⁵⁶ Thirdly, Philo describes the behaviour of a prostitute or woman of loose morals to illustrate lust in this way:⁵⁷ the friends of a prostitute are all iniquities (*De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini* 20-22).⁵⁸

Philo thus uses the word πόρνη (πορν-) primarily in a literal sense to refer to a prostitute, a woman with many lovers, to illustrate the inferiority of polytheism,⁵⁹ and as a personification of desire, from which all evil begins.

3.3. In apocryphal (pseudepigraphic) literature

Most of the texts discussed below were written in Hebrew, or alternatively in Aramaic. They are included here because they are known primarily in their Greek-language versions (or from further translations), and the focus of interest in this study is the meaning of the Greek root word πορν-.

A. Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint includes the **Psalms of Solomon** (Rahlfs 1982 II, 471-489), although the ancient codices do not include

⁵⁶ Philo warns against the prostitute like Prov. warn against the strange woman. She deceives both men and women, fills their souls with lewdness, lack of restraint (*ἀκολασία*). We can also add to this the condemnation of panderers or brothel-keepers (*Fig* 28: πορνοτρόφος). Philo sharply criticises pederasty (*παιδεραστία/παιδεραστέω*) and the functioning of such boys (*μαλακία*; *Spec Leg* III 37-38), but πορν- does not then appear.

⁵⁷ Cf. *WPA* III, 222 fn. 2: personalization of lust.

⁵⁸ In fact, Philo sometimes uses two synonymous terms πόρνη and χαμαιτύπη, "whore", "prostitute" (*De Iosepho* 43; *Sacr AC* 21).

⁵⁹ This is somewhat reminiscent of the figurative use of נָרָה in the Hebrew Bible for the purpose of criticising idolatrous cults. In the Hebrew Bible it was a derogatory, disparaging term (cf. Slawik 2024), whereas in Philo we find an allegorical interpretation of children of prostitutes.

them.⁶⁰ They are dated to the first century BC.⁶¹ Ps. Sol. 2 portrays the sad fate of Jerusalem, conquered by pagans because of the terrible guilt of its inhabitants. The foreign invaders (Cf. *OTP* II, 652 fn. k) “exposed the sons of Jerusalem to mockery because of the prostitutes⁶² in it, anyone passing by could enter in a bright day” (v.11).⁶³ The psalm speaks of the grave faults of the Jerusalemites in very general terms, and among these were cultic iniquities (v.3-5). In contrast, v.13 seems to accuse the daughters of Jerusalem of desecrating themselves through disordered sexual activity.⁶⁴ The content of v.11 is strikingly reminiscent⁶⁵ of Old Testament criticism of cultic infidelity (e.g. Ezek. 6:8-10).⁶⁵ It is, of course, difficult to imagine that the prevalence of prostitution could justify the destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of its inhabitants (v.13 may be an analogous criticism of the daughters of Jerusalem; cf. v.6 for the juxtaposition of sons and daughters). Prostitutes (prostitution) is a contemptuous term for Jerusalemites desecrating the sacrifices offered to God.

The First Book of Enoch, also called the Ethiopic Book of Enoch because it is only preserved in its entirety in the Ethiopic language, is a literary composition in several parts, dating to the 2nd century BC.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Cf. Rahlfs 1982 II, 471; *APAT* II, 127; *SD*, 913. Information at the beginning of the Codex Alexandrinus suggests that these were to be found at the end of the Codex, but these pages are missing – cf. *OTP* II, 639.

⁶¹ Cf. *APAT* II, 127; *OTP* II, 640-641; Eissfeldt 1964, 807, suspects that the Hebrew original was written no later than the 2nd century BC; *JSHRZ* IV, 58.

⁶² In *JSHRZ* IV, 64 (fn. 11c); *APAT* II, 132 and fn. b, it is presumed to be a translation of זְנוּנִיּוֹת, which should be rendered by πορνεία. Then prostitution would be a contemptuous term for the conduct of Jerusalemites (cf. below).

⁶³ Literally: “he went in opposite the sun”; above citing *APAT* II, 132; *OTP* II, 652; *SD*; similarly in *JSHRZ* IV, 58: “openly”, citing Ezek. 23:44.

⁶⁴ The verse is understood differently in *JSHRZ* IV, 58 fn. 13a, i.e. as an accusation of incest, although its connection with Num. 25:4 is also noted. The question arises as to why incest of all things and why only the daughters of Jerusalem should be accused of incest, even though the daughters can be a metaphor for inhabitants of Jerusalem.

⁶⁵ For further passages cf. Slawik 2024.

⁶⁶ The book is mostly dated between 167 BC and 64 AD. It is known in the Ethiopic

Chapters 6-36 tell the story of the fall of the angels (cf. *APAT* II, 221-222; Eissfeldt 1964, 837; *OTP* I, 5; Rubinkiewicz 1999, 141). Azazel taught the people to make weapons (metal) and ornaments (8:1). “And there came a great ungodliness, and they committed fornication (prostituted themselves: πορνεύω, *pl. masc.*), and were deceived and destroyed in all their ways” (8:2).⁶⁷ The people were furthermore taught various practices of divination and magic (8:3). And because the earth was ruined by the teaching of Azazel (10:8), “The Lord said to Gabriel: Proceed against the bastards, against the spurious⁶⁸ and the sons of fornication (πορνεία), and put down⁶⁹ the sons of the watchers (sentinels) from among the people! Send them into a battle of destruction! For they shall not have long days [of life]” (10:9). In v. 8:2 the verb πορνεύω refers to ungodliness, associated with practising witchcraft, and in 10:9, reference is made to the descendants of the sons of God, angelic figures, also called watchers (cf. 6:2.7-8), who slept with human women. They gave birth to giants (cf. Gen. 6:1-4), filling the earth with wickedness and murder (6:1-7:6; 9:8-11; cf. also *JSHRZ* V, 528 fn. 9c). Πορνεία is used as a term for intercourse between angels and human women which violates the order of the world (cf. also 10:11, where we read of angels who “mixed with women, defiling themselves with them in their impurity”).

The root πόρν- is most often found in the **Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs** (TestXII) consisting mainly of the message or testament that each of the dying twelve sons of Jacob passed on to their descendants. They contain Christian interpolations, if not an entirely Christian message based on older Jewish traditions. Moreover, even the already

language from a translation of a Greek text dating from c. 500, preserved up to 32:6 (but not in its entirety). The original was probably written in Hebrew or Aramaic – cf. *APAT* II, 232; Eissfeldt 1964, 837-843; *OTP* I, 6-7, emphasising the literary complexity of the book; *JSHRZ* V, 483-494, where the Book of the Watchers (chapters 1-36) is assumed to be dated between the late 3rd century and the mid-2nd century BC.

⁶⁷ A different variant: “and all their ways became evil” – cf. *JSHRZ* V, 521.

⁶⁸ A different variant: “rejected” – cf. *JSHRZ* V, 528 (fn. 9c).

⁶⁹ Again, there are different textual variants – cf. *JSHRZ* V, 528 (fn. g).

(presumed) Jewish original was certainly subject to editorial extensions.⁷⁰ Thus, dating is difficult and controversial, ranging from the 2nd century BC to the 3rd century AD.⁷¹

Πορνεία is a significant theme in the **Testament of Reuben**. Reuben mentions that he defiled his father's bed, referring no doubt to his intercourse with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah (Gen. 35:22; 49:4). He warns his descendants "lest you act in the ignorance of youth and fornication (πορνεία),⁷² in which I indulged myself and defiled the bed of my father Jacob" (1:6). Among the seven spirits of error (3:2) that come from Beliar, he first mentions "the spirit of fornication (τὸ τῆς πορνείας πνεῦμα) lying in nature and affections" (3:3). It has its counterpart among the seven spirits given to man: the seventh is the spirit of semen and intercourse, which is connected to sin because of the desire for pleasure (2:8). In ch. 4, Reuben again returns to his iniquity towards his father. "And the destruction of the soul is the sin of fornication (πορνεία), separating one from God and leading to idols, because it deceives the mind and understanding, and leads the young to hades, not in their time [i.e., before their time]. And fornication (πορνεία) has destroyed many [...]. But you have heard of Joseph, how he guarded himself from a woman and purified his thoughts from all fornication (πορνεία), and found favour with God⁷³ and men" (4:6-8). Even though the "Egyptian woman"

⁷⁰ Cf. *APAT* II, 459-460; Eissfeldt 1964, 858-862, who argues for the provenance of the Testaments from the Qumran community; *JSHRZ* III, 23-27; Rubinkiewicz 1987, 52. It is mostly assumed that they were written in Hebrew or Aramaic, as indicated by the Aramaic fragments among the Qumran manuscripts (the Hebrew text *TestNaft/Neft* on the other hand, is a translation from Greek) – cf. Eissfeldt 1964, 862; *JSHRZ* III, 23-27; Rubinkiewicz 1987, 51-52. The thesis of a Semitic original is criticised in *OTPI*, 776-777: it is not possible to settle the question, especially since the Aramaic and Greek texts have little in common.

⁷¹ On the early dating cf. especially *OTPI*, 777-778 (disregarding up to 12 Christian interpolations). Eissfeldt 1964, 861-862, dates *TestXII* in the period of the Qumran community, and at least *TestLew* must have been written before 70 AD.

⁷² It lacks an equivalent in the Aramaic passages – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 33 (fn. 6b).

⁷³ According to *OPG* θεοῦ (also in translations by Evans 2008; *APOTE*; *JSHRZ* III,

tried sorcery and magical means, she achieved nothing (4:9) thanks to God's support of Joseph (4:10). "For if fornication (πορνεία) does not overcome your thoughts, neither will Beliar be able to overcome you" (4:11). Reuben's further words are extremely misogynistic. "For women are evil, my children, and in the absence of authority and strength over man, they work deceitful charms to bind him to themselves" (5:1). For, as the angel of God instructed Reuben, "women are more easily given to the spirit of fornication (πορνεία) than men. And in the heart, they plot against men, and deceive their thoughts with adornments, and infuse poison with their appearance and then bind them with their deeds. For it is not possible for a woman to dominate a man. Flee therefore from fornication (πορνεία), my children, and command your wives and your daughters not to adorn their heads or their faces, for every woman who acts deceitfully in this way is to be subject to eternal punishment" (5:3-5). Ch. 5 closes with the remark on sentinels or watchers being seduced by women (cf. Dan. 4:10), alluding to Gen. 6:2, after which Reuben again exhorts: "Beware, therefore, of fornication (πορνεία)! And if you wish to purify your thought, then guard your senses against every female! And behold, command [women] not to associate with men, that they also may purify their thought. For repeated incidents [i.e., intercourse], even if they do not cause an impious act, are an incurable disease, and for us the eternal shame of Beliar. For fornication (πορνεία) never has understanding or piety in it, and all jealousy dwells in its lust" (6:1-4).

