

## ***1 Thessalonians 4:4: Breaking the Impasse***

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*The crux interpretum τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ in 1 Thess 4:4 has traditionally been understood in one of three ways: (1) "acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor" (NAB); (2) "live with your wife in a holy and honorable way" (TEV); and (3) "control your own body in holiness and honor" (NRSV). These three views are thoroughly evaluated, and new evidence, especially concerning the referent of σκεῦος as well as the semantic force of the present infinitive κτᾶσθαι, is brought to bear on the problem. This analysis suggests that by τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ Paul means that each one is to control his or her own body in holiness and honor or, perhaps more specifically, that each one is to control his or her sexual organ in holiness and honor.*

*Key Words:* κτᾶσθαι, σκεῦος, כֵּל, vessel, body, sexual, organ, wife, possess, acquire

The meaning of the obscure phrase τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι in 1 Thess 4:4 has long puzzled interpreters. Two major questions are at issue: (1) the referent of σκεῦος, and (2) the meaning of the verb κτᾶσθαι. From antiquity two major interpretations have been proposed for σκεῦος. Augustine and Theodore of Mopseuestia, for example, held that σκεῦος referred to a man's wife, while Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Theodoret understood it as a reference to one's body.<sup>1</sup> Two major interpretations have also been

1. For a survey of the patristic evidence, see M. Adinolfi, "La santità del matrimonio in 1 Tess. 4, 1-8," *RivB* 24 (1976) 168-71; S. K. Avotri, *Possessing One's Vessel in 1 Thessalonians 4:4: Marital or Martial Metaphor?* (Ph.D. diss., The Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver, 1991) 16-31; J. Doignon, "L'exégèse latine ancienne de I Thessaloniens 4,4-5 sur la possession de notre vas," *BLE* 83 (1982) 163-77; C. Maurer, "σκεῦος," *TDNT* 7.365 nn. 48-49. J. M. Bassler has recently suggested, in what she calls a "highly speculative and purely exploratory" proposal, that σκεῦος might be a "metaphorical reference to virgin partners," alluding to the practice of spiritual marriages that is often proposed for 1 Cor 7:36-38 ("Σκεῦος: A Modest Proposal

proposed for the meaning of κτάομαι. The present infinitive κτάσθαι is understood to have either ingressive force ("to obtain," "to acquire") or durative force ("to possess," and hence, "to control" or "to live with"), which is normally expressed by the perfect tense.

These various options have been combined into three main interpretations of the phrase τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτάσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ.<sup>2</sup> Each interpretation understands the infinitive κτάσθαι to be dependent on the preceding infinitive εἰδέναι<sup>3</sup> ("to know"), which in turn explains ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας<sup>4</sup> ("that you abstain

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for Illuminating Paul's Use of Metaphor in 1 Thessalonians 4:4," in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks* [ed. L. M. White and O. L. Yarbrough; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995] 65, 61). Although intriguing, this interpretation lacks clear terminological parallels and is based upon evidence that is quite general and capable of a number of different interpretations. Furthermore, not only does this view lack "hard evidence," but the admonition that one "know about acquiring a virgin partner" seems to have too narrow a focus and too limited an audience for the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis of this section (see further nn. 38, 86, and pp. 54-56, 74-75 below). In other words, it seems unlikely that knowing how to acquire a virgin partner is the will of God (θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 3) and a part of the sanctification (ὁ ἀγιασμός ὑμῶν, v. 3) of each one (ἐκαστον ὑμῶν, v. 4) of the Thessalonians. For a further critique of Bassler's suggestion, see T. Elgvin, "'To Master His Own Vessel': 1 Thess 4:4 in Light of New Qumran Evidence," *NTS* 43 (1997) 615-16.

2. A fourth combination or view, "to acquire one's own body," is theoretically possible, but it does not make reasonable sense of the phrase. See E. Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 161; R. F. Collins, "'This Is the Will of God: Your Sanctification' (1 Thess 4:3)," in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (ed. R. F. Collins; BETL 66; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984) 313, 315; repr. from LTP 39 (1983); E. von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe* (7th ed.; KEK 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909) 164; Maurer, "σκεῦος;" 365; H. Schlier, *Der Apostel und seine Gemeinde: Auslegung des ersten Briefes an die Thessalonicher* (2d ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 66. C. Wordsworth, following the lead of Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.8.2) and interpreting κτάομαι in light of Matt 12:29, raises the possibility that the Christian is to obtain or acquire his or her own body from Satan's control (*The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Original Greek* [new ed.; 2 vols.; London: Rivingtons, 1875] 2.15). While such a view makes reasonable sense of the phrase, it lacks contextual warrant and rightly has not been followed by others.

3. Several interpreters offer an alternative view that takes κτάσθαι to be independent of εἰδέναι and parallel to ἀπέχεσθαι. See W. Bornemann, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe* (5th and 6th eds.; KEK 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894) 168-70; von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-briefe*, 161-63; J. E. Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 147-48; M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (4 vols.; New York: Scribner, 1887) 4.35. However, this suggestion has not generally been followed. For a critique, see Best, *Thessalonians*, 163; Collins, "Will of God," 314; T. J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul* (AnBib 89; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1981) 244-45; I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 109; A. L. Moore, *I and II Thessalonians* (NCB; London: Nelson, 1969) 62-63; B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (EB; Paris: Gabalda, 1956) 503.

4. Or εἰδέναι is simply parallel to ἀπέχεσθαι κτλ.; see n. 116 below.

from sexual immorality") in 4:3. Yet each interpretation is distinct from the others, and this is best seen in the translations of the NAB<sup>2</sup>, TEV, and the NRSV, which bring out clearly the unique emphasis of each interpretation. Ultimately it is God's will (θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:3) that the Christian know how to:

1. "acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor" (NAB<sup>2</sup>),<sup>5</sup> or
2. "live with your wife in a holy and honorable way" (TEV),<sup>6</sup> or
3. "control your own body in holiness and honor" (NRSV).<sup>7</sup>

Since these three major interpretive options are so firmly entrenched and the evidence for them so finely balanced, reaching a consensus has been elusive. With this essay, however, I hope to take several important steps in the direction of breaking the impasse over the meaning of τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος in 1 Thess 4:4. To achieve this objective, I will thoroughly reexamine the three main interpretive options. This examination will entail not only a critical evaluation of the traditional arguments for and against each view but also the introduction of new grammatical, lexical, and historical evidence at key points throughout the discussion. In the end, I will propose a particular solution, all the while hoping that the task of building a consensus for this crux interpretum is nearer to completion.

#### INTERPRETATION ONE:

#### "ACQUIRE A WIFE FOR HIMSELF IN HOLINESS AND HONOR"

The first interpretation, that "each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor," is supported by several arguments:

(1) In 1 Pet 3:7, σκεῦος is used of a man's wife, in that she is referred to as a "weaker vessel" (ὀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, if there are direct connections between 1 Pet 3:1-7 and 1 Thess 4:1-8, either through Silvanus's acting as the amanuensis (or co-author) for both 1 Thessalonians (cf. 1:1) and 1 Peter (cf. 5:12) or through the direct literary dependence of 1 Peter on 1 Thessalonians, this argument is even more forceful.<sup>9</sup>

5. Also see the NIV<sup>mg</sup>, NRSV<sup>mg</sup>, RSV.

6. Also see the CEV, NIV<sup>mg</sup>.

7. Also see the NIV, NJB, REB, RSV<sup>mg</sup>, TEV<sup>mg</sup>. Cf. the NAB: "guarding his member in sanctity and honor."

8. See also Chariton *Chaer* 1.14.9, where Callirhoe, in reflecting on her new position as a slave (and possible concubinage; cf. 1.12.9; 2.1.5; 3.1.6), refers to herself as "a mere chattel [σκεῦος]." Cf. Plutarch *Mor.* 138E, where the marriage relationship itself is compared to household vessels (σκευῶν).

9. For these possibilities, see especially F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (3d ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1970) 157, 213; H. Binder, "Paulus und Die Thessalonicherbrief," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* [ed. R. F. Collins; BETL 87; Leuven: Leuven University

(2) The description of a man's wife as a "vessel" is a recurring metaphor in rabbinic and biblical sources. *M. Ketub.* 3:4-5, for example, refers to her as "a common earthen vessel" (עֲצִי).<sup>10</sup> Prov 5:15-18 also refers to a man's wife as a "vessel" or container of water and is an especially important reference, since it antedates Paul and has unmistakable sexual overtones:<sup>11</sup>

- 15 Drink water from your own cistern (בֹּרַי; LXX ἀγγεῖον),  
flowing water from your own well (כְּאַרְ; LXX φρεάτων πηγῆς).
- 16 Should your springs (מַעְיָטַי; LXX τὰ ὕδατα ἐκ τῆς σῆς πηγῆς)  
be scattered abroad,  
streams of water (פְּלִגְמֵי; LXX τὰ σὰ ὕδατα) in the streets?
- 17 Let them be for yourself alone,  
and not for sharing with strangers.
- 18 Let your fountain (מְקוֹר; LXX ἡ πηγή σου τοῦ ὕδατος)  
be blessed,  
and rejoice in the wife of your youth.

The description of a man's wife as a "vessel" is more than just conceptually parallel to 1 Thess 4:4, because כֶּלִי the Hebrew equivalent of σκεῦος,<sup>12</sup> is also used of a man's wife in several rabbinic texts. *B. Meg.* 12b is especially clear:<sup>13</sup>

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Press, 1990] 87-93; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 367; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (2d ed.; London: Macmillan, 1947) 9-17, 369-84; B. Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (SNTSMS 59; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 65, 250 n. 34.