In T. Reu., πορνεία refers to all sexual desire, from which spousal intercourse is also not excluded, and is equated with loss of reason, turning away from God and idolatry, because witchcraft plays a role in stimulating it. It poses a deadly danger. One must guard against any thought of a woman and frequent sexual activity. The responsibility for it falls primarily on women, who indulge in it even more. At the same time,

37 [fn. 8b)], and according to *TLG* (Jonge, M. de. 1970. *Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece I*. 2nd edn., 1-86. Leiden: Brill) κυρίου, "Lord" (and some translations – cf. *APAT* II, 462; Rubinkiewicz 1999, 47).

the spirit of fornication is in human nature and only careful devotion to the teachings of Levi, or the priests, can guard against it (6:5-12). It is the first and worst sin, even though it stems from creation and sexual reproduction given to man.

The warning against fornication also appears in the **Testament of Simeon**. He warns: “Beware of indulging in fornication (of prostituting yourselves: πορνείω). Fornication (πορνεία) is the mother of all evil, separating you from God and bringing you closer to Beliar. For I have seen the signs in the writing of Enoch that your sons together with you⁷⁴ will be destroyed because of fornication (πορνεία) and they will act lawlessly towards Levi using the sword” (5:3-5).

The wording of T. Sim. is so general that it does not allow for a closer specification of what πορνεία is supposed to be. However, the tone is so close to that of T. Reu. that it suggests the same understanding of in T. Reu.

The **Testament of Levi** is addressed to his descendants, future priests. Levi (along with Judah) had been blessed by his grandfather Isaac, who taught him all the law concerning sacrificial worship and the law of God (9:1-8). Isaac also “said, Beware, child, of the spirit of fornication (πορνεία). It shall abide, and shall cause your seed [i.e., offspring] to stain the holy. Take therefore a wife while you are still young, one without blemish, undefiled, and not descent of a foreign people” (9:9-10). Levi learnt from the Book of Enoch that in the end times his descendants would commit ungodliness by being complicit in iniquity and teaching contrary to God’s commandments (14:1.4). “You shall snatch the offerings of the Lord, and from his share you shall steal, and before offering to the Lord you shall take away the select, eating with prostitutes in contempt.⁷⁵ And you shall teach the commandments of the Lord in covetousness, and you shall defile married women, and stain the virgins

⁷⁴ “Together with you” does not appear in the translation in *JSHRZ* III, 43-44.

⁷⁵ This accusation is reminiscent of the criticism of the pagan priests in Let. Jer. 9 (cf. above: 2.3.).

of Jerusalem,⁷⁶ and you shall join with prostitutes and adulteresses; and you shall take the daughters of the nations for wives, purifying them with unlawful purification,⁷⁷ and your confusion⁷⁸ shall become Sodom and Gomorrah in ungodliness.”⁷⁹ (14:5-6).

The dying patriarch warns against violating the regulations of Lev. 21:7.13-15. The priests will unfortunately not obey this law driven by a spirit of fornication, a theme taken from Hos. 4:12; 5:4. Also, intercourse with prostitutes and adulteresses in combination with sacrificial irregularities and ignoring priestly regulations seems to be based on prophetic criticism (cf. Hos. 4:13-14). Given the context of TestXII, however, the spirit of fornication (cf. T. Reu.) probably refers to sexual lust, here finding expression primarily in non-endogamous marriages, a particularly aggravating sin in the case of priests (cf. Tob. 4:12; 8:7 {cf. above: 2.3.}), and in intercourse with adulteresses and prostitutes.

In the **Testament of Judah**, πορνεία appears already in the title, which however is only partially attested in TestXII.⁸⁰ Judah mentions drunken intercourse with Tamar (cf. Gen. 38) and the resulting shame, although this happened from the Lord (12:1-12). Tamar took advantage of a custom that was supposed to have existed with the Amorites, that “the newly married⁸¹ sat in prostitution (πορνεία) for seven days in the gate” (12:2). Based on his own experience, Judah instructs people to observe God’s law (13:1), to beware of lust, pride and self-gratification (13:2). He himself boasted that in battles he was not seduced even by

⁷⁶ The mention of the virgins of Jerusalem is attested only in some sources – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 57 (fn. 6a).

⁷⁷ The following expression is attested only in some sources – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 57 (fn. 6b).

⁷⁸ It is likely a reference to sexual intercourse with foreign women (cf. translation in *OTPI*, 793).

⁷⁹ “In ungodliness” is also poorly attested – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 57 (fn. 6c).

⁸⁰ Cf. *JSHRZ* III, 63 (fn. a); included in *TLG*, but not in *OPG*.

⁸¹ According to *OTPI*, 798, it refers to a widow, which, however, is not a translation of the text (γαμέω *ptp.*) but an interpretation of it.

the beautiful face of a woman, so that he mocked Reuben because of Bilhah. “The spirit of jealousy and fornication (πορνεία) armed itself in (against) me until I fell, [having intercourse] with Bessoue,⁸² a Canaanite woman, and Tamar, betrothed to my sons” (13:3). Also in the case of his Canaanite wife, he was first intoxicated by his future father-in-law and infatuated with his daughter’s golden adornments. The wine blinded his eyes and lust shaded his heart, so that he transgressed God’s commandments and took her as his wife. As punishment, he had no joy in her children (13:4-8). Hence, another warning concerns the drinking of wine, which blinds the mind from the truth, awakens angry desire (ἐπιθυμία) and deceives the eyes (14:1). “For the spirit of fornication (πορνεία) has wine as a servant for the pleasure of mind. For these two take away the understanding/power⁸³ of man. For if anyone drinks wine to get drunk, in impure musings he deceives reason towards fornication (πορνεία) and incites the body to confusion [intercourse],⁸⁴ and because there is a cause for lust,⁸⁵ he commits sin and is not ashamed” (14:2-3). The evidence that this was the case was precisely the intercourse with Tamar and marrying a Canaanite woman (14:5-6). The consequences of such fornication are sad. “The one who commits fornication (πορνεύω) suffers, though he does not notice it; he is humiliated, though he is not despised. For if the ruler as king commits fornication (prostitutes himself: πορνεύω), he is stripped of his kingdom. He has become a slave of fornication (πορνεία), as I he has been stripped” (15:1-2).⁸⁶

⁸² Other manuscripts give the name Anan. Bathshua is perhaps derived from bat-Šua’ in Gen. 38:12 – cf. *OTP* I, 798 fn. b.

⁸³ Two different textual variants – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 71 (fn. 2a); as well as *APOTE* and Evans 2008.

⁸⁴ The same word as in T. Lev. 14:6 – cf. footnote above. The same translation in *APAT* II, 475 (Rubinkiewicz 1999, 58: unclean deed; *OTP* I, 779: adultery). A different textual variant has been chosen in *JSHRZ* III, 71 (fn. 3c).

⁸⁵ Cf. translations in *APAT* II, 475; Rubinkiewicz 1999, 58.

⁸⁶ Cf. *OPG*; *APOTE*; *OTP* I, 799 and *JSHRZ* III, 71 (and fn. 2a). The shorter lection is chosen in *TLG*, which is apparently the basis of the translations in *APAT* II, 475;

In doing so, Judah mentions the surrender of his insignia to Tamar and thus his kingdom (15:3). He further returns to the exhortation: “Beware therefore, my children, of fornication (πορνεία) and the love of money! Listen to Judah, your father!” (18:2). Also greed leads to idolatry (19:1).

Fornication involves intercourse with a supposed prostitute, marriage to a foreigner, a Canaanite, and stems from sexual desire or lust. Drunkenness and greed, which played as much of a role in Judah’s mistakes as fornication did, produce similarly unfortunate results. It seems that the author is also adapting the account of Herodotus (*Histories I*, 199, as was also the case in Let Jer. 42-43 and 2 Macc. 6:4).⁸⁷

On the other hand, at the end of his **Testament of Issachar**, the patriarch ensures that he did not commit a mortal sin (“till death”; 7:1)⁸⁸. “Except my wife, I did not know⁸⁹ another. I did not commit fornication (I did not prostitute myself: πορνεύω), lifting up my eyes. I did not drink wine to be led astray. I did not covet any desirable thing of my neighbour. No deceit was in my heart. No lie came out of my mouth.” (7:2-4).

If cheating on one’s wife and prostituting oneself or indulging in fornication are not separate sins, then it would be fornication to have intercourse with a woman other than one’s own wife. The meaning of the expression “lifting up the eyes” is unclear (encouragement to sexual intercourse, religious gesture?).⁹⁰

In the **Testament of Dan**, the descendants are warned: “And as soon as you depart from the Lord, you shall walk (act) in all evil, committing abominations of the nations, prostituting yourselves (ἐκπορνεύω) with (ἐν) the wives of the wicked, and in all wickedness caused in you by the

Rubinkiewicz 1999, 58. The text seems to have been contaminated – cf. *APAT II*, 475 fn. a.

⁸⁷ Cf. Slawik 2011, 46-48.50-51. On the Amorites cf. Amos 2,9-10.

⁸⁸ For this expression cf. *JSHRZ III*, 82 (fn. 1b).

⁸⁹ A Hebraism (זר) referring to sexual intercourse – cf. e.g. Gen. 4,1.

⁹⁰ *OTP I*, 804, interprets it as a lewd gaze. It still appears in T. Benj. 8:3: a noble man “does not mislead by lifting up his eyes”, which does not make the interpretation any easier.

spirits of error.⁹¹ I have read in the Book of Enoch the Righteous, that your ruler is Satan, and that all the spirits of fornication (πορνεία)⁹² and pride are subordinate to Levi, accompanying the sons of Levi, making them sin before the Lord” (5:5-6).

Fornication alongside pride (cf. T. Jud. 13:2) leads the descendants of Levi to sin. Moreover, πορνεία seems to be one of the terms referring to all the evils and abominations of the nations. At the same time, it means engaging with the wives of the wicked, disrespecting the law, which is probably supposed to mean engaging in all kinds of lawlessness.

Through a series of examples, the **Testament of Asher** shows that one's good deeds do not justify bad conduct. Even the fulfilment of religious commandments combined with socio-ethical iniquity must be discounted. “Another commits adultery and fornication (prostitutes himself: πορνεύω), but abstains from eating,⁹³ and fasting he commits evil, he overcomes many by power and riches, in spite of arrogant evil he fulfils the commandments; this too has two sides [i.e. it is ambiguous], and the whole is evil” (2:8). Πορνεύω stands next to adultery (cf. also 4:3, where only the adulterer is mentioned), which may show that they are complementary as well as different iniquities (cf. T. Iss. 7:2).

The protagonist of the **Testament of Joseph** recalls the many years of endeavours of the Egyptian woman to seduce him, claiming that she desired a son: “For that time, therefore, she embraced me like a son, and I did not know. At last she lured me to fornication (πορνεία)” (3:8). Πορνεία thus refers to adultery, i.e. intercourse with a married woman.

The youngest of Jacob's sons in the **Testament of Benjamin** urges his descendants to avoid anger, jealousy and hatred between brothers, and instead to be guided by love and goodness. “One who has a pure thought in love does not look to a woman for fornication (πορνεία). For

⁹¹ For a different textual variant cf. *JSHRZ* III, 95 (fn. 5a).

⁹² Some sources refer to the spirit of evil instead of the spirit of fornication – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 71 (fn. 6c).

⁹³ Or meat – cf. *LSJ*.

there is no corruption in the heart, because the spirit of God rests in it" (8:2). Like the other patriarchs, he is convinced of the transgressions they will commit. "And I assume that the deeds among you will not be good – from the words of Enoch the Righteous – you will commit fornication (prostitute yourselves: πορνεύω) with the fornication (πορνεία) of Sodom, and you will perish except for the rest. And you will arouse the wantonness of women, and the kingdom of the Lord will not be among you, for he will take it away Himself at once" (9:1).⁹⁴ He also foretells, which could be a later Christian extension, that God will judge not only Israel but also the nations, whereby "He will judge Israel through the elect of the nations, just as He judged Esau through the Midianites, who led their brothers into disobedience through fornication (πορνεία) and idolatry, and were alienated from God, having no part among the children of the God-fearing" (10:10).⁹⁵

Pure love and the spirit of the Lord stand in opposition to looking lustfully at women. Regarding Sodom, πορνεία seems to be a general term for horrific iniquity and homosexual rape, both punishable by death. Was it understood in T. Benj. as an expression of sexual lust? In contrast, 10:10 belongs to an extension in which πορνεία is juxtaposed with idolatry.

The **Martyrdom of Isaiah** is a legend recounting, among other things, the fate and death of Isaiah, which dates from the (early) 1st century BC, and was originally written in Hebrew.⁹⁶ Modern translations are mainly

⁹⁴ On textual problems cf. *APAT* II, 505 fn. a; *JSHRZ* III, 135 (fn. 1a-b).

⁹⁵ It is believed that the text had been corrupted and secondarily extended, and that originally it had not mentioned fornication or idolatry – cf. *JSHRZ* III, 137 (fn. 10a-d); an even later (non-Christian extension); and also *OTP* I, 828, *APOTE*.

⁹⁶ Mart. Isa. is the first part of a collection of three writings on Isaiah, called *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* – cf. Eissfeldt 1964, 825-826, who holds 1:1-2a.6b-13a; 2:1-3,12; 5:1b-14 as the original Jewish text; *OTP* II, 146-150; Rubinkiewicz 1987, 38-40; similarly *ATAP* II, 120-123, without specifying the question of dating. *JSHRZ* II, 17-18, on the other hand, states that it is probably part of a larger writing cited by ancient authors as the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and dates it to the last 30 years of the first

based on the Ethiopic text,⁹⁷ which is preserved in its entirety and is of good quality. The Greek text is partially preserved in two versions, which are probably copies of a common ancestor.⁹⁸ We come across the word πορνεία in a fragment preserved in both manuscripts in slightly different forms. The first tells the story of Manasseh, who strayed from the path of his father, abandoned the true service of God and “worshipped the devil and his angels together with worldly, impure idols, and multiplied through them sorcery, fornication (πορνεία),⁹⁹ incantations,¹⁰⁰ observing signs (divination), falsehood, and persecuted all those living piously according to God.” In the second, Manasseh is accused of apostasy and lawlessness: “and multiplied sorcery, magic, fornication (πορνεία), persecution of the righteous by the hand of Manasseh and by the hand of Toubi (Tobiah) the Canaanite...” (2:5).¹⁰¹

Πορνεία was listed among the purely religious offences associated with idolatry and worship of the devil/Satan worship. The word was thus used as in the Old Testament criticism of illicit, idolatrous cults.¹⁰² It is a contemptuous term for such practices (in a figurative sense).¹⁰³

centuryAD.

⁹⁷ Cf. *APAT* II, 123; *APOTE*; *OTP* II, 144; *JSHRZ* II, 18 (for Ethiopic manuscripts A and B).

⁹⁸ Cf. *JSHRZ* II, 19-20, marking the manuscripts G¹ and G²; *OPG*, using the designations A/MrI and B/MrB.

⁹⁹ Evans 2008, translates it as immorality.

¹⁰⁰ The Greek word ἐπαοιδεία is unknown; Evans 2008, translates it as enchantment.

¹⁰¹ Neither of these passages is identical to the Ethiopic translation, where we read (I rely on translations) that Beliar was pleased with Manasseh, because “then sorcery, the art of enchantment, divination from a bird’s flight, magic, fornication, adultery, the persecution of the righteous by Manasseh, Balkir, Tobiah the Canaanite ... increased [in Jerusalem].” (2:5). The Ethiopic text avoids, if the translations are to be believed, the confusion associated with the fact that Manasseh appears to be the subject in the Greek text, but at the same time the text refers to persecution “by the hand of Manasseh”.

¹⁰² Cf. Slawik, 2024. The new element here compared to the Old Testament is the persecution of the pious.

¹⁰³ If the translations I use are accurate, the situation changes in the Ethiopic text, where adultery appears next to fornication.

The **Ordinances of Levi** 16¹⁰⁴ and the **Prayer of Levi** 7¹⁰⁵ are passages attributed to Levi and probably date from the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC. They are also partly known from fragments found among the Qumran documents and the Cairo Geniza. The Prayer of Levi in Greek was included in T. Lev. in the Athos manuscript.¹⁰⁶ In the Ordinances of Levi, it is non-endogamous marriage that is referred to as fornication (16-17a): “Guard yourself from all sexual intercourse and from impurity, and from all fornication (πορνεία)! First take to yourself (a wife) from your seed (lineage), and do not profane seed (offspring) with many!”¹⁰⁷ In the Prayer of Levi, it appears in a very general context (7-8): “Remove me, O Lord, from an unrighteous spirit! And turn away from me evil thought, and fornication (πορνεία), and pride! Let, O Lord, the holy spirit be shown to me! And give me counsel, wisdom and knowledge!”

Πόρνη also appears in the **Penitence (Book) of Jannes and Jambres**, which is preserved in fragments and is therefore very difficult to date. Jannes and Jambres, the two magicians, are mentioned in 2 Tim. 3:18, but is difficult to determine if 2 Tim. refers to a tradition involving them or stands in relation to the texts which we know from surviving fragments. The fragments may be from a Christian book.¹⁰⁸ Its fragmentary nature also makes it impossible to determine in any way the meaning of πόρνη.

We can also assume that the root word under consideration occurred in the **Book of Jubilees**, which, however, is only preserved in its entirety

¹⁰⁴ In Greenfield et al 2004, marked as 6:3.

¹⁰⁵ In Greenfield et al 2004, marked as 3:5.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *OPG*; Greenfield et al 2004, 1-6.19-22.

¹⁰⁷ As the Aramaic text shows, the obscure word πολλῶν is a mistake by the copyist of the Greek text, it should be πορνῶν, cf. Greenfield et al 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Was it based on a Jewish account? Because of the fragmentary nature of the surviving parts, it is impossible to decide. In any case, it was written no later than the middle of the third century AD, most likely in Greek – cf. *OTP II*, 427-436.

in Ethiopic. In the surviving Greek fragments πορν- does not occur.¹⁰⁹ Jub. was probably written in Hebrew in the middle of the second century BC and shows a number of similarities with ancient Jewish literature, in particular TestXII.¹¹⁰

The meaning of the root word πορν- in Ps. Sol. 2, Mart. Isa. and 1 En falls within the framework of Old Testament criticism of inappropriate, idolatrous cultic and religious practices, which are associated with the worship of Satan. According to 1 En 10:9, it had come to mean a desecrating intercourse between angels and women, described as πορνεία, presumably meaning intercourse that violated the human and divine order of the world. The root word most frequently occurs in TestXII, and in a much broader sense. It refers to all sorts of inappropriate sexual intercourse: with another man's wife, i.e. adultery, with a woman other than one's own wife and, above all, intercourse with a woman of another lineage and taking her as one's wife. In T. Ben. it is also perhaps a term for homosexual rape. In the end, it refers not only to sexual iniquity, but also to the sexual lust that brings ruin and from which even marital intercourse is not free. It is sometimes closely associated with drunkenness and greed (T. Jud.). Its connection with idolatry is manifold, for it leads to idolatry, but also stems from idolatry. It deceives people's thoughts and brings misery and death to people. It becomes the first and worst sin, the source of all evil or even synonymous with all iniquity.

¹⁰⁹ Hauck, Schulz 1959, 587-588, invoke 20:3; 25:1; 30:2.6-7.10; 33:13.18; 39:6. If they are correct, a similar use of terminology as in TestXII would emerge: prostitution or promiscuous behaviour, marrying women from other peoples (with Canaanites), rape or intercourse with an unmarried woman, incest. In 20:3-4 it would be fornication to prostitute oneself and marry women from other peoples (cf. *JSHRZ* III, 426-427 including footnotes), which is also identified with fornication in 25:1 (cf. 30:1-11, the story of Dinah, where, however – based on *JSHRZ* III, 469-472, the term fornication is not used). In 33:20 (sic!) it is considered fornication to have intercourse with one's stepmother (Ruben), and in 39:6 to have intercourse with a married woman.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Rubinkiewicz 1987, 89-92 (= Rubinkiewicz 1999, 259-261); Eissfeldt 1964, 822-824; *OTP* II, 41-45; *JSHRZ* III, 300.