10. See Jastrow, 1102. For other examples of this metaphor, see *b. Ned.* 20b; *b. Pesah.* 112a-b; *b. Šabb.* 152a.

11. See also Sir 26:12; and possibly Cant 4:12, 15; Prov 23:27. Clement of Alexandria refers to Eve as the receptacle (ὑποδοχήν) of Adam's seed (*Paed.* 3.3.19.1). Similarly, Pseudo-Lucian refers to a woman as a "vessel [δοχεῖον ἀγγεῖον in Γ, E; δοχεῖον alone in the recensions] as it were for the reception of seed" (*Amores* 19; fourth century CE).

12. About 270 of the approximately 320 occurrences of כֶּלִי found in the MT are translated σκεῦος in the LXX; see HALOT, 478; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 359.

13. See also the parallel *Midr. Esth.* 3.13 [on 1:11]. The other key text is *b. B. Mes.* 84b; (and parallels *Midr. Qoh.* 11.2; *b. Sanh.* 22b; *y. Šabb.* 10.5; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 11.24), where, in reply to a marriage proposal from Judah the Prince, the widow of Rabbi Eleazar b. Simon retorts, "Should the vessel which has been used by a holy man be used by a secular one [כלי שנשתמש בו קודש ישתמש בו חול]?" Cf. Maurer, "σκεῦος," 361-62; Str-B, 3.632-33. Also, Aramaic uses לְחַנְּבָה ("concubine," "maidservant"), which is a loanword derived from the Akkadian *lahannu*, meaning (1) "vessel," or (2) "prostitute" (*HALAT*, 1731; see also *BAGD*, 754). According to Maurer, "One may see here an oriental understanding of sexual intercourse on the part of the male as the using of a container or vessel" (361; see also W. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993] 143). On the other hand, N. Baumert questions whether the Akkadian term does in fact specifically mean "prostitute" ("Brautwerbung: Das einheitliche Thema von 1 Thess 4,3-8," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* [ed. R. F. Collins; BETL 87; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990] 318 n. 11).

Some said: The Median women were the most beautiful; and some said: The Persian women are the most beautiful. Said Ahasuerus to them: The vessel that I use [כַּלִּי שְׂאֵנִי מִשְׁמַמֵּשׁ] is neither Median nor Persian, but Chaldean. Do you wish to see her? They said to him: Yes, but only if she is naked.

Thus, there are not only conceptual but also verbal parallels to the description of a man's wife as a "vessel!"

(3) The verb κτάρομαι in the present tense means "procure for oneself," "acquire," "get,"<sup>14</sup> and the phrase γυναίκα κτάρσθαι "is a rather well known expression"<sup>15</sup> occurring at least five times with the meaning "to acquire a wife": (1) Ruth 4:5 (καὶ αὐτήν κτήσασθαί σε δεῖ, "you must also acquire her"); (2) Ruth 4:10 (Ρυοθ . . . κέκτημαι ἑμαυτῶ εἰς γυναίκα, "Ruth . . . I have acquired to be a wife for myself"); (3) Sir 36:24 [29] (ὁ κτῶμενος γυναίκα, "he who acquires a wife"); (4) Ps.-Menander *Monostichoi* 398-99 (Κακὸν φυτὸν πέφυκεν ἐν βίῳ γυνή, καὶ κτῶμεθ' αὐτὰς ὡς ἀναγκαῖον κακόν, "A wife is by nature a wicked creature in life, and we acquire them as a necessary evil"); and (5) Xenophon *Symp.* 2.10 (ταύτην κέκτημαι, "I have got her").<sup>16</sup> The verb κτάρομαι is also used to describe the acquisition or possession of mistresses, courtesans, male lovers, and same-sex lovers.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in 1 Thess 4:4, it would appear that Paul has created a hybrid expression, σκεύος κτάρσθαι, by replacing γυνή with σκεύος.

(4) Parallels between 1 Cor 7:2 and 1 Thess 4:3b-4 suggest that in 1 Thessalonians Paul is coupling a warning against πορνεία with

14. BAGD, 455; LSJ, 1001; see, e.g., Acts 1:18; 8:20.

15. Collins, "Will of God," 313; cf. O. L. Yarbrough, *Not like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (SBLDS 80; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 71-72.

16. Both L. Morris and R. E. Collins consider this the strongest argument in favor of this first interpretation (Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* [rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991] 121; Collins, "Will of God," 313). See also E. Delebecque, "Sur un passage de Saint Paul (I Thess 4,3 6)," *La Pensée Catholique* no. 177 (1978) 85.

17. See Epictetus *Diatr.* 1.28.24; 2.24.22; Diogenes Laertius 2.84; Longus *Daphn.* 3.15; Philostratus *Vit. Apoll.* 1.30; Xenophon *Symp.* 8.2. The noun κτήμα is used similarly (Plato *Resp.* 423E, 451C, 453D, 502D). Also, κτήμα is used to refer to wives or women as possessions (Athenaeus *Deipn.* 13.559C; Chariton *Cheer.* 1.12.10; 2.6.4; Ps.-Menander *Mon.* 835; Stobaeus *Ecl.* 4.22.14, 66). Plutarch appears to reject this line of thinking, which may, as D. Fredrickson points out, indicate just how widespread it was (*Mor.* 142E; Fredrickson, "Passionless Sex in Paul's Epistles" [an unpublished paper read at the annual meeting of the SBL in San Francisco, 1997] 2 n. 2). Evidence for the use of κτάρομαι to describe the acquisition of a wife also comes from Jewish sources and their use of the translation equivalent קַנָּה. See Ruth 4:5, 10; Sir 32:24; *m. Nid.* 5:4; *m. Qidd.* 1:1; *b. Ketub.* 82b; *b. Qidd.* 6b; Jastrow, 1391-92.

advice on acquiring a wife.<sup>18</sup> These parallels are not merely conceptual (i.e., marriage as a prophylaxis against πορνεία) but also verbal:<sup>19</sup>

1 Thess 4:4:	εἰδέναι	ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ	ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι
1 Cor 7:2:		ἕκαστος	τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω.

The evidence for this first interpretation might seem persuasive initially, but several objections can be raised against each of its supporting arguments:

(1) The parallel in 1 Pet 3:7 is not convincing, for the wife is not referred to as her husband's "vessel," as in 1 Thess 4:4. Moreover, the comparative adjective "weaker" (ἄσθενεστέρως) implies that men are "vessels" as well.<sup>20</sup> Thus σκεῦος is not synonymous with "wife" at all.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the possibility of a direct connection between 1 Pet 3:1-7 and 1 Thess 4:1-8 through either a common author or through

18. This combination is also seen in Tob 4:12 and *T. Levi* 9:9-10 (cf. *b. Qidd.* 29b; *b. Yeham.* 63b), and, according to Yarbrough, "suggest[s] that the precepts Paul cites in 1 Thess 4:3b-5 are based on traditional precepts of Jewish paraenesis which couple warnings against sexual immorality with advice on obtaining a wife" (*Gentiles*, 69-70). These texts state: "Beware, my son, of every kind of fornication [πορνεία]. First of all, marry a woman [γυναῖκα πρῶτον λάβε] from among the descendants of your ancestors" (Tob 4:12); and "Be on guard against the spirit of promiscuity [πορνεία], for it is constantly active and through your descendants it is about to defile the sanctuary. Therefore take for yourself a wife [λάβε οὖν σεαυτῷ γυναῖκα] (*T. Levi* 9:9-10).

19. Both Maurer and Yarbrough consider this the strongest argument in favor of the first interpretation (Maurer, "σκεῦος," 366-67; Yarbrough, *Gentiles*, 69). Witherington notes other possible parallels between 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Thess 4:3-8 (*Women*, 249 n. 225). However, they are not convincing, for they ignore Paul's specific argument in each passage and refer only to isolated words or concepts.

20. See, e.g., P. J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 217; C. Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (2d ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) 155; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 133; J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter* (WBC 49; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1988) 169. J. H. A. Hart points out that "the comparative ἄσθενεστέρως proves that both husband and wife are vessels and assists to exclude the notion that St. Paul could mean to call a wife the vessel of her husband in I Thess. iv" ("The First Epistle General of Peter," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament* [5 vols.; ed. W R. Nicoll; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.] 5.65).

21. In fact, σκεῦος; meaning "wife" is not attested in Greek literature at the time of or prior to the NT period. See Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 55; Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 610; L&N §10.55. Numerous commentators maintain that σκεῦος in 1 Pet 3:7 refers to the woman's body, thus suggesting that σκεῦος is a reference to the human body per se. See E F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Dallas: Word, 1982), 83; George P. Carras, "Jewish Ethics and Gentile Converts: Remarks on 1 Thes 4,3-8," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. R. E Collins; BETL 87; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 308, 310, Kelly, *Peter and Jude*, 133; Michaels, *Peter*, 169; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 505; C. A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 152-53.

direct literary dependence is vulnerable at a number of points and has rightly been challenged.<sup>22</sup> Yet even granting the existence of a common source, an argument based on it to the effect that σκεῦος in 1 Thess 4:4 refers to a wife remains unpersuasive for two reasons: (1) 1 Pet 3:7, as we have seen, does not use σκεῦος synonymously with "wife" and implies that husbands are "vessels" as well, and (2) it is also possible to interpret σκεῦος in 1 Thess 4:4 as "body" and to read 1 Pet 3:7 in light of it, as E. G. Selwyn does and as the usual dating of the epistles suggests.<sup>23</sup>

(2) The references in the biblical and extrabiblical sources to a wife as a "vessel" are problematic for several reasons. (1) The rabbinic parallels are: (a) centuries later than Paul; (b) written in Hebrew rather than Greek; (c) from a form of Judaism that was, at best, in its beginning stages during the lifetime of Paul; (d) expressive of a low view of women that is difficult to reconcile with the views expressed by Paul in 1 Cor 7:3-4; Eph 5:25-33; and Col 3:19;<sup>24</sup> (e) too selective in that "vessel" (כֵּל) is also used in other texts to refer to the person as a divine creation or to the body specifically;<sup>25</sup> and (f) are better understood not

22. See, among others, Achtemeier, *Peter*, 7-9; 15-23, esp. n. 164; 349-50; Beare, *Peter*, 212-16; E. Best, *1 Peter* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 32-36, 55-56; idem, *Thessalonians*, 23-29, 178-79; J. H. Elliott, "The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research," *JBL* 95 (1976) 246-47; L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 28-30, esp. n. 82; 50 n. 135; Michaels, *Peter*, xliii-xlv; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 35; E. R. Richards, *The Secretary in Paul's Letters* (WUNT 2/42; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991) 73 n. 21; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 105-11; C. Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre* (SB; Paris: Gabalda, 1966) 178; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 67-68.

23. See Selwyn, *Peter*, 187. It is possible that 1 Thess 4:4 and 1 Pet 3:7 are drawing on the language of a common, early tradition. See Goppelt, *Peter*, 226 and note the parallels between 1 Thess 4:4 and 1 Pet 3:7: εἰδέναι—κατὰ γνώσιν; σκεῦος—σκεῦει τιμῆ—τιμῆν (also note the possible sexual connotations of συνοικέω found in 1 Pet 3:7; but cf. W. Grudem, *1 Peter* [TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988] 142). However, this assessment is based upon only a few isolated terms rather than a series of parallels between 1 Thess 4:1-8 and 1 Pet 3:1-7 (see Selwyn, *Peter*, 370-71), and it is generally thought that 1 Thess 4:1-12 and 1 Pet 3:1-7 are derived from different sources (a baptismal holiness code for 1 Thess 4:1-12 and a social code or *Haustafel* for 1 Pet 3:1-7). Also, these points of contact appear to be superficial and not necessarily indicative of a conceptual affinity for several reasons: (1) the terms used are commonly employed by both authors; (2) the context in which they are placed is different (sexual sin in 1 Thess 4:1-8; husbands and wives in 1 Pet 3:1-7); and (3) other possible examples of 1 Thess 4:1-12 and 1 Peter drawing on the language of a common tradition (see Selwyn, *Peter*, 370-71) show only the most general conceptual affinity, or as Achtemeier puts it, "The language is more Pauline than the actual content" (*Peter*, 19; see also Best, *Peter*, 34; idem, *Thessalonians*, 178-79).

24. See also Rom 16:1-3, 6-7 12; 1 Cor 9:5; 11:11-12; 16:19; Phil 4:2-3; 1 Tim 3:11.

25. See *Sipre Deut.* 48; *b. Ned.* 50b; *b. Ta'an.* 20b; and esp. *b. Ta'an.* 7a: "This is illustrated by the story of the daughter of the Roman emperor who addressed R. Joshua b. Hanania, 'O glorious Wisdom in an ugly vessel [כֵּל]." *B. Sanh.* 99b contains

as a reference to a "wife" but to a "woman as a sexual object" or even to a woman's "sexual organ."<sup>26</sup> (2) The Thessalonians probably did not know Hebrew and could not be expected to make these kinds of verbal and conceptual connections.<sup>27</sup> (3) Only Prov 5:15-18 is early enough to have influenced Paul, yet such influence, though possible, is unlikely for two reasons: (a) Proverbs 5 does not use the operative word, σκεῦος; and (b) the Hebrew imagery found in Proverbs 5 moves in a direction different from the direction of 1 Thess 4:4. Specifically, Proverbs 5 pictures a man's wife as a cistern or well, which, as A. Ross notes, "means that the wife is to be the *source* of pleasure, not a useful *conveyance* of pleasure."<sup>28</sup> Thus Proverbs 5, unlike the rabbinic parallels and 1 Thess 4:4 (as understood by this first interpretation), does not imply that a man's wife is merely a "vessel" or "instrument" to be used by him for the satisfaction of his sexual desire.<sup>29</sup>

(3) With only 5 known occurrences, the phrase γυναῖκα κτάσθαι is hardly a well-known expression. In fact, γυναῖκα λαβεῖν ("to take a wife") is the usual way the idiom is expressed, being used approximately 95 times in Biblical Greek.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the object of κτάομαι in

an interesting parallel: 'And this coincides with Raba's dictum, viz., All human bodies are carriers [דררופתקן]; happy are they who are worthy receptacles [דררופתקן] of the Torah.' Much of the sentence in the text above is drawn from M. McGehee, "A Rejoinder to Two Recent Studies Dealing with 1 Thess 4:4," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 87.

26. See Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 610 and cf. n. 103 below.

27. See Carras, "Ethics," 310; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 109; E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Sacra Pagina 11; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1995) 198; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 152. In light of Paul's facility with Greek and Hebrew and in light of the occasional nature of his letters, it is reasonable to suppose that he would not introduce a figure of speech that was unfamiliar to the predominately Greek-speaking Gentile Thessalonians (cf. Acts 17:4; 1 Thess 1:9; 2:14) but would write with sensitivity to their linguistic limitations. C. Masson, however, suggests that Paul may have previously introduced (see vv. 1-2, 6) this figure to the Thessalonians (*Le deux Épîtres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniens* [CNT 11a; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957] 47).

28. A. P. Ross, "Proverbs," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (12 vols.; ed. F. E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-92) 5.927 n. 15, italics mine. Cf. R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Proverbs," in *NIB*, 5.69. For the imagery, see 2 Kgs 18:31; Isa 36:16; and Crawford H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899) 112-13. Elgvin notes that Proverbs 5 pictures "the woman as a source of water from which one drinks, not as a vessel" ("To Master His Own Vessel," 613).

29. Maurer argues that σκεῦος κτάσθαι means "to use a woman as a vessel (instrument)" ("σκεῦος," 366; see also pp. 361-62).

30. The NT references are Mark 12:19, 20, 21; Luke 20:28, 29, 31; cf. Matt 1:20, 24. For the LXX, see, in addition to the references cited in n. 66 below, Gen 20:3; 25:1; 26:34; 27:46; 28:1, 6; 31:50; Lev 18:18; 20:14, 21; 21:7; 21:14; Num 12:1 (2x); Deut 20:7; 22:13, 14; 23:1; 24:1, 5; 25:7; 28:30; Judg 14:3; 21:22, 23; 2 Kgdms 3:14; 5:13; 12:10, 11; 3 Kgdms 11:1; 16:31; 1 Chr 14:3; Ezra 10:44; Job 42:17; Jer 16:1; 36:6; Tob 1:9; 4:12 (3x); 6:16; 9:5 [5]; 11:5 [S]; Susanna 2; 1 Esdr 5:38; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 1.19.7 §302; 17.1.1 §9. The Hebrew expression is usually נִשְׂאָה לְקַיֵּץ; see *DCH*, 4.573.2; *HALOT*, 534.7; cf. Jastrow, 1391-92.

the parallels that are cited (Ruth 4:5, 10; Sir 36:24 [29]; Ps.-Menander *Mon.* 398-99; Xenophon *Symp.* 2.10) is not σκεῦος but is explicitly identified as a man's wife—either γυνή, the personal name "Ruth," or the pronouns αὐτή or αὐτή, whose antecedents are γυνή.<sup>31</sup>

(4) The alleged parallel in 1 Cor 7:2 is doubtful for several reasons.<sup>32</sup> (1) The larger context of 1 Corinthians 7 does not accord well with 1 Thess 4:4. According to this reading of 1 Thess 4:4, marriage is encouraged, while in 1 Corinthians 7 singleness is recommended (1 Cor 7:7-8, 25-40).<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, marriage is viewed as a valid outlet for uncontrolled passion in 1 Corinthians 7 (vv. 2-5, 9, 36-37), but in 1 Thess 4:4-5 one is to acquire a wife quite apart from lustful passion (πάθει ἐπιθυμίας). (2) The one-sided, disparaging view of the wife as the "vessel" of the husband clashes with the mutuality expressed by 1 Cor 7:3-4.<sup>34</sup> (3) The verbal similarity involves only two shared pronouns (ἐκαστος; ἑαυτοῦ). (4) Discovering any similarity in content depends upon affirming the result in advance—a classic petitio principii—as well as ignoring the infinitive εἰδέναι in 1 Thess 4:4, which, as M. R. Vincent notes, reduces Paul's injunction

31. It is worth noting that Plato uses the expression σκεύη κτῶνται literally ("possess utensils") without reference to a wife (*Leg.* 746E).

32. See Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 57-58; S. Légasse, "Vas suum possidere [1 Th 4,4]," *Filologia neotestamentaria* 10 (1997) 109; McGehee, "Rejoinder," 83.

33. See W. Bahnsen, "Zum Verständnis von 1. Thess. 4,1-12," *ZWT* 47 (1904) 336; T. R. P. D. Buzy, *Épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (3d ed.; La Sainte Bible; Paris: Letouzey & Ane, 1951) 155. Paul's recommendation in 1 Corinthians to remain single may arise from a belief in the imminent end of the world, or, as L. Keck and V. P. Furnish put it, "Why undertake the responsibilities and involvements of family life if the transformation of all things is at hand?" (*The Pauline Letters* [Interpreting Biblical Texts; Nashville: Abingdon, 1984] 85). If this, the traditional understanding of 1 Cor 7:26-31, is correct, then the difference in perspective between 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians regarding marriage is especially significant, since 1 Thessalonians also seems to presuppose that the end of the world is near (4:13-5:11, esp. 4:17; 5:6; cf. 4:11-12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-12) and yet encourages marriage. In other words, if 1 Thessalonians follows the same line of thought as 1 Corinthians, the fervent eschatological expectation of the Thessalonian epistles makes it unlikely that Paul is encouraging the Thessalonians to acquire wives. For a further discussion, see Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 57-58; Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 612. However, it must be noted with G. B. Caird that "the mood of recent scholarly opinion is clearly against taking 1 Cor. 7 as indicating an imminent 'end of the world'" (*New Testament Theology* [ed. L. D. Hurst; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994] 254 n. 25). For recent challenges to the traditional understanding of 1 Cor 7:26-31, see W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy* (SNTSMS 83; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 181-87; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 329-30, 336-42; A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament* (NovTSup 13; Leiden: Brill, 1966) 114-17; L. Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (rev. ed.; TNTC 7; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 112-14; B. Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul, and the End of the World: A Comparative Study of New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992) 27-30.