Women succumb more easily to fornication (πορνεία), and by adorning themselves they want to dominate men (T. Reu.).

4. Πορν- in Acts of the Apostles and other books of the New Testament

4.1. Fornication and dietary regulations in the New Testament

In the New Testament, πορν- appears 50 times: ἐκπορνεύω (Jud. 7), πορνεύω (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:8 [twice]; Rev. 2:14.20.17:2; 18:3.9), πόρνος (1 Cor. 5:9.10.11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 12:16; 13:4; Rev. 21:8; 22:15), πορνεία (Matt. 5:32; 15:9; 19:9; Mark 7:21; John 8:41; Acts 15:20.29; 21:25; 1 Cor. 5,1 [twice]; 6:13.18; 7:2; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5,19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3; Rev. 2:21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2.4; 18:3; 19:2) and πόρνη (Matt. 5:31.32; Luke 15:30; 1 Cor. 6:15.16; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25; Rev. 17:1.5.15.16; 19:2). Thus, it appears most frequently in 1 Cor. (12 times) and Rev. (19 times). It is not possible to present all these passages here. Although it also appears once in the first work of Luke, Luke 15:30,¹¹¹ we should first of all look at the Proto-Pauline writings,¹¹² and not only because of their dating.¹¹³ Although many of the above-mentioned writings may have been written in close temporal proximity to Acts (dated after 70 AD, probably around 90 AD),¹¹⁴ the link between the prohibition of eating meat sacrificed to idols (εἰδωλόθυτος) and fornication (πορν-) is only found in three New Testament books: 1 Cor. (5-10);

¹¹¹ In the words of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son (the traditional name for this parable is not adequate – cf. Bovon 2001, 40-41) the younger son lost his property with prostitutes, leading a prodigal life (ἀσώτως – v.13). Πόρνη is a prostitute according to the classical Greek meaning, and the assessment of his conduct can be based on Prov. 29:3; Sir^A 9:6.

¹¹² Many of these passages were reviewed by Slawik 2017, 75-103.

¹¹³ More precise dating of individual New Testament writings is not always possible or it is disputed (see the introductions to the New Testament listed in the next footnote). Paul's letters are certainly among the oldest.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Vielhauer 1975, 406-407; Pesch 1986a, 28; similarly Boor 1970, 21 (after 80 AD); Cullmann 1984, 64-65 and Kümmel 1989, 154 (80-90 AD); Roloff 1988, 2-5 (90-100 AD); Rakocy 1997, 20 (70-95 AD); Bock 2007, 27 (65-90 AD).

Acts 15:29; 21:25 and Rev. 2:14.20. Rev. 2:14.20 is probably based on the decree in Acts.¹¹⁵ Since πορν- is not found next to dietary regulations in any of the other New Testament passages, the underlying text for the regulations in Acts 15:20.29 (and 21:25) is most likely 1 Cor. Was there an Old Christian compromise or tradition behind this, which found expression in Acts 15 and was known to Paul and the Corinthians? The existence of such a tradition can actually be ruled out. Not only is there no evidence that it would have pre-Pauline origins, but above all, it would be completely incomprehensible for Paul never to have mentioned it when arguing about circumcision (cf. Gal. [3-]5; 6:12-15).¹¹⁶

4.2. 1 Cor.

The topic of fornication (πορνεία) is central to 1 Cor. 5-6, from which Paul also derives instruction on married life in ch.7. The starting point is the situation among the addressees (5:1). There is loud talk of a fornication (πορνεία) worse than that of the nations, i.e. the Gentiles, involving intercourse with one's father's wife, i.e. one's stepmother.¹¹⁷ It literally refers to possessing her, indicating a permanent relationship similar to marriage (cf. Lev. 18:7-8; 20:11; Deut. 23:1; Ezek. 22:10a).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Cf. Witherington 1998, 466; Keener 2014, 2278, according to whom Rev. 2 is evidence that the apostolic decree was not Luke's invention and confirms its functioning in the Christian community; Conzelmann 1972, 93, who also refers to further attestations of the decree.

¹¹⁶ Witherington 1998, 465-466, is convinced that the argument in 1 Cor. 5-10 refers to the apostolic decree. However, Zeller 2010, 281, rightly observes that there is no indication that Paul and the Corinthians knew about it. Of the literature known to me, only Johnson 1992, 266-267, makes note of a connection between the issues raised in the apostolic decree and 1 Cor. In contrast, the issue of the relationship with Gal. 2, like the more frequently mentioned dispute over the requirement of circumcision for Gentile converts, is not addressed here.

¹¹⁷ It was forbidden in the Greco-Roman world – cf. Dąbrowski 1965, 178; Schrage 1991, 370 and fn. 16; Rosik 2009, 208 (although at the same time he thinks that this implies higher expectations towards Christians in moral matters); Zeller 2010, 200; Slawik 2017, 90 and fn. 308.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Zeller 2010, 199. Schrage 1991, 370, argues that this could not have been about marriage to a stepmother, which was forbidden in Roman law, but about concubinage,

Such a sinner should be removed from the congregation (5:2-8; cf. Lev. 18:29).¹¹⁹ Paul had already insisted in a previous letter¹²⁰ on not having fellowship (cf. Hos 7:8)¹²¹ with fornicators (πόρνος *w pl.*; 5:9). By this he does not mean fornicators and other sinners:¹²² the greedy (wanting more), the swindlers (plunderers) and idolaters,¹²³ from outside the congregation (from the world: ὁ κόσμος), which would even be impossible (5:10),¹²⁴ but from among the brethren – with sinners from among the believers: the fornicator (πόρνος *w sg.*), the greedy, the idolater, the slanderer, the drunkard and the swindler, with whom one should not eat together (5:11; a reference to table fellowship?¹²⁵). Such should be judged by the congregation and excluded (5:12-13; cf. Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21, etc.).¹²⁶ In both cases, Paul places the fornicator at the beginning

and Paul used exaggeration in his argument, since such concubinages certainly existed among the pagans.

¹¹⁹ Schrage 1991, 371-372, supposes that the relationships with the stepmother were public, provocative acts, performed “in the name of our Lord Jesus” (v.4).

¹²⁰ One can guess that his instructions on this matter had been ignored by the Corinthian believers so far. Cf. also Zeller 2010, 206 (and 47).

¹²¹ For criticism of mixing with other nations, see Schrage 1991, 388 (cf. also Ezek. 20:18 [G]).

¹²² Cf. Zeller 2010, 206-207: a stereotypical enumeration of the gravest sins. Although such an enumeration corresponds to ancient catalogues of transgressions, nowhere do we find an identical list – see Schrage 1991, 386-387.

¹²³ A word found only in the New Testament and derived literature, although a related concept appears in T. Jud. 23:1; T. Benj. 10:10 (cf. also εἶδωλον in T. Jud. 19:1 and elsewhere) – see also Schrage 1991, 392 and fn. 131. The only transgression in the catalogue(s) of vv. 9-11 is not social in nature, but strictly religious (for λοῖδορος see Schrage 1991, 393).

¹²⁴ On this, cf. especially Schrage 1991, 388-370. According to Rosik 2009, 213, Paul would criticise ascetic groups such as the Essenes, the Therapeutae or the Pythagoreans.

¹²⁵ Cf. Schrage 1991, 394: private and public meals, including the Agape and the Eucharist feasts; and according to Zeller 2010, 208, Paul does not rather have the Eucharistic meal in mind, but the communal meal as the primary form of interpersonal communication.

¹²⁶ The last sentence is from the Old Testament – cf. Schrage 1991, 388; Zeller 2010, 208. According to Schottroff 2021, 86, the dispute between Paul and the Corinthian church concerns the correct interpretation of the Torah.

of the list of the wicked, on whom he primarily focuses his attention, which may be due to the fact that πορνεία of v.1 was the reason for Paul's argument.¹²⁷ Are fornicators only those having sexual relationships with their stepmother? Why exactly would illicit relations with the stepmother be the worst (cf. the prohibitions in Lev. 18)?¹²⁸ Was this due to the particular situation of the Corinthian church?¹²⁹

The next passage (6:1-8.9-11)¹³⁰ is devoted to the problem of legal disputes between believers about everyday issues before the unrighteous outside the church,¹³¹ which ultimately means hurting one another. It is as if believers forget that the unrighteous have no chance to participate in the kingdom of God (6:9a). Paul enumerates here in *pl.*: fornicators

¹²⁷ Cf. Schrage 1991, 390. Although one does not necessarily have to view this as a hierarchy of sins (cf. Slawik 2017, 98-99), πορνεία does play a special role in these chapters.

¹²⁸ Cf. Montague 2021, 93. This is contradicted by Schrage 1991, 390-391, who views fornication as all kinds of illicit sexual intercourse. The prohibition seems to protect the social (patriarchal) order (cf. Schottroff 2021, 87-88, who emphasises that it is wrong to speak of incest; to some extent also Zeller 2010, 209: the father's intimate sphere is protected from younger competitors, which is supposed to protect the community from the outbreak of violence resulting from mutual rivalry). According to Slawik 2017, 92, Paul is not stigmatising a particular practice, but calling for the nurturing of the community, avoiding that which tears it apart from within.

¹²⁹ Cf. Slawik 2017, 99. Provocation "in the name of Jesus" that was supposed to have occurred in the Corinthian church (see above cited thesis from Schrage 1991, 372)?

¹³⁰ On the connection with the neighbouring passages, in which πορνεία comes to the fore, cf. Schrage 1991, 403-404: they are linked by the matter of judging the guilty (similarly Rosik 2009, 218). At the same time, Schrage 1991, 426, sees 6:9-11 as a new passage (on the links with vv.1-8 again on 429); and Zeller 2010, 210-211, highlights what binds 6:1-11 together.

¹³¹ Is it simply a synonym for unbelievers, or does it indicate widespread judicial abuse (e.g. bribery, giving the rich an advantage in court)? The first interpretation is supported by v.6 ("unbelievers" – cf. Schrage 1991, 406: disobedient to the gospel; Rosik 2009, 219-220). In contrast, Zeller 2010, 211-212; Schottroff 2021, 97; Montague 2021, 98, lean towards a moral interpretation.