34. See Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 83; Carras, "Ethics," 308-9.

simply to "counsel to be well informed in the way of obtaining a wife."<sup>35</sup> (5) The verb ἔχω in 1 Cor 7:2 does not refer to marriage or acquiring a wife but is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the point of 1 Cor 7:2 is not that each man is to be married or enter into marriage, as alleged for 1 Thess 4:4, but that each married man is "to have sexually" his own wife.

Not only are the specific arguments used to support this first interpretation less than persuasive, but several objections can also be leveled against this view:

(1) Paul appears to "be laying an emphatic and binding veto on celibacy,"<sup>37</sup> which elsewhere he recognizes as both valid and desirable (1 Cor 7:7-8, 25-40; 9:5).<sup>38</sup>

(2) The infinitive εἰδέναι, "to know," according to this interpretation, is "both superfluous and absurd."<sup>39</sup> In other words, the force of εἰδέναι is either completely ignored, or, if it is acknowledged, it should probably be admitted with A. J. Mason that it is

35. Vincent, *Word Studies*, 4.36. See R. C. H. Lenski for an example of the exegesis that ignores the force of the infinitive εἰδέναι (*The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1937] 309).

36. See, e.g., N. Baumert, *Ehelosigkeit und Ehe im Herrn: Eine Neuinterpretation von 1 Kor 7* (FB 47; Würzburg: Echter, 1984) 22; Fee, *Corinthians*, 278-79; D. E. Garland, "The Christian's Posture toward Marriage and Celibacy: 1 Corinthians 7," *RevExp* 80 (1980) 353; H. Hanse, "ἔχω," *TDNT* 2.817 n. 5; J. C. Hurd, Jr., *The Origin of I Corinthians* (rev. ed.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1983) 162; H. Merklein, "Es ist gut für den Menschen eine Frau nicht anzufassen," in *Die Frau im Urchristentum* (ed. G. Dautzenberg, H. Merklein, and K. Müller; QD 95; Freiburg: Herder, 1983) 232-33; W. E. Orr and J. A. Walther, *I Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976) 206; W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT 7/1-3; 3 vols; Neukirchenvluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991-99) 2.61-63; C. Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT 7; Leipzig: Evangelische, 1996) 134.

37. A. J. Mason, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians," in *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (8 vols.; ed. C. J. Ellicott; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954) 8.138.

38. See Elgvin, "'To Master His Own Vessel,'" 612; D. E. Hiebert, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1992) 182; F. Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung und Lebensgestaltung nach Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zum Wirken des Apostels beim Aufbau der Gemeinde in Thessalonike* (Biblische Untersuchungen 10; Regensburg: Pustet, 1973) 54. J. B. Lightfoot suggests that Paul has in view only those who "cannot contain" themselves (*Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* [London: Macmillan, 1895] 55). See also B. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans* (3d ed.; London: John Murray, 1894) 45; G. Lünemann, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880) 110. Lightfoot may be correct, but Paul's language seems to suggest a comprehensive injunction that applies to all of the Thessalonians, both married and unmarried: "this is the will of God" . . . for "each of you" (vv. 3-4). See Elgvin, "'To Master His Own Vessel,'" 612; and also n. 86, and pp. 54-56, 74-75 below.

39. Vincent, *Word Studies*, 4.36; see also Bornemann, *Thessalonicherbriefe*, 170.

"certainly . . . no part of a religious man's duty 'to know how to procure a wife.'"<sup>40</sup>

(3) Paul's use of *σκεῦος* as a metaphor for "wife" is contrary to his normal practice. When Paul refers to acquiring a wife elsewhere (1 Cor 7:27; cf. 1 Cor 9:5; Eph 5:31), he does so explicitly by using the term *γυνή*. Moreover, there seems to be no reason for him to use such an unusual metaphor in 1 Thess 4:4, for nothing in the immediate context suggests it, nor is there anything "in all of Paul's letters that even remotely suggests that 'to take a wife' would be such a delicate thing to say that he would feel compelled to resort to such an oblique metaphor."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, in calling a man's wife *his* *σκεῦος*, this interpretation "implies a 'low sensual view of the marriage relation, and a 'depreciatory estimate of the woman's position,' as though her *raison d'être* were to provide a means by which her husband might satisfy his sexual appetite without infringing the divine law."<sup>42</sup> Such a position is particularly difficult to accept, for, as J. B. Lightfoot points out, "It is his [Paul's] constant effort to exalt both the one [marriage] and the other [the woman's position]."<sup>43</sup> And, as J. M. Bassler notes, "It is difficult to concede that, with all the other terms available to him, Paul would use in this context one that originates in—and conveys—a view of women as containers for semen."<sup>44</sup> Feeling the force of this

40. Mason, "Thessalonians," 138; see also Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 63-64; cf. Witherington, *Women*, 66. It could be argued that the Thessalonians do not need to know how to procure a wife but how to procure one "in a holy and honorable way" (ἐν ἀγίασμῳ καὶ τιμῇ). However, the corresponding phrase, "not in lustful passion" (μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας), is problematic, for it is difficult to see how one can obtain a wife "in lustful passion." For further discussion, see the body of the main text below.

41. G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 52 n. 59; see also Bornemann, *Thessalonicherbriefe*, 170.

42. Bruce (quoting Lightfoot), *Thessalonians*, 83. See also D. Lührmann, "The Beginnings of the Church at Thessalonica," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, and W. A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 247; Meeks, *Origins*, 143; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 121; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 198; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 152. But Marshall suggests that the "objection is not wholly valid [emphasis mine], since Paul is speaking specifically about the problem of physical sexual relationships and not about other aspects of marriage, and also since he insists on a holy and honourable relationship" (*Thessalonians*, 108). See also J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians* (London: Macmillan, 1877) 130; Lightfoot, *Notes*, 55; Witherington, *Women*, 67.

43. Lightfoot, *Notes*, 55. See also Lührmann, "The Beginnings," 247; D. J. Williams, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NIBCNT; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992) 72; and 1 Cor 7:3-4; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; and cf. Rom 16:1-3, 6-7, 12; 1 Cor 9:5; 11:11-12; 16:19; 2 Cor 11:2; Phil 4:2-3; 1 Tim 3:11; 5:14; Titus 2:3-5. G. Milligan points out that the reader of 1 Thess 4:3-8 is unprepared for a position suggestive of a low view of marriage, since the passage is "specifically directed to enforcing its sanctity" (*St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* [London: Macmillan, 1908] 49).

44. Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 55.

objection, Baumert suggests that σκεῦος should be understood as "help" or "support" and thus, since it recalls Gen 2:18, refers to one's wife.<sup>45</sup> In this way, Baumert identifies σκεῦος as "wife" without direct reference to rabbinic parallels and their overt sexual references. However, direct lexical evidence for the use of σκεῦος in the sense of a "help" or "support" when referring to a person is lacking.<sup>46</sup> Also, βοηθός, rather than σκεῦος, is the term used in the LXX to represent the notion that a wife is a "help" or "support" (Gen 2:18, 20; Sir 36:24 [29]; Tob 8:6 [bis]).<sup>47</sup> Even granting such a meaning for σκεῦος, this view does not explain why Paul uses this metaphor in 1 Thess 4:4, for nothing in the immediate context suggests it, especially since the term allegedly is devoid of overt sexual overtones, thus eliminating the motive for such an oblique metaphor. Also, there seems to be little reason for Paul not to use the more common term, γυνή.

(4) Paul's choice of the verb κτάομαι is also unusual if by it he means that one is to acquire a wife. Paul's preference elsewhere is for the verb γαμέω (or γαμίζω; 1 Cor 7:9, 10, 28, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39; 1 Tim 4:3; 5:11, 14). But if he bypasses γαμέω and means precisely "to take/acquire a wife," γυνάικα λαβεῖν rather than σκεῦος κτάσθαι or γυνάικα κτάσθαι is the way the idiom is usually expressed in Biblical Greek.<sup>48</sup>

(5) Understanding the phrase σκεῦος κτάσθαι as "to acquire a wife" makes little sense of its adverbial modifier, "not in lustful passion" (ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας), both exegetically and sociologically. Exegetically, it is difficult to see how one can acquire a wife "in lustful passion,"<sup>49</sup> unless this means that one should not obtain a wife out of impure and lustful motives.<sup>50</sup> Yet this idea of motive is served more

45. Baumert, "Brautwerbung," 318-27; see also R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 375.

46. See BAGD, 754; LSJ, 1607; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 358-62. Apparently, such a definition is considered an extension of the meaning "instrument" (cf. n. 102 below).

47. Philo also uses the term βοηθός similarly. See *Leg.* 2.1, 5, 8, 9; QG 1.17 (βοηθέω).

48. Based upon the evidence from the LXX and the NT, the number of occurrences of λαβεῖν γυνάικα as compared to κτάσθαι σκεῦος/γυνάικα is approximately 95 to 3. See the discussion above, p. 46.

49. See Fee, *Presence*, 52 n. 59; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 122 n. 24. However, Josephus provides a partial parallel: "[The Law commands us not] to win her [a wife] by guile and deceit [δόλω καὶ ἀπάτη πείσαντας]" (*Ag. Ap.* 2.25 §200). But here again, while it is conceivable that a man might win a wife "by guile and deceit," it is difficult to see how he could win her by "lustful passion." Jowett avoids the difficulty by supplying an additional verbal element: "not living in lustful passion" (*Epistles of St. Paul*, 45; see also NJB, REB). However, such an addition is neither necessary nor a natural reading of the text, for the repeated use of ἐν suggests that both prepositional phrases modify κτάσθαι. Moreover, Jowett's suggestion has not generally been followed.