(πόρνοι), idolaters, adulterers (μοιχοὶ),¹³² the soft (μαλακοὶ),¹³³ those having intercourse with men (ἀρσενοκοῖται), thieves, the greedy, drunkards,¹³⁴ slanderers, swindlers (6:9b-10 with the framing and emphatic statement that such will not possess the kingdom of God). Such conduct belonged to the Christians' past, from which they were liberated (6:11), as a fundamental transformation had taken place in their lives).¹³⁵ Again, Paul placed fornicators at the top of the list of those excluded from the kingdom of God and separately listed three other groups committing sexual iniquities: adulterers, passive partners seducing other men and those penetrating other men (cf. Slawik, Slawik 2011, 58-60). Does it follow that πορνεία does not include adultery and sexual acts between men?¹³⁶

In the challenging passage 6:12-20, Paul calls for a prudent, responsible use of freedom (v.12).¹³⁷ Referring to the relationship between the stomach and food, both of which pass away (v.13a),¹³⁸ he illustrates the relationship of the body (σῶμα)¹³⁹ to the Lord, which stands in opposition

¹³² Schrage 1991, 430, believes that adultery should be understood more broadly than in the Old Testament and referred to any extramarital intercourse. But how would it then differ from his understanding of πορνεία (see above)? On the Old Testament prohibition of adultery cf. Slawik 2023, 256-258 and Slawik 2024, 49-51.

¹³³ Probably referring to men who seduce other men and are sexually penetrated by them – cf. Slawik, Slawik 2011, 59.

¹³⁴ According to Zeller 2010, 207, drunkenness would be linked to fornication (cf. T. Jud. 14; cf. above: 3.3.).

¹³⁵ Cf. Schrage 1991, 426. V.11a describes the transformation that God has brought about through baptism – cf. Schrage 1991, 433; Zeller 2010, 218-219.

¹³⁶ Schottroff 2021, 103.105-105, thinks that πορνεία is here a term that encompasses all kinds of sexual iniquities forbidden in the Torah, and that the criticism is not of individual acts but of the social structures.

¹³⁷ Cf. Schrage 1995, 19; Slawik 2017, 157-159, according to whom it is not about the limits of freedom, but about a profound awareness of behaviour corresponding to being the body of Christ, a relationship with God. Zeller 2010, 222-223, interprets these words as a liberation from norms, and originally from the dietary rules of Judaism.

¹³⁸ From an eschatological perspective – cf. Schrage 1995, 20; Zeller 2010, 221.223-224.

¹³⁹ Σῶμα, like the Old Testament נַפְשׁ, is a description of the whole person, not

to engaging in fornication: “the body is not meant for fornication” (πορνεία; w.13b). For God raised the Lord from the dead and so will raise believers from the dead (v.14),¹⁴⁰ and thus they are members of Christ (“the body of Christ” as in 1 Cor.12:27), of which they are also well aware (v.15a). Hence, they cannot at the same time be members of a prostitute (πόρνη; v.15), which Paul supports with an argument from Scripture (v.16; cf. Gen.2:24b): one joining (κολλάω)¹⁴¹ to a prostitute becomes one body with her (σῶμα; while it reads σάρξ in the quote from Gen.2:24b according to G)¹⁴². Whereas the one joining (κολλάω in v.16) to the Lord becomes one spirit with him (v.17). The spirit – like the body – is used to describe the whole man. There is therefore no question of an antithesis of body and spirit, but of a competitive belonging: either to a prostitute or to Christ.¹⁴³ Only one conclusion can be drawn from this: “Flee from fornication!” (πορνεία; v.18a). Fornication is a singular sin, for while all other sins are “outside the body” (σῶμα) of man, “the

some part of a person – cf. Schrage 1995, 22. Rosik 2009, 227, refers to the *pars pro toto* (stylistic device).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Schrage 1995, 23: the body is the area of Christ’s reign. Zeller 2010, 221, notes that the style of vv.12-14 is impersonal, while v.14b is communicative, i.e. there is a reference to the addressees – to “us”.

¹⁴¹ Gen. 2:24 contains the longer form προσκολλάω. Κολλάω certainly refers to sexual intercourse (cf. Sir. 19:2 [G]; Mat. 19:5) - cf. also Schrage 1995, 26-27; Zeller 2010, 225. It is interpreted in a broader sense by Slawik 2017, 66.

¹⁴² The noun σάρξ here has the same meaning as σῶμα – cf. Schrage 1995, 27; Zeller 2010, 225, according to whom it illustrates the carnal intensity of such an extra-marital relationship. According to Slawik 2017, 70-71, it is meant to highlight the fact that a relationship with πόρνη implies a loss of fellowship with God: the human σῶμα leaves the divine space, which is also the sphere of resurrection, joining the sphere of σάρξ, the mortal world subject to destruction.

¹⁴³ In Paul’s writings, the spirit is never in opposition to the body (σῶμα; cf. v.13!), so that the two relationships – with the prostitute and with Christ – are mutually exclusive. While the flesh may emphasise the physical relationship with the prostitute, the spirit locates the relationship with Christ on a somewhat different level. Cf. Schrage 1995, 27-30; Schottroff 2021, 108-110, who accuses Paul of a complete lack of sensitivity to the plight of prostituted women, including among Christian women, most often forced into prostitution by their economic situation.

one prostituting himself/committing fornication (πορνεύω) sins against his own body (σῶμα)” (v.18b).¹⁴⁴ It is a sin against oneself (cf. Schrage 1995, 31). And yet the addressees know (identical wording to v.16) that their bodies are a temple, or place where the Holy Spirit of God is present, and do not belong to themselves (v.19; one might add, but to the Lord - cf. v.17).¹⁴⁵ For they have been dearly redeemed, i.e. liberated, by Christ (cf. Zeller 2010, 227-228) and should glorify God with their bodies (σῶμα; v.20).¹⁴⁶ Thus, a special significance is attributed to the body. There is no Christian existence without the body or outside the body. Sin aimed at it subverts the whole existence of man redeemed by the Lord. The question arises as to why intercourse with a prostitute is such a fundamental issue.¹⁴⁷ Or maybe πόρνη here does not just mean prostitute, but stepmother as in 5:1? Or perhaps, much more broadly, associating with her is code for all sorts of sexual transgressions (as, for example, in Schottroff 2021, 107)? Either way, it is puzzling that it is prostitution or sexual iniquity that gains such prominence in Paul (and not drunkenness or gluttony, let alone [other] seemingly more serious offences or crimes against one’s neighbour).¹⁴⁸ Did Paul want to draw a distinction between satisfying one’s hunger (the stomach) and satisfying the sexual urge (the body) in every possible form, as the Cynics

¹⁴⁴ The distinction is more than surprising. The phrase “outside the body” appears again only in 2 Cor. 12:2 in the context of a vision, a rapture to the third heaven. Zeller 2010, 226, found the expression: εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἡμάρτηκειν, in Aeschines’ speech *Against Timarchus* 39, which may refer to the prostitution of a young man (195). Cf. also Rom 1:24.

¹⁴⁵ The temple was the place of God’s presence, which was here applied to being God’s property - cf. Zeller 2010, 227; Schrage 1995, 31 (transgression against the body as a place of fellowship with God).

¹⁴⁶ An instrumental reading of ἐν is also advocated by Zeller 2010, 228 fn. 209.

¹⁴⁷ According to Zeller 2010, 225, it was precisely because intercourse with a prostitute did not involve commitment that Paul was forced to expand his argument in v.16. The issue is also considered by Schrage 1995, 27-28 together with fn. 330 and 331; 37.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Schrage 1995, 31-33, arguing for a hyperbole. And according to Rosik 2009, 228, extramarital sexual relations contradict one’s baptised status.

were supposed to have done (according to Zeller 2010, 223-224)? Or did freedom from Jewish laws perhaps result in sexual laxity among the believers in Corinth (taverns and brothels were places where anyone could find paid sex)?¹⁴⁹ Metaphorical prostitution as a source domain for criticising religious infidelity in the Hebrew Bible, which was marked by sexual language (especially in Hos. and Ezek.), may also have played a role (cf. Slawik 2024 and above {2.1.}). Perhaps it led to the belief that the sexual sphere posed a unique threat. In any case, Paul was deeply convinced of the power of human sexuality (cf. 1 Cor.7:2).

Paul draws not only ecclesiological but also practical conclusions from the threat of indulging in fornication (7:1-40, referring to the question addressed to him, which he mentions in 7:1a; cf. Zeller 2010, 234-235.249). “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.¹⁵⁰ But because of fornication (πορνεία in *pl.*) let each one have his own wife and let each one have her own husband” (v.1b-2). The use of πορνεία in *pl.* (cf. Mark 7:21; Matt. 15:19) suggests that Paul did not have one transgression in mind, but rather various forms of fornication.¹⁵¹ Here the term is understood more broadly than just a relationship with one’s stepmother or using the services of a prostitute. Paul seems to only allow for intercourse between husband and wife.¹⁵² In the verses that follow, he elaborates

¹⁴⁹ According to Zeller 2010, 230-231, Paul would have argued against such a generalisation of freedom from the Old Testament commandments, which may also have applied to the attitude towards what was offered to idols (ch. 8).

¹⁵⁰ Touching (ἅπτω) a woman means sexual intercourse (cf. Gen. 20:4.6) – cf. Zeller 2010, 237 and fn. 20.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Schottroff 2021, 11, who translates the word as irresponsible sexuality; Zeller 2010, 238 (the parallel for the use of *pl.* is not necessarily Tob. 4:12 as argued in note 27 – cf. above: 2:3), who further points out that marriage is not for the purpose of conceiving children and having offspring (cf. also v.29), as it was throughout antiquity (cf. also Gen. 1:28a); Schrage 1995, 63, who writes about sexual promiscuity.

¹⁵² Cf. Schottroff 2021, 118 (whereby Paul does not specify which legal form of marriage he is referring to; concubinage was widespread); Zeller 2010, 237, who also, because of the often repeated ideal of the Apostle himself (v.1.7a.8.26.38), suspects that an earlier letter (cf. 5:9) may have been misread as meaning that sexual intercourse was

on this by giving advice and instructions concerning intercourse between spouses (vv.3-5), widows and the unmarried (vv.8-9), as well as divorce (vv.10-11),¹⁵³ maintaining marriages with unbelieving partners (vv.12-16),¹⁵⁴ unmarried women and remaining in the state in which one has been called (vv.17-24), and widows (vv.25-40), which could be summarised as follows: marriage is good for believers, but celibacy is better (cf. Zeller 2010, 278). However, spouses should not shy away from intercourse except by mutual consent, “lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control (ἀκρασία)” (v.5).¹⁵⁵ Those who are unable to control themselves had better marry, for it is better to marry than to burn (v.9).¹⁵⁶ Fornication is thus linked to lust and a lack of self-control.

In 1 Cor. 8-10 Paul discusses at length the issue of eating meat from sacrifices offered to idols – εἰδωλόθυτος (8:1.4.7.10; 10:19;¹⁵⁷ this subject appears again in the New Testament only in Acts 15:29; 21:25 and Rev. 2:14.20).¹⁵⁸ He begins by contrasting knowledge that puffs up with pride

to be a sin.

¹⁵³ Both on the initiative of the wife and the husband. On this cf. the discussion in Schottroff 2021, 122-123.

¹⁵⁴ He points out that Paul does not evaluate maintaining a relationship with a non-believer in relation to the prohibition of intermarriage with nations/pagans in Ex. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:1-4; cf. also Ps. 106:35; Ezra 9:11-14; Tob. 4:12 (G¹); T. Jud. 13:3 (and 14:5-6). Cf. also Zeller 2010, 246(-247), who finds the Apostle’s advice extremely tolerant.

¹⁵⁵ The lack of self-control is the result of overestimating one’s own capacity for sexual abstinence, which provides an opportunity for Satan, who continually stalks Christians (cf. 2 Cor. 2:11 etc.) - cf. Schrage 1995, 69-70.

¹⁵⁶ The theme of fire was widespread in ancient love poetry - cf. Zeller 2010, 242-243 and fn. 59. According to Rosik 2009, 240-24, the metaphor of a non-sizzling fire indicates the negative side of passion.

¹⁵⁷ According to Zeller 2010, 279, this theme binds 8:1-11:1, and in 9:1-27 Paul demonstrates the abandonment of his own rights by his example.

¹⁵⁸ Outside the New Testament, only in 4 Macc. 5:2; Sib. 2:96; Ps.-Phoc. 31 yet – cf. *BW10*; Witherington 1998, 460-461, who sees in 4 Macc. 5:2 (later than 1 Cor.) and Sib. 2:96 (=Ps.-Phoc. 31) Christian interpolations, drawing on Acts 15 (on this also Horst 1978, 135-136; Zeller 2010, 280-281; on the very poorly attested Ps.-Phoc. 31, derived from Sib. 2:96, cf. *JSHRZ* IV, 200 [fn. 31a]).

and love that builds up fellowship (vv.1-3; cf. Schrage 1995, 230.245), before referring to the knowledge shared by the Corinthians and the Apostle (“we know”) that idols do not in fact exist (vv.4.5-6).¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, some eat meat believing it has been sacrificed to idols,¹⁶⁰ and it burdens and pollutes their consciences (v.7).¹⁶¹ Although in terms of faith the food eaten is irrelevant (v.8),¹⁶² for the sake of the community one must not exercise one’s freedom (ἐξουσία, resulting from knowledge) at the expense of the weak (vv.9-10).¹⁶³ Indeed, Christians who enjoyed the proper knowledge of the non-existence of idols (v.1a.2) went so far as to participate in sacrificial ceremonies in pagan temples (v.10).¹⁶⁴ While in principle there is no reason why such meat should not be eaten, for the sake of the weak it must be avoided. For the weak, by imitating those having proper knowledge, participate in idolatry in

¹⁵⁹ To be a Christian, it is essential to recognize (v.1) that there is only one God and that idols are nothing – cf. Zeller 2010, 285. Schottroff 2021, 154, interprets these words not in terms of strict monotheism, but as a statement that other deities lack power.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Schrage 1995, 254-256: out of habit of previous religious beliefs.

¹⁶¹ On conscience as a capacity to note departures from norms of conduct – a *gerund* meaning literally “being aware of something (wrong)”, i.e. having knowledge of the moral assessment of conduct – more in Schrage 1995, 257-258; Zeller 2010, 297. Somewhat differently again Schottroff 2021, 156, who believes conscience to be the non-individual beliefs and intentions that guide human conduct.

¹⁶² The background is the image of king’s court and access to the king – cf. Zeller 2010, 294.

¹⁶³ The weak are those who have not fully internalised the knowledge of the non-existence of idols and who are a minority in need of protection – cf. Zeller 2010, 293-294.

¹⁶⁴ Zeller 2010, 282-283, reconstructs the customs of the time. Valuable meat was eaten for various ceremonial reasons, including personal or family reasons, in banquet halls located in the temple area, where the meat of previously sacrificed animals was certainly eaten as well. Avoiding such festivities would have excluded Christians from social life, so it is hardly surprising that they took part in them (according to Schottroff 2021, 157, participation in such feasts was a comfort enjoyed by the powerful). If one wanted to be sure of the origin of the meat one ate, whether killed according to Jewish law or not derived from sacrifices, one was often “condemned” to vegetarianism (cf. Rom. 14:2b). Similarly Keener 2014, 2270-2271.

their consciousness.¹⁶⁵ By contributing to the perdition of a brother or sister, those boasting of knowledge sin and annihilate the saving work of Christ (v.11-12). Paul himself would never, under any circumstances, contribute to his fellow brethren stumbling (v.13). Love and solidarity with the weak curtails the freedom resulting from right knowledge (cf. v.1-3; cf. Dąbrowski 1965, 210).

After chapter 9, where Paul gives himself as an example of renouncing one's rights, he turns his attention to avoiding idolatry (ch.10). He revisits the theme of harlotry/fornication (v.8), as well as the issue of meat sacrificed to idols (vv.14-22; cf. Zeller 2010, 279). Paul refers to the negative example of the fathers, the ancestors from the time of leaving Egypt and wandering through the desert (vv.1-13). In the exodus and wandering he finds an analogy with baptism (v.2) and the Eucharist (vv.3-4).¹⁶⁶ That generation is an example (τύπος) and a warning to "us" Christians (vv.5-6a; cf. vv.10-11)¹⁶⁷ against the fivefold guilt: coveting (ἐπιθυμέω) evil (v.6 b), being an idolater (εἰδωλολάτρης; v.7), committing fornication (πορνεία; v.8), tempting the Lord or putting him to the test (v.9) and grumbling (v.10).¹⁶⁸ Coveting evil probably refers to the desire of the people who had had enough manna to eat meat (Num. 11:4-34).¹⁶⁹ Idolatry, as the quotation from Ex.32:6 shows, refers to participation in pagan sacrificial worship (cf. 1 Cor. 8:10), which involved eating from sacrifices and partaking in libations.¹⁷⁰ An example of fornication can

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Ex. 23:33; 34:12 – cf. especially Zeller 2010, 295-296 and fn. 101; also Schrage 1995, 265-266.

¹⁶⁶ For details cf. Zeller 2010, 327-329.

¹⁶⁷ Schrage 1995, 396-398, argues that the Apostle's polemic is directed against the false certainty of salvation which, according to the Corinthians, was supposed to be guaranteed by these two sacraments.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Zeller 2010, 330-332, also on the following explanations of the iniquities mentioned.

¹⁶⁹ Schottroff 2021, 162, extends the list of coveted things to all feasts and goods; and Schrage 1995, 397-398, understands coveting still differently as a general term referring to idolatry and πορνεία, and related to the certainty of salvation based on sacraments.

¹⁷⁰ Which in v.20 is referred to as fellowship with demons – cf. Schrage 1995, 398.

be found in the events of Shittim in Num. 25:1-9, where fornication is a metaphor for cultic unfaithfulness to the God of Israel (cf. Slawik 2024, 173) and involved participation in sacrifices to Baal of Peor and cultic meals (Num 25:2-3). The number of sacrifices does not match that of Num. 25:9 and is probably derived from Ex. 32:28.¹⁷¹ If the root πορν- did not occur more frequently in 1 Cor., one would have to interpret fornication here in a figurative sense as participation in idolatrous worship. However, because of the weight of πορνεία in 1 Cor., it must be understood as sexual freedom or yielding to sexual desire.¹⁷² A new theme in 1 Cor. is instead to put God to the test, which seems to refer to Ex. 17:2-7 and Deut. 6:16 (cf. Deut. 9:22; Ps. 78:18-20; 95:8-9), where the reason for tempting God was the lack of water. Tempting means lacking trust and expressing doubt in God's power, dominion and salvific will, which is the same as putting God's patience to the test.¹⁷³ The punishment by serpents, on the other hand, points to Num. 21:6, where it afflicts the people for repeated rebellions against God and Moses. It is also associated with grumbling, i.e. directing one's displeasure against God and Moses and formulating accusations against them (cf. Ex. 7:3; Lev. 11:1; 14:27.29 etc.).¹⁷⁴ The figure of the destroyer (ὄλοθρευτής) probably comes from Ex. 12:23 (ὄλεθρεύω). It is difficult to guess what specifically Paul has in mind when he warns against putting Christ to the test and grumbling: opposing Paul like Moses or rather the longing for meat and cultic feasts.¹⁷⁵ In any case, the old stories of the fathers are

¹⁷¹ According to Schrage 1995, 400, is a *lapsus memoriae*, and the number comes from Num. 26:62.

¹⁷² Similarly, Zeller 2010, 331, but substantiating this with the use of the word παίζω in v.7, which was supposed to connote sexual freedom (which is denied by Schrage 1995, 398).

¹⁷³ "Definition" of tempting according to Schrage 1995, 401, who interprets the temptation of Christ in this context specifically as participation in pagan cultic feasts.

¹⁷⁴ According to Schrage 1995, 401-402, it is not possible to distinguish between tempting and grumbling.

¹⁷⁵ Such interpretations are considered by Schrage 1995, 402.

an instruction, an exhortation (νουθεσία) for contemporary Christians living in the end times (v.11-13).¹⁷⁶ In these verses, fornication is directly adjacent to the consumption of what has been sacrificed in idolatrous cultic practices (cf. Zeller 2010, 231).