50. See N. Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul: Overcoming a Misunderstanding* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1996) 161; Witherington, *Women*, 68. C. B. Williams offers the translation "out of pure and honorable motives, not out of evil passions" (*The New*

naturally by the prepositions ἀπό, διά, ἐκ, or κατά than by ἐν.<sup>51</sup> This is seen clearly in what would be a close parallel in Tob 8:7, "Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine [ἐγὼ λαμβάνω τὴν ἀδελφὴν μου ταύτην] not for any lustful motive [οὐ διὰ πορνείαν]," as well as a later parallel in Ign. *Pol.* 5.2, "And it is proper for men and women who marry to be united with the consent of the bishop, that the marriage be in accordance with the Lord and not due to lustful passion [καὶ μὴ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν]."<sup>52</sup> The preposition on the other hand, in combination with πάθος, as in 1 Thess 4:4, should probably be understood adverbially to mean "with lustful passion" or "passionately."<sup>53</sup>

N. Baumert suggests that 1 Thess 4:3-8 "is the response to a single problem" and deals with "a specific case: someone has apparently had sexual relations with an unmarried woman who already belonged—perhaps through engagement—to another, as a way to bind her to himself."<sup>54</sup> If this is the case, it would mean that one could win a bride (i.e., acquire a wife) through illicit sexual relations (ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας) rather than in a holy and honorable way (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ). Thus, Baumert limits the meaning of πορνεία to a single set of "specific relations" and restricts the context to "a single problem."<sup>55</sup> However, these limitations severely restrict the focus of

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*Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People* [Chicago: Moody, 1937] 454). See also Goodspeed, who is similar.

51. For ἀπό see, e.g., Matt 13:44; 14:26; Luke 22:45; Acts 12:14; and BAGD, 88.V.3. For διά see, e.g., Matt 27:18; Mark 15:10; John 7:13; 19:38; 20:19; Rom 12:1; Eph 2:4; Phil 1:15; Rev 18:10, 15; and BAGD, 181.11.1. For ἐκ see, e.g., Rom 14:23; 2 Cor 2:17; Phil 1:16-17; 1 Thess 2:3; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:22; and BAGD, 235.3γγ. For κατά see, e.g., Eph 1:5; 1 Tim 5:21; Titus 3:5; Phlm 14; 1 Pet 1:3; and BAGD, 407.11.5αδ. Such a use for ἐν is not common. See BAGD, 261.3; BDF, §219.2; M. J. Harris, "Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament," *NIDNTT* 3.1191-92. Admittedly, ἐν is quite versatile and, while the so-called sociative ἐν, could possibly be pressed into service here, this use of ἐν, is not particularly common, nor is it the usual way to express motive. See BAGD, 261.IV.5e; N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: *Syntax* (ed. J. H. Moulton; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963) 252; M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963) §§116-17.

52. Philo expresses a similar motive with the preposition διά in *Spec.* 3.34. See also 2 Tim 4:3, where the construction κατά + ἐπιθυμία is used to express motive; cf. Deut 12:21; 2 Chr 8:6; Eph 4:22.

53. See esp. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) 78; and also L&N, §25.30; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 188, 196; E. P. Sanders, "When Is a Law a Law? The Case of Jesus and Paul," in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives* (ed. E. B. Firmage, B. G. Weiss, and J. W. Welch; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 152 n. 22; Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, p. 185 and §§116-17.

54. Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul*, 158; see also idem, "Brautwerbung," 332-35; cf. Masson, *Thessaloniciens*, 48.

55. Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul*, 161, 158.

Paul's injunctions, and this seems improbable considering the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis of 4:1-8, which, as R. F. Collins points out, makes it "impossible to infer from these verses any specific reference to the real life situation of the Thessalonian community."<sup>56</sup> Further, a problem such as envisioned by Baumert seems unlikely in light of "the overall confidence and joy that Paul had toward the Thessalonians (1:3, 7; 2:19-20; 3:6), plus his explicit statements about the Thessalonians doing well and needing only to do better (4:1, 10; 5:11)."<sup>57</sup>

Sociologically, understanding the phrase σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι as "to acquire a wife" assumes that unmarried men were able to act independently regarding their choice of a wife, and in so doing, might be tempted to obtain a wife from impure motives.<sup>58</sup> However, such an assumption ignores the fact that many marriages in the Greco-Roman world were arranged by someone other than the bride and groom.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, to understand Paul's injunction here as directed to the few men who were unmarried, looking for a wife, and

56. Collins, "The Unity of Paul's Paraenesis in 1 Thess. 4.3-8: 1 Cor. 7.1-7, a Significant Parallel," in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (ed. R. F. Collins; BETL 66; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984) 327; repr. from *NTS* 29 (1983). For a similar assessment, see M. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I-II, An die Philipper* (3d ed.; HNT 11; Tübingen: Mohr, 1937) 19-20; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 61. For a detailed review of the general nature of the paraenesis of 4:1-8, see the discussion given in the body of the main text below.

57. R. F. Hock, "God's Will at Thessalonica and Greco-Roman Asceticism," in *Asceticism and the New Testament* (ed. L. E. Vaage and V. L. Wimbush; New York: Routledge, 1999) 161. See also Best, *Thessalonians*, 15; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 20, 103; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 118; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 61. In an older and rather obscure view, J. H. Thayer suggests that "the words ἐν ἄγ. κ. τιμῇ are added to express completely the idea of marrying in contrast with the baseness of procuring a harlot as his 'vessel'— (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [New York: Harper, 1889] 363). In other words, Paul is advocating that the Thessalonian man procure for himself a "vessel" for the satisfaction of his sexual passion and that this be done through marriage ("in sanctification and honor") rather than through prostitution ("in lustful passion"). However, Thayer's view is vexed at a number of points: (1) the lexical evidence for this meaning of σκεῦος (i.e., a woman as a "sexual outlet") is not impressive; (2) it paints a depreciatory view of one's marriage partner as a sexual object, and this clashes with 1 Cor 7:3-4; Eph 5:21-33; and Col 3:18-19; and (3) it too conflicts with the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis of 1 Thess 4:1-8. For further evidence against both Baumert's view and Thayer's view, see the additional arguments against the first interpretive option that are given in the body of the main text below. These arguments also apply to Baumert and Thayer.

58. See McGehee, "Rejoinder," 84-85; cf. W. Klassen, "Foundations for Pauline Ethics as seen in I Thess 4:1-8," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1978* (SBLSP 14; 2 vols.; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) 2.167.

59. See A. A. Bell, Jr., *Exploring the New Testament World* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998) 230-31; Cicero *Att.* 5.4; *De or.* 3.133; Livy 38.57; Pliny *Ep.* 1.14.1-2; Plutarch *Ti. C. Gracch.* 4.1-3; Seneca (the Elder) *Controv.* 2.3.2; Tacitus *Agr.* 9.6; and possibly 1 Cor 7:36-38. However, Yarbrough provides contrary evidence that blunts the force of this argument

able to act independently "requires a tremendous focusing of Paul's discussion."<sup>60</sup> In other words, it suggests that Paul had in mind a rather limited segment within the church at Thessalonica. Yet in light of the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis of 4:1-8 this seems unlikely.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, if R. Bank's estimate that the average membership of a Pauline church was "around thirty to thirty-five people" is at all close, then even the very existence of such a select audience would appear to be questionable.<sup>62</sup>

(6) The use of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ in the genitive case makes little sense, for it literally means that each man is to get married but only to his own wife.<sup>63</sup> Technically, one does not acquire or marry *his own* wife but rather acquires a wife *for himself*. Thus, if τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι does in fact refer to marriage, the reflexive pronoun (ἑαυτοῦ) would be expected to be in the dative case rather than the genitive, and σκεῦος should probably be anarthrous.<sup>64</sup> This

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(*Gentiles*, 46-53; see also Klassen, "Foundations," 171-72). See also 1 Cor 7:8-9 (and possibly vv. 36-38), which seems to suggest that the decision to marry belonged to the couple involved. Lenski suggests that Paul's wording in 1 Thess 4:4 is consistent with the idea that the selection of a wife was not necessarily the sole prerogative of the unmarried man but was often a cooperative decision involving his family (*Thessalonians*, 311). Such a view seems consistent with much of the Greco-Roman evidence. See, e.g., S. Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 62-64; S. Treggiari, "Consent to Roman Marriage: Some Aspects of Law and Reality," *EMC* 26 (1982) 34-44. It may be that arranged marriages did not prevent an unmarried man from taking the initiative in acquiring a wife (see, e.g., Plutarch *Cat. Min.* 30.2-4) or that marriage and betrothal customs varied from one locality to the next or from one socioeconomic or ethnic group to another (cf. C. Osiek and D. L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World* [The Family, Religion, and Culture; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997] 62).

60. McGehee, "Rejoinder," 84; see also W. Vogel, "Εἰδέναι τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι: Zur Deutung von 1 Thess 4,3ff. im Zusammenhang der paulinischen Eheauffassung," *TBI* 13 (1934) 84.

61. For the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis, see nn. 38, 86, and pp. 54-56, 74-75.

62. R. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (rev. ed.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 35. Bank's estimate is for the "whole church" (cf. Rom 16:5 with 16:12; 1 Cor 14:23 with 16:19) not simply individual house churches within a city. J. Murphy-O'Connor increases this estimate to "around 50 persons as a base figure" (*St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* [2d ed.; GNS 6; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1990] 166). Cf. Acts 17:5-6, which may suggest that the church at Thessalonica met in Jason's house.

63. See Mason, "Thessalonians," 138; Vogel, "Deutung von 1 Thess," 83; and esp. 1 Cor 7:2a; Eph 5:28, 33, where τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα refers to one's current wife. Cf. Baumert, *Ehelosigkeit*, 22; G. D. Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1 in the *NIV*," *JETS* 23 (1980) 311; 1 Cor 7:2b, 3Z 38; 14:35.