In the following verses 10:14-22,¹⁷⁷ Paul takes the issue of sacrificial food a step further,¹⁷⁸ and in opposition to the Eucharist (vv.16-17; cf. vv.3-4). Partaking of the Eucharist is fellowship (κοινωνία) with Christ (v.16),¹⁷⁹ participation in the body of Christ (v.17). As Israel's sacrificial practice also shows (v.18): those eating from the sacrifices have a relationship with the altar and thus with God.¹⁸⁰ Meat sacrificed to idols is nothing more than meat, it has no special significance and neither do idols (v.19).¹⁸¹ However, the sacrifices offered to them are

¹⁷⁶ According to Schrage 1995, 382.403, it is a *résumé*.

¹⁷⁷ 10:14 is an introductory exhortation to the new section, which is substantively not a continuation of v.13, but through the initial διόπερ (“therefore”) alludes to 10:1-13, in particular to v.7 – cf. Zeller 2010, 336-337.

¹⁷⁸ The discrepancy between ch. 8 and 10 is explained differently by Schrage 1995, 263-264.445-446.448, who supposes that in 8:10 Paul merely signals a problem which, after the necessary preparation, he discusses in 10:4ff. 10:20 speaks not so much of eating meat from pagan sacrifices, but of participating in pagan sacrificial worship, which is an overstepping of the boundary of Christian freedom (see also Dąbrowski 1965, 227, who distinguishes between forbidden temple feasts and permitted purchase of meat at markets and participating in home feasts with pagans). It is not the eating of meat that has been sacrificed that is absolutely forbidden, but only the participation in pagan sacrifice and cultic feasts. Such a distinction is critically approached by Zeller 2010, 342. According to Montague 2021, 102, what is at stake here is the meaning of the act, which can be perceived as a confession of faith in idols and cause offense.

¹⁷⁹ On the understanding of this term cf. Schrage 1995, 437(-439).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Zeller 2010, 339. The meaning of v.18 is questionable because of the expression Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα, since σὰρξ is mostly associated with sinfulness (but cf. 1 Cor. 6:16 and above). Thus, it could refer to disobedient Israel offering sacrifices to idols, linking v.18 with v.19 – so Schrage 1995, 443-444. More recent commentaries shun interpretations that could give the impression of being anti-Judaic (see e.g. Schottroff 2021, 190, according to which Paul is thinking of the actually still existing temple community in Jerusalem at the time).

¹⁸¹ On the literal expression: “they are something” – cf. Zeller 2010, 340 fn. 379.

not offered to God, but to demons (v.20a; cf. Deut. 32:17).¹⁸² Thus, they are not religiously neutral, even if those enjoying the knowledge would think so (cf. Zeller 2010, 340). For they signify fellowship (κοινωνός) with demons, with anti-divine powers (v.20b). And fellowship with the Lord is exclusive and cannot be shared with demons (v.21, referring to vv.16-17; cf. Zeller 2010, 342). Participating in pagan sacrifice and libations by eating food sacrificed to demons contradicts the fellowship of the Lord's table.¹⁸³ The passage closes with a warning against the wrath of a jealous Lord (v.22; cf. Ex. 20:5, etc.; the rhetorical question about measuring oneself against God seems to refer to 10:9-10).¹⁸⁴ Idolatry, serving other gods, provokes the angry, punishing jealousy of YHWH (cf. Deut. 32:32,[16-]21 [παραζηλώω]; 1 Kgs. 14:22-23; Ps. 78[G: 77]:58; cf. Schrage 1995, 447; Zeller 2010, 342-343).

In 1 Cor. πορνεία is directly adjacent to the problem of idolatry, involving the eating of that which has been sacrificed to idols, or so-called gods. Although there are no other gods except the one God and Lord, and the meat sacrificed to them is just meat, eating it ultimately targets fellowship with Christ and other believers, annihilating the saving work of Christ. Such fellowship is also incompatible with fornication, which primarily means a sexual relationship with the stepmother, but also includes sexual freedom (Paul only considers intercourse between spouses to be good) and succumbing to sexual desire. This broad understanding of the concept of πορνεία has its roots in apocryphal literature, especially in TestXII. Both issues – fornication and eating meat sacrificed to idols – are linked to ἐξουσία (cf. 6:12; 8:9), a freedom, misunderstood in

¹⁸² Cf. Zeller 2010, 341. Schrage 1995, 444-445, believes that one must distinguish between idols and demons, identified with the “so-called gods” of 8:4-5 (quasi-divine spirits, devilish beings standing between God and humans). According to Schottroff 2021, 190, demons are destructive powers.

¹⁸³ Ποτήριον is also a cup used in cultic libations; similarly τράπεζα τοῦ θεοῦ is attested in pagan worship – cf. Schrage 1995, 446-447.

¹⁸⁴ Rosik 2009, 332, more generally: to examples from wandering in the desert.

the Corinthian church, that ultimately proved to be against fellowship with Christ and the members of Christ's body (cf. Schrage 1995, 212).

4.3. Acts 15

The account of the council of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem closes the middle section of Acts devoted to legitimising the mission among the Gentiles (13:1-15:33),¹⁸⁵ which is placed between the description of the beginning of the mission among the Gentiles (9:32-12:25) and that of Paul's mission in Asia and Europe (15:35-19:20; cf. Pesch 1986a, 40-41; Bock 2007, 46-48). The introduction (15:1-3) provides the background to the meeting in Jerusalem: the conflict between the Judeans and Paul and Barnabas over the need to circumcise Gentile converts (cf. Gal 2:1-10) and the sending of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. Vv.4-5 report on a similar dispute in Jerusalem that erupted after Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the spread of faith in Christ. They thus open the section of v.6-11: the gathering in Jerusalem on the matter (v.6), the dispute (v.7a) and Peter's speech urging that no additional requirements be imposed on Gentile converts (vv.7b-11). After Paul and Barnabas recounted their mission among the Gentiles before the congregation (vv.12-13), James took the floor (vv.14-21), proposing a solution to impose no conditions on Gentile Christians (v.19) beyond (v.20): "keep away from the pollutions of idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication".¹⁸⁶ Together, the decision

¹⁸⁵ Conzelmann 1972, 90; Haenchen 1959, 399: Acts 15 marks a turning point; similarly Rakocy 1996, 139; Witherington 1998, 439; Barrett 1998, 709 et al.

¹⁸⁶ The complements "idols", "blood", "strangled" and "fornication" can be subordinated to the verb ἀπέχεσθαι as further complements, as well as being designations of "impurity" – cf. Slawik 2017, 81. The above translation is supported by v.29 (and 21:25). Καὶ τῆς πορνείας is missing from P⁴⁵ (cf. NA28 and Slawik 2017, 82), but again v.29 argues for its presence (noting that neither v.29 nor 21:25 are preserved in P45 – cf. Conzelmann 1972, 92). The later tradition (D) is extensive (also in v.29): "and what you do not want to happen to yourself, do not do to another" (cf. NA28 and Conzelmann 1972, 93; Pesch 1986b, 81: the Western tradition adds the golden rule [cf. Mat. 7:12; Luke 6:31] to make the decree more relevant at a time when table fellowship with Judeo-Christians, who were no longer present in the churches, was no longer an issue).

was made to send Paul and Barnabas, together with two representatives of the Jerusalem church, to Antioch with a letter (vv.22-29) outlining this resolution (v.29): “keep away from that which has been sacrificed to idols, and blood, and that which has been strangled,¹⁸⁷ and fornication”. The final vv.30-33 speak of the return to Antioch and the rejoicing in the church there. The content of the letter is revisited again in 21.25: “guard yourselves from that which has been sacrificed idols, and blood, and that which has been strangled, and fornication.”

In addition to the absence of articles,¹⁸⁸ the letter specifies that the pollutions of idols mean food offered to idols and places *πορνεία* at the end. A different verb (*φυλάσσεσθαι*) is used in 21:25 than in ch. 15. Although the expression “pollutions of idols” has no parallel, the verb *ἀλισγέω*, “to pollute,”¹⁸⁹ appears in the Septuagint in the context of food (cf. Dan. 1:8 [G]; Mark 9:49; Sir. 40:29 [G]) and even in reference to unclean food laid on the altar (cf. Mal. 1:7.12 [G])¹⁹⁰. 15:29 and 21:25 leave no doubt that the reference is to that which was sacrificed to idols, meat from sacrifices in the temples (cf. 4 Macc. 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 8:1.4.7.10; and 10:19).¹⁹¹ The consumption of blood was already forbidden in Gen. 9:4¹⁹² and the prohibition also applied to strangers living among the

¹⁸⁷ A variant of *pl.* was selected in NA28 (*sg.* in P⁴⁵, *κ*² and onwards, and also in v.20 and 21:25), presumably as *l. difficilior*.

¹⁸⁸ The difference is purely grammatical (cf. also NA28).

¹⁸⁹ Unlike the verb *ἀλισγέω* the noun *ἀλισγημα* is *hapaxl.* in the Bible, and appears again in 4 Baruch 7:37 (for dating the Jewish writing to the early 2nd century AD, i.e. preceding the Christian redaction, cf. Allison 2019, 57-63). Cf. Barrett 1998, 731; *LSJ*.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Barrett 1998, 731; Bock 2007, 505. Obviously, the reference is to cultic impurity associated with idolatry, as emphasised by Witherington 1998, 462-463, who also argues that it must have been about meat eaten in the presence of idols

¹⁹¹ The term *εἰδωλόθυτος* certainly comes from the Judeo-Christian vocabulary, but it was not used by James, as Witherington 1998, 461, assumes.

¹⁹² It is not the chronologically earliest attestation of such a prohibition, but the first moment in the history of the world described in the Old Testament. This verse belongs to P, according to which, until the Flood, people fed exclusively on plants and fruit (Gen. 1:29[-30]).