64. See Baumert, *Ehelosigkeit*, 22 n. 51; *Woman and Man in Paul*, 33; Best, *Thessalonians*, 162; Mason, "Thessalonians," 138. Various English translations recognize this and rather consistently translate the phrase accordingly: "acquire a wife for himself." See Goodspeed, Moffatt, NAB<sup>2</sup>, NRSV<sup>mg</sup>, RSV.

is contrary to 1 Thess 4:4, where the definite article in conjunction with the genitive (τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος) seems to indicate that Paul has a specific individual in view: his own wife rather than merely *a wife*.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, these differences do not seem to be merely a function of English idiom, for the reflexive pronoun in the dative case along with an anarthrous noun are used repeatedly in the common LXX idiom "to take a wife for himself" (λαβεῖν ἑαυτῶ) γυναῖκα.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the alleged parallel in Ruth 4:10 (Ρυοθ . . . κέκτημαι ἑμαυτῶ εἰς γυναῖκα, "Ruth . . . I have acquired to be a wife for myself") also uses the reflexive pronoun in the dative case and γυνή without the article.<sup>67</sup> And finally, this idiom (κτάνομαι in the sense of "acquire" + the reflexive pronoun in the dative rather than the genitive case) seems to be used consistently throughout Biblical Greek (Ruth 4:8; Jer 13:1; 39:7, 25; Ezek 5:1; Sir 51:25).<sup>68</sup>

(7) This interpretation requires a rather abrupt and unwarranted shift in the paraenesis of 4:1-8.<sup>69</sup> The paraenesis of vv. 1-3 and vv. 7-8 appears to be addressed to the community as a whole—a position supported by a number of observations. (1) In general, Paul's

65. An alternate translation such as "acquire a wife of his own" would alter this meaning and would probably require an anarthrous use of σκεῦος, unlike 1 Thess 4:4. Cf. the anarthrous construction in Luke 2:39; 13:19; 19:13; 1 Thess 2:11; and see A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th ed.; Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 690.

66. See Gen 4:19; 6:2; 11:29; 12:19; 25:20; 28:2, 6; 36:2; Exod 6:20; Deut 21:11; 24:3, 4; 25:5; Judg 3:6; 19:1 [A]; Ruth 1:4; 1 Kgdms 25:39; 2 Kgdms 12:9; 3 Kgdms 5:14a; 2 Chr 11:18; 13:21; 24:3; Ezek 44:22; Hos 1:2; Tob 4:13; also *T. Levi* 9:9-10. Cf. Gen 21:21; 24:3, 4, 7, 37, 38, 40; 34:16, 21; 38:6; Exod 6:25; Judg 14:2; 1 Kgdms 25:40; 1 Chr 7:15; 2 Chr 24:3; Jer 36:6. While not using the reflexive pronoun, the texts in this latter series use either a noun or the personal pronoun, autos, in the dative. Judg 21:22 appears to be the only case in which a genitive pronoun is used in the idiom. Note that when γυνή is articular in the construction λαμβάνω + γυνή the expression means to take one's current wife for some purpose rather than to acquire a woman for a wife. See Gen 12:5; 19:15; 20:3; 31:17; 32:23; Lev 20:21; Deut 23:1; 25:7; 2 Kgdms 12:9, 11, 11; 20:3.

67. Cf. the alleged parallel Sir 32:24 [36], which also uses γυνή without the article.

68. The idiom also seems to hold for Josephus (see *Ant.* 1.18.2 §261; 19.1.15 §121; 19.1.18 §150; 19.2.3 §189) and Philo (see *Agr.* 88). We know of no case in which the genitive is used instead of the dative. 1 Cor 7:2 (τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω) is not an exception, since it uses the verb ἔχω, which is not used in the sense of "acquire a wife" but in the sense of "have sexually." Also Matt 1:20 (παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκα σου) and 1:24 (παρέλαβον τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ) are not parallel, for τὴν γυναῖκα functions as an object complement to Μαρίας in v. 20 and to an understood Μαρίαν or αὐτήν in v. 24 (i.e., "he took Mary/her as his wife").

69. See McGehee, "Rejoinder," 84-86; and cf. Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 55; P. Ellingworth and E. A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976) 79; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 121; H. Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament* (6 vols.; New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1858) 5.274; R. Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments* (HTKNTSup 1-2; Freiburg: Herder, 1986, 1988) 2.62; and n. 38 above.

paraenesis tends to be comprehensive, addressed to all who are reading his letter.<sup>70</sup> (2) The term ἀδελφοί in 4:1 refers to Christians generally.<sup>71</sup> (3) The λοιπὸν οὖν of 4:1, in looking back to the preceding section and especially to Paul's prayer for all of the Thessalonians in 3:11-13, marks a transition to a new section of the letter, which is also addressed to all members of the community. (4) Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his previous instruction (vv. 1-2, 6), which was undoubtedly directed to the whole community (cf. Acts 17:4). (5) The references in 4:1-8 to the Christian's duty are of a very general nature and appear quite inclusive: (a) "you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God," v. 1; (b) "this is the will of God, your sanctification," v. 3; and (c) "God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification," v. 7.<sup>72</sup> (6) The reception of the Holy Spirit (v. 8) applies to the entire believing community. Yet, contrary to this evidence, the first major interpretive option (i.e., "to acquire a wife") argues that ἕκαστον ὑμῶν in v. 4 refers exclusively to the unmarried males. Such an abrupt shift is difficult to explain<sup>73</sup> and, apart from assuming the results of this first

70. See McGehee, "Rejoinder," 85. 1 Thess 5:27 ("I adjure you . . . have this letter read to all the brothers" [πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς]) seems to confirm this for 1 Thessalonians in particular. In the Pastoral Epistles, paraenesis directed towards specific groups within the larger community is common, but the group is almost always specifically identified (see 1 Tim 2:8, 9-15; 3:1-7, 8-10, 11, 12-13; 5:3-10, 11-15, 16, 17-20; 6:1-2, 3-5, 17-1.9; Titus 1:5-9; 2:2, 3-5, 6, 9-10; and also Rom 14:1-15:13; 1 Cor 7:2, 8, 10, 12, 25, 39-40; Eph 5:22-6:9; Phil 4:2-3; Col 3:18-4:1; 2 Thess 3:12).

71. See BAGD, 16; J. Beutler, "ἀδελφός," *EDNT* 1.30; Fee, *Corinthians*, 52 n. 22; cf. 1 Thess 1:4; 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:2, 7; 4:1, 6, 10 (bis), 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27.

72. R. F. Collins notes that "a consensus within contemporary exegesis has been reached . . . that the first six verses of 1 Thess. 4 contain general ethical instruction" ("Unity," 327; cf. idem, "Will of God," 307-8).

73. Lightfoot's suggestion that it is not a "valid argument . . . that the Apostle's precept would apply to men only: for the corresponding obligation on the part of the woman is inferentially implied in it" is not quite to the point, for it only indicates that such an abrupt shift is possible in that the woman might be implied in the command (*Notes*, 55). It does not explain why Paul now chooses to address only men, particularly unmarried men. Marshall's suggestion that "he writes in terms of the attitudes of the husbands, possibly because they were more liable to temptation" is perhaps better (*Thessalonians*, 108). Such a view, though possible, is speculative nonetheless. Moreover, several factors, besides textual considerations in the immediate context, weigh against restricting Paul's audience to unmarried men (or men in general) only. First, Paul is quite able and willing to direct instruction concerning marriage specifically to women (1 Cor 7:39-40; 1 Tim 5:14). Second, in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul presents a balanced treatment for men and women, as well as for the married and single, by explicitly addressing each group in parallel clauses. (In 7:36-38, 39-40 Paul addresses only one group, but see the next point.) Third, when Paul wants to restrict his audience to a specific group within the church, he usually identifies them explicitly (see the references in n. 70 above). Fourth, when Paul warns against πορνεία elsewhere (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 7:2-9; 10:8; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5), he addresses the whole community, both male

interpretation, there is little textual basis for it.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the phrase "each of you" (ἐκαστον ὑμῶν) in v. 4 appears to tie vv. 4-5 to the rest of the section (see ὑμᾶς in vv. 1 [bis], 3, 8; ὑμῖν in vv. 2, 6; and ὑμῶν in v. 3), and vv. 3-6 form a single sentence, which appears to be bound together by the explanatory γάρ in v. 7 and tied to vv. 1-2 by the explanatory γάρ in v. 3.<sup>75</sup> All of this suggests that the same audience is intended throughout 4:1-8. Moreover, there is the inherent improbability of moving from general paraenesis (vv. 1-3) to specific advice (vv. 4-6) and back to general paraenesis (vv. 7-8) in the space of a few short lines.<sup>76</sup>

#### INTERPRETATION TWO:

#### "LIVE WITH YOUR WIFE IN A HOLY AND HONORABLE WAY"

The second interpretation, that "each one of you know how to live with your wife in a holy and honorable way," has a great deal in common with the first interpretation, but it differs in one important aspect. While the first interpretation understands κτάομαι to have ingressive force ("to acquire," "to obtain"), this second interpretation gives it durative force: "to possess," "to keep," and in combination

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and female (in the case of 1 Cor 6:12-20, only the man is addressed, since πορνεία refers to prostitution). For further discussion of this final point, see Lührmann, "The Beginnings," 245-46.

74. Witherington suggests that "the context limits the meaning of ἐκαστος to the men in Paul's audience" (*Women*, 66). However, his assertion is not only unsubstantiated but also overlooks textual data to the contrary, as outlined in the text above. The pronoun αὐτοῦ ("his") in v. 6 might suggest that Paul is now addressing only men. However, αὐτοῦ is probably conventional language, as the implied singular subject of v. 6, τινὰ ὑμῶν, suggests (see Frame, *Thessalonians*, 151; Lightfoot, *Notes*, 56). That conventional language is in view seems highly likely for two additional reasons: (1) the other indefinite subject, ὁ ἄθετῶν in v. 8a, appears to include both men and women (see v. 7 and v. 8b); and (2) 2 Thess 3:14-15 uses a construction (τις . . . αὐτῶ . . . ἀδελφόν) similar to v. 6 and appears to include men and women.