Israelites (Lev. 17:10-14).¹⁹³ In pagan temples, animals were also supposed to be bled, although the slaughtered animal was not hung, so that blood residues could remain in the meat (they could be removed when the animal was dismembered; according to Keener 2014, 2276). Does the same apply to the prohibition of eating strangled animals? While it may come down to this, it refers to animals that died under unknown circumstances, including after being attacked by predators (cf. Ex. 22:30; Lev. 17:15; Deut. 14:21).¹⁹⁴

The fact that the dietary regulations are accompanied by the prohibition of fornication (πορνεία), has led to many varying interpretations and explanations of the decree.¹⁹⁵ According to the moral interpretation, the content of the decree refers to basic moral prohibitions: idolatry, murder and sexual immorality. This interpretation is, however, flawed for several reasons. The use of the word “blood” is (incorrectly) considered synonymous with “shedding of blood” used in other places to describe murder. Secondly, there is no mention of that which has been strangled. Furthermore, the issue of Judeo-Christians and Gentile-Christians eating together is well attested (cf. above {1.}). The interpretation that it is about avoiding pagan temples is no less problematic. The prohibitions would then apply to what took place during pagan festivals (cf. 2 Macc. 6:4-5).¹⁹⁶ In that case, however, one would have to wonder that it was not

¹⁹³ It was firmly established not only in the Hebrew Bible but is also attested in Jub. or CD XII, 12-13 – cf. Keener 2014, 2275-2276; Barrett 1998, 733.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Bauernfeind 1980, 196; Barrett 1998, 732-733. Lev. includes strangers, outsiders, in this rule, whereas according to Deut. it can be given or sold to non-Israelites. According to Conzelmann 1972, 9 or Bauernfeind, it applies to animals not ritually slaughtered. With regard to the Christian fellowship of the table, it is doubtful that the blood is meant to be an allusion to some pagan cultic custom associated with blood (as suggested by, among others, Bock 2007, 506.).

¹⁹⁵ Cf. the above introduction (1.). It is systematised by Keener 2014, 2260-2269, who advocates the last interpretive model presented (the Noahide Laws). Such interpretive models are sometimes mixed together, as in Witherington 1998, 463-464; Parsons 2008, 215; Johnson 1992, 273.

¹⁹⁶ Witherington 1998, 462-463, finds the same combination of themes in this

more clearly or simply phrased: “Do not partake of temple feasts”, and not in a form that easily leads to misunderstanding. Moreover, 2 Macc. 6 is clearly a polemical text, probably not describing actual religious practices.¹⁹⁷ More speaks in favour of the decree being an expression of the Old Testament law concerning strangers too, in particular Lev. 17-18, where regulations concerning sacrificial offerings are combined with sexual ethics and where it is indicated as many as five times that strangers “among the people of God” are also obliged to observe them (cf. Jer. 12:16; Zech. 2:15): in 17:8(-9) which instructs that sacrifices be brought to the entrance of the tabernacle, which would be equivalent to the prohibition of sacrificing to idols; in 17:10.12.13 regarding the eating of meat with blood; and in 18:26 summarising chapter 18, which brings together the prohibitions against various sexual offences. The weakness of such an interpretation lies not only in the lack of reference to things strangled and the fact that Lev. refers to the rules of life in the land of Israel and not in the Diaspora,¹⁹⁸ but also the frail linguistic connections (no mention of *πορνεία/הג* or gods/idols),¹⁹⁹ and this in a situation where there are quite a few passages in the Old Testament linking idolatry with *πορνεία*.²⁰⁰ A fourth way of interpreting this may

passage as in the Apostolic Decree.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Slawik 2011, 51 (and literature invoked in fn. 29).

¹⁹⁸ Callan 1993, 290-296, on the other hand, argues against such an argument, analysing the perception of *הג*, together with its Greek equivalents in Philo and early rabbinic Judaism, and posits that the prohibitions of the apostolic decree reflect the regulations of the time applying to non-Jews who joined the synagogue (in the Diaspora).

¹⁹⁹ Such an interpretation is criticised based mainly on Lev. 17-18 by Witherington 1998, 464-465; Barrett 1998, 732.734.

²⁰⁰ Cf. above (2.1.). Whereby *πορνεία* is then most often understood in a figurative sense - cf. Slawik 2024. However, Keener 2014, 2263 writes about texts linking idolatry with sexual immorality (Ex. 32:6-8; Hos. 4:11-14; Mic. 1:7; and above all Ex. 34:15-16), and according to Holladay 2016, 302-303 and fn. 18, the traditional connection between idolatry and sexual immorality is indicated above all by Wis. 14:12. On Hos. 4:11-14; Mic. 1:7 cf. again Slawik 2024, 47-48.59-75; on Wis. 14:12 cf. above (2.3.). In Ex. 32:6-8 there is no mention of sexual acts, and *הג* by no means suggests sexual immorality, but a joyful feast (especially since it was originally a celebration in honour of YHWH - cf.

partly overlap with the previous one. Behind the decree are the so-called Noahide laws, applicable to all, including the non-Jewish descendants of Noah. Although there is a well-developed rabbinic idea behind such a concept, its roots are much earlier. Its predecessors beyond Gen 9:4-6 were primarily Jub 7:20-25.²⁰¹ The Noahide Laws are related to the idea of natural law (derived from Stoicism). These laws are presumed to be based on Gen. 9 and Lev. 17-18. The lists of these laws differ, which does not yet rule out the possibility of a reference to them in Luke's description of the assembly in Jerusalem. However, we do not find wording similar to that of the decree in the texts intended to attest to the Noahide Laws and, more importantly, it would be difficult to guess why the decree should link dietary regulations with fornication. Such a difficulty is made clear by a comparison with the oldest texts supposed to speak of the Noahide Laws. There is no surviving Greek text of Jub. 7:20-21(25), a kind of testament of Noah, in which he instructs what his descendants are to do: to do justice, to cover the shame of the flesh (i.e. nakedness; cf. Rubinkiewicz 1999, 277), to bless the Creator, to honour father and mother, to love one's neighbours, to avoid fornication,²⁰² impurity and all unrighteousness (v.20-21). For it was because of the last three that the Flood came (v.22). Fornication led to the intercourse of the watchers with the daughters of men (cf. Gen 6:1-4; 1 En. 10), giving rise to all kinds of impurity. The descendants from these unions, the giants, killed one another, which in turn gave rise to murders among humans and the killing of animals, the shedding of blood (vv.23-25). Further on, in vv.30-33, we still read about the prohibition of the consumption

Slawik 2004, 78-99).

²⁰¹ Keener 2014, 2265-2266 (including footnotes), provides a list of further attestations. Flusser 1994, 582-583, believes that the Apostolic Decree forms the oldest version of the Noahide commandments; similarly Heiligenthal 1994, 585-586.

²⁰² In *OTP* I, 70, it has been translated as adultery or extra-marital intercourse (*fornication*).

of blood.²⁰³ Book III of the Sibylline Oracles, the Jewish and oldest one, dating from the 1st century BC,²⁰⁴ conveys the laws given to the whole earth by God (III, 757-760), which consist of (III, 763-765): avoiding unlawful worship and serving God (“the Living One”), abstaining from adultery and sexual relations with a man, raising offspring rather than killing them. Jub. and Sib. attest to the existence of a belief that certain rules apply to all people,²⁰⁵ and among these are restrictions on sexuality. However, it is impossible either linguistically or factually to link them to the apostolic decree, let alone to the prohibition of eating meat sacrificed to the gods. The same must be said of Pseudo-Phocylides, a Greek rhymed collection of aphorisms dating between 50 BC and 100 AD.²⁰⁶ It compiles a number of rules for everyday life, including sexual ethics (adultery and incest – e.g. 3 and 177-183), as well as religious life (avoiding eating meat with blood, or more specifically a ripped-up animal – 147-148, or idolatry [?] – 8.54).²⁰⁷ However, it would be very bold to attempt to link Ps.-Phoc. factually and linguistically (the root πορν- does not appear, and as for μοιχ- there is only μοιχικός in 178, εἴδωλον is missing, etc.)²⁰⁸ to the Noahide Laws, both in the part relating to cultic and religious regulations and rules of daily life. To explain the juxtaposition of dietary regulations with the prohibition of fornication in the apostolic decree, it is not enough to search for texts condemning idolatry and crimes of an ethical-social nature, such as killing and committing sexual iniquity.²⁰⁹ The reason for linking together the prohibition

²⁰³ Keener 2014, 2265 fn. 571, does not invoke vv.30-33.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *APAT* II, 179-182; *JSHRZ* V, 1059; Rubinkiewicz 1999, 344-345.

²⁰⁵ I leave aside the question of how one imagined the obligation of all mankind to worship the God of Israel.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *OTP* I, 567-568; *JSHRZ* IV, 193; Porter 2003, 126, according to whom it is a type of textbook used to teach reading and writing.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Keener 2014, 2266, who interprets 8-54 as avoiding idolatry, which is not reflected in either *OPG*, *OTP* I, 574-577 or *APOTE*.

²⁰⁸ On Ps.-Phoc. 31 cf. above fn. 158.

²⁰⁹ K. Berger (*JSHRZ* II, 364 fn. 20d), argues that the Noahide commandments

of eating meat sacrificed to idols, with blood or an animal otherwise killed with the prohibition of fornication can only be found in 1 Cor.

5. Conclusions

The connection between the dietary prohibitions and abstaining from πορνεία in Acts 15:20.29; 21:25 is backed up by the apostle Paul's message in 1 Cor. The direct link between πορνεία and idolatry has its roots in the Old Testament, where metaphorical promiscuity was used to criticise the people's unfaithfulness to YHWH. However, in 1 Cor. πορνεία involves succumbing to sexual lust, which finds expression in various sexual iniquities. Paul regarded πορνεία as the sin most destructive to the Christian fellowship. This fellowship is also threatened by eating meat sacrificed to idols and participating in pagan feasts, which make the consciences of fellow Christians unclean and ultimately constitute fellowship with anti-divine forces. However, in 1 Cor. Paul did not address the consumption of meat with blood or from an unknown source, which was nevertheless relevant from the perspective of maintaining table fellowship with the Judeo-Christians in Acts 15.

Paul, and Acts 15 after him, use the term πορν- in a much broader sense than was the case in the literal sense in the Hebrew Bible. The widening of its semantic field had already occurred in Jewish apocryphal literature, especially in TestXII. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that the exceptional spread of the root word πορν- in Jewish and Christian literature is owed precisely to the metaphorical criticism of cultic and religious infidelity to the God YHWH in the Old Testament, in which prostitution became a metaphor for participating in the worship of foreign gods. This association of sexual freedom with idolatry was most likely the main impetus for the role that fornication played in post- Old Testament Jewish and Christian literature. The stigmatisation

were unknown in Hellenistic and early Roman Judaism. Also critical of the idea of the decree being based on the Noahide commandments: Callan 1993, 293; Witherington 1998, 464; Barrett 1998, 734.

of sexual iniquity became a prominent theme in TestXII, and Paul identified fornication as the most serious sin, destroying believers and the body of Christ.

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