75. The γάρ clause of v. 7 appears to form an inclusio with v. 3 (note the repetition of Ccytamik, the parallel concepts πορνεία and ἀκαθαρσία, and the parallel ideas—the will of God and the call of God [cf. Wis 11:25]). See also Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 81; C. H. Griblin, *In Hope of God's Glory: Pauline Theological Perspectives* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) 18; C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians* (2d ed.; London: Pickering & Inglis, 1929) 120. Thus the reach of the explanatory γάρ in v. 7 extends back to v. 3 to explain why one is "to abstain from πορνεία" (v. 3b). See Best, *Thessalonians*, 167; Hogg and Vine, *Thessalonians*, 119; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 112-13; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 125 n. 31; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 189, 196.

76. See McGehee, "Rejoinder," 85. McGehee also points out that if S. K. Stowers is correct in distinguishing paraenesis (general, universal advice) from *symbolē* (specific advice), it seems highly irregular to switch back and forth between genres in the span of such a short section (Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* [LEC 5; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986] 91-112).

with σκεῦος "to live with," in which "live" has sexual overtones. In other words, σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι does not refer to acquiring a wife but to sexual behavior within marriage.<sup>77</sup> The expression does not simply mean "to reside/live with" in a very general sense, for in that case there is little reason for Paul to use the unusual idiom σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the use of the term πορνεία (cf. ἀκαθαρσία in v. 7) and the expression πάθει ἐπιθυμίας suggest that σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι refers to the sexual relationship.<sup>79</sup> Thus, 1 Thess 4:4 encourages an honorable approach to sexual intercourse with one's wife and the avoidance of "lustful passion" within that relationship.<sup>80</sup>

Normally in Classical Greek, κτᾶσθαι has this durative sense only in the perfect and pluperfect tenses,<sup>81</sup> but to judge from the papyri and several other texts it would seem that "this meaning was no longer confined to the perfect"<sup>82</sup> but was extended to other tenses including the present, as in 1 Thess 4:4. For example, P.Oxy. 2.259.6 (23 CE) indicates that a certain Theon swears on oath that he "has" (or "possesses") thirty days (κτήσασθαι ἡμ[έ]ρας τριάκοντα) in which

77. See Best, *Thessalonians*, 162; and also Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 108; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 366; Schlier, *Der Apostel*, 66. Collins considers v. 4 "an exhortation on the proper use of sexual relationships within marriage" ("Will of God," 313-14). However, he is not entirely consistent in understanding the verb as durative (cf. "Will of God," 313-14; "Unity," 333, 335).

78. If Paul had wanted to comment on the general treatment of a wife, we should probably expect a more general expression. See, e.g., Paul's use of οἰκέω in 1 Cor 7:12-13 and also 1 Pet 3:7: "live with [συνοικούντες] your wives in an understanding way . . . granting her honor [τιμῆν]." On συνοικέω in 1 Pet 3:7, see Grudem, *Peter*, 142.

79. Vogel suggests that κτᾶσθαι in 1 Thess 4:4 means to "win someone for oneself" and that it is used here of making one's wife favorably disposed to sexual intercourse ("Deutung von 1 Thess," 84). Vogel cites Xenophon *Cyr.* 8.2.10; Plutarch *Vit. Pomp.* 25.4; 44.2 as parallel. See also LSJ, 1001; R. L. Thomas, "Thessalonians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (12 vols.; ed. F. E. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-92) 11.271.

80. Cf. the antierotic tradition within the ancient world and its suspicion of sexual passion even within marriage. For this concern over passion, see A. C. van Geytenbeek, *Musonius Rufus and Greek Diatribe* (Wijssgerige Teksten En Studies; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1963) 72-73; I. Heinemann, *Philons griechische and jüdische Bildung: Kulturvergleichende Untersuchungen zu Philons Darstellung der jüdische Gesetze* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1962) 261-77; and cf. Epictet us *Diatr.* 1.18.11; Charondas *Prooemia* 62.30-33 (see H. Thesleff [ed.], *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* [Acta Academiae Aboensis 30/1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965] 62); Iamblichus *VP* 31.210; Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.24 §199; *J.W.* 2.8.13 §161; Lucretius *De rerum natura* 4.1030-1287; M. Aurelius *Med.* 1.17.6; Musonius Rufus frg. 12, lines 4-12; Ocellus Lucanus 44-45; Philo *Abr.* 137; *Ios.* 43; *Spec.* 3.9, 34-36, 113; *Mos.* 1.28; Plutarch *Mor.* 144E-145A; Pseudo-Phocylides 189, 193-94; Seneca *Ep.* 74.2; *T. Iss.* 2:3; Tob 8:5-8.

81. See BAGD, 455; LSJ, 1001.

82. Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 49. Elgvin maintains that the evidence from the papyri does not allow a sharp distinction to be made between the use of the present and the perfect tense in profane Greek ("To Master His Own Vessel," 611 n. 24).

to return the man whom he has bailed out of prison. Josephus (*Ant.* 19.1.13 §93) refers to exotic birds that are "prized by their possessors [τοῖς κτωμενοῖς] for their rarity." Philo (*Sobr.* 39), in the conclusion to his discussion on how the misfortunes of life often prevent the qualities of the virtuous from being manifested, writes, "These, then possess [ἐκτήσαντο] their good qualities, as it were in chains and duration." Sir 6:4 refers to evil passion that destroys "anyone who harbors [κτησόμενον] it." Finally, the LXX takes *בָּעַל יָנֵנוּ* ("have ruled over us") in Isa 26:13 as an imperative and translates it κτήσαι ἡμᾶς, which has a durative sense, "rule over us."<sup>83</sup>

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*Excursus 1: The Durative Force of Nonperfect Forms of κτάομαι*

Other examples of the durative sense of nonperfect forms of κτάομαι include the following texts.

1. Prov 1:14: "Let us all have [κτησώμεθα] a common purse, and let us have [γενηθήτω] one pouch." Isa 1:3: "The ox knows his owner [κτησόμενον]." See also Ps 138:13; Isa 57:13; Jer 16:19; Ezek 8:3; Sir 22:23; J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992-96) 2.269; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 366.
2. P. Tebt. 1.5.241-43 (118 BCE): "Nor shall any other persons take possession of or use the tools required for cloth-weaving or byssus-manufacture [μηδ' ἄλλους κτάσθαι μηδε χρῆσθαι τοῖς τε λινυθαντικοῖς καὶ βυσσαυρικοῖς ἐργαλείοις]." Rigaux maintains that the fundamental idea of κτάσθαι here is durative (*Thessaloniciens*, 505).
3. Aesop *Fab.* 289 (Teubner; Budé: 325): "except for this trumpet, I possess nothing [πλὴν γὰρ τοῦ χαλκοῦ τούτου οὐδὲν ἄλλο κτώματι]." Aesop lived in the early 6th century BCE. The date of the text is uncertain but probably originates no later than the third century CE and may well go back into the pre-Christian era. See È. Chambry, *Ésope Fables* (Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1927) xliv–xlvi; S. A. Handford, *Fables of Aesop* (rev. ed.; New York: Penguin, 1964) xviii–xix; B. E. Perry, *Studies in the Text History of the Life and Fables of Aesop* (American Philological Association

83. See Elgvin, *ibid.*, 613; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 366. Baumert suggests that κτήσαι has an ingressive sense: "begin your reign over us" ("Brautwerbung," 328). However, the request seems to include a durative element: "take possession of us," "reestablish and continue your rule over us."

Monograph Series; Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Press, 1936; reprint, Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981) 156.

4. Philo *Mos.* 1.160: "Some who . . . possess [κτησόμενοι] a soul kindly and propitious and free from all viciousness." See also *Ebr.* 167; *Mut.* 164; *Virt.* 98, and possibly *Abr.* 34, 37; *Cher.* 19; *Agr.* 150; *Flacc.* 130; *Hypoth.* 11.4; *Ios.* 37; *Legat.* 155; *Leg.* 1.77; 3.193; *Mos.* 1.152, 159; *Mut.* 80, 183; *Praem.* 27, 59; *Her.* 110; *Prob.* 149; *Spec.* 2.168.
5. Luke 18:12 (possibly): "I give tithes of all that I possess [κτώμαι]." See LSJ, 1001. Luke 21:19 (possibly): "By your perseverance you will preserve [κτήσεσθε] I your lives," or "By your patience possess [κτήσασθε] your souls." See NKIV.
6. Josephus *Ant.* 5.1.16 §54: "they were to have possession [κτήσασθαι] of the land of Canaan bestowed upon them." The translation is from W. Whiston, *The Works of Josephus* (rev. ed.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987). The LCL translation is similar, also understanding κτήσασθαι in the sense of "possession." See also *Ant.* 4.1.1 §5; 4.4.3 §67; 4.6.2 §102; 4.7.4 §173; 4.8.2 §§182, 189, 190; 4.8.5 §199; 4.8.8 §205; 4.8.22 §241; 5.1.13 §39; 5.1.25 §93; 7.5.5 §114; 17.10.9 §287; 18.6.8 §207; 19.2.1 §162; 19.2.2 §177; 19.3.2 §225; 19.4.3 §248.

Maurer claims that "Paul, who spoke both Hebrew and Greek, would translate the Hebrew . . . בָּעַל אִשָּׁה ('to possess a woman sexually') κτᾶσθαι γυναῖκα, thus imparting a durative sense to the Greek phrase" ("σκεῦος," 366). But Maurer's claim is doubtful, for it misrepresents the evidence at several points: (1) בָּעַל is more commonly translated συνοικέω (or συνοικίζω), "to live together in wedlock" (9x, Gen 20:3; Deut 21:13; 22:22; 24:1; Prov 30:23 [σ']; Isa 62:4 [B], 5; Sir 25:8; 42:10) than by κτᾶσθαι (1x, Isa 26:13, which does not even refer to sexual intercourse or marriage; the participial form of κτᾶσθαι does translate the noun form of בָּעַל twice, Prov 16:22; Sir 6:4, neither of which refers to sexual intercourse or marriage). (2) κτᾶσθαι normally translates the Hebrew verb קָנָה, "to acquire," rather than בָּעַל. About 68 of the approximately 90 occurrences of κτᾶσθαι found in the LXX with a Hebrew *Vorlage* translate the verb קָנָה. Two of these 90 occurrences translate related noun forms (Gen 36:6; Lev 27:22). (3) In Ruth 4:5, 10 and Sir 36:24, γυναῖκα κτᾶσθαι translates a Hebrew expression that uses the verb קָנָה rather than בָּעַל. For similar criticisms of Maurer, see Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 612-13; Yarbrough, *Gentiles*, 70-71. Légasse, on the other hand, thinks that Paul intended the durative sense of the perfect tense but inadvertently used the present tense under the

influence of ἀπέχεσθαι and εἰδέναι in vv. 3-4 ("Vas suum possidere," 113-14).

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This second interpretation has several distinct advantages over the first one: (1) It makes better sense of the adverbial modifier "not in lustful passion," which then means that one is not to live with a wife "in lustful passion."<sup>84</sup> (2) It accords naturally with the genitive case of the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ—one is to live with "his own" wife in holiness and honor. (3) Since it no longer refers to the acquisition of a wife, this interpretation overcomes the problem of Paul's using the verb κτάομαι rather than the usual term λαμβάνω to describe such an "acquisition."<sup>85</sup>

Despite its advantages, however, the second interpretation still suffers from some of the same objections that hampered the first one: (1) The evidence for Paul's use of σκεῦος as a metaphor for "wife" is not persuasive. (2) Restricting the audience in vv. 4-5 to married males requires an abrupt shift in the paraenesis of 1 Thess 4:1-8, which seems to be addressed to the community as a whole and to have the same audience intended throughout the paragraph.<sup>86</sup>

84. But see McGehee ("Rejoinder," 88), who questions the implications that this phrase has for Christian marriage. According to McGehee, "1 Thess 4:4 would seem to be arguing for celibacy (or sexual relations without passion) within marriage." Cf. D. E. H. Whiteley, *Thessalonians in the Revised Standard Version* (New Clarendon Bible; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 61. We will discuss this issue in the body of the main text below.

85. See the discussion on p. 46 above. Also, by encouraging an honorable approach to sexual intercourse with one's wife, this interpretation accords well with 1 Cor 7:2.

86. Those who want to restrict the audience of vv. 4-5 to only married males must account not only for these features, but they must also explain why Paul, in a context concerning πορνεία, singles out married males for special mention while ignoring bachelors, widowers, and women (cf. Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 506). Of these two factors, Collins addresses only the latter and suggests that because of his Jewish background it is "highly unlikely that Paul would have construed his readership in other than the married state" ("Will of God," 314-15; see also "Unity," 331-32; Best, *Thessalonians*, 162). But this ignores several factors: (1) Paul's preference for celibacy (1 Cor 7:8-9; 25-40); (2) the fact that women are ignored altogether; and (3) the fact that the number of bachelors and widowers may have been considerable, given the mortality rate of the ancient world and the fact that marriage had fallen into such disfavor that Augustus was forced in 18 BCE and again in 9 CE to pass legislation encouraging marriage. But this legislation, which was an attempt "to restore the dignity of marriage" and "to check celibacy," had limited success. See CAH 10.448-56; H. Preisker, *Christentum und Ehe in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1927) 21, 63-66. In another attempt to deal with this difficulty, Witherington suggests that in addressing married men Paul's point is that every man is to know how to live with a wife even if for some this advice no longer, or does not yet, or never will apply (*Women*, 66).

More troubling, however, are two additional objections that specifically apply to this second interpretation:

(1) The phrase "not in lustful passion" (μὴ ἐν πόθει ἐπιθυμίας) appears to be the kind of qualification that Paul would apply to sexual relationships outside marriage, not to the sexual relationship within marriage.<sup>87</sup> This assessment seems to be borne out by at least four observations: (1) Although Paul does not applaud sexual passion, he certainly never condemns it within marriage. In fact, he appears to view sexual passion as an important and normal aspect of marriage

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This does not appear to be an acceptable solution, however, for one would expect an anarthrous use of σκεῦος rather than the definite τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος. In other words, for those to whom the advice does not apply (e.g., the celibate), it is not appropriate to speak of "his own wife," but rather "a" potential wife. Witherington also fails to explain why it is necessary for all men, including even the celibate, to know how to live with a wife. Furthermore, like Collins, he fails to account for the unity of the paraenesis, as well as for Paul's ignoring of a significant portion of the community (i.e., women) in a context that concerns sexual immorality.

87. Contra Fredrickson, who sees a parallel between Paul and the antierotic tradition of the Greco-Roman world (and its condemnation of sexual passion even within marriage) and suggests that "Paul appropriates with scarcely any modification this philosophic condemnation of erotic love along with its supporting theory of sexual passion" ("Passionless Sex," 1). Consequently, he maintains that Paul argues for honorable, i.e., passionless sex within marriage (so also D. B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995] 212-17). Although Paul shares a number of terms with this philosophical tradition, he is not afraid to break with contemporary Greco-Roman views. For example, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, he does not argue that the primary function of sexual intercourse is procreation. See D. A. deSilva, "Paul and the Stoa: A Comparison," *JETS* 38 (1995) 549-64; R. B. Ward, "Munsonius and Paul on Marriage," *NTS* 36 (1990) 285-87; cf. 1 Cor 7:2-5, 36. The concept of passionless sex is a case in point, for it does not seem to represent his view concerning marriage (see n. 88 below). It seems that Fredrickson has confused Paul's understanding of illicit sexual passion with his understanding of sexual passion within marriage. Such a distinction seems to be hinted at in Rom 1:26-27. The parallel clauses introduced by γάρ seem to indicate that it is illicit sexual passion that is censured by Paul as dishonorable (ατιμίας). 1 Thess 4:5 is similar. It is not desire per se but the uncontrolled nature of the desire, as indicated by the modifier ἐπιθυμίας, that seems to be condemned. See J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 696 n. 105. Thus L. W. Countryman seems to be more consistent with the Pauline evidence concerning sexual passion within marriage when he indicates that "Paul was willing . . . to accept the legitimacy of sexual desire and its appropriate satisfaction" (*Dirt Greed & Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 113). Similarly, J. D. G. Dunn concludes that "Paul does not indict all human, including sexual, desire as unclean" (*Romans* [WBC 38; 2 vols.; Dallas: Word, 1993] 1.63). See also D. L. Carlidge, who suggests that Paul's sexual ethic is not driven by an antieroticism but by the tension between the eschatological "already," which envisions celibacy, and the "not yet," which recognizes sexual passion and marriage ("1 Corinthians 7 as a Foundation for a Christian Sex Ethic," *JR* 55 [1974] 224-27).

(1 Cor 7:2-5, 9, 36-37).<sup>88</sup> (2) Paul nowhere else applies this kind of language to the marriage relationship. In fact, he uses another set of terms to describe sexual passion when he refers to marriage in the immediate context: ἀκρασία (1 Cor 7:5), πυρόω (1 Cor 7:9), ὑπέρακμος (1 Cor 7:36), θέλημα (1 Cor 7:37), and καταστηρνιάω (1 Tim 5:11). (3) Elsewhere Paul applies the terminology found in 1 Thess 4:4 to situations that seem to envision something other than sexual desire within marriage. In other words, the phrase "not in lustful passion [πάθει ἐπιθυμίας] like the Gentiles" is reminiscent of the wording found in numerous passages that seem to describe immoral behavior that falls outside the scope of marriage (Rom 13:12-14; Gal 5:16-24, esp. v. 24; Col 3:5-7; 2 Tim 2:22; 3:6; and esp. 1 Pet 4:2-3, which explicitly mentions the Gentiles). Especially significant is Rom 1:24-26, which uses the three key terms found in 1 Thess 4:4-7 (πάθος, ἐπιθυμία, and ἀκαθαρσία) to describe sexual misconduct that clearly falls outside the scope of sexual desire within marriage. (4) Comparing (καθάπερ) the "lustful passion" that is forbidden a husband to the behavior of the Gentiles, who were notorious for fornication, prostitution, and pederasty,<sup>89</sup> suggests that a broader range of transgres-

88. See McGehee ("Rejoinder," 86 n. 11), whose discussion forms the basis of this observation. According to Dunn, "The implication of 1 Cor 7:5, 9a, and 36 is rather that sexual desire in marriage is entirely natural and proper" (*The Theology of Paul*, 696 n. 105). Furthermore, the fact that temporary abstinence is granted by Paul as a *concession* (1 Cor 7:5-6) seems to reflect not merely the dangers of πορνεία (v. 2) but also the fact that sexual passion within marriage is normal and proper. Similarly, D. F. Wright, commenting on 1 Cor 7:2, indicates, "The implication is clear: the satisfying of sexual desires is not wrong, and marriage is its appointed setting" ("Sexuality, Sexual Ethics," *DPL*, 873). See also the similar assessment by J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-65) 1.48.

89. Although the standards of sexual morality in the Greco-Roman world varied and were at times quite commendable (see, e.g., Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 7.133-37, 151; Epictetus *Diatr.* 2.4.2-11; Musonius Rufus frgs. 12-14), sexual immorality was nevertheless common and the moral standards generally quite low. For an overview of sexual standards in the Greco-Roman world, see Bell, *Exploring the New Testament World*, 221-56; E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 63-64, 70-71, 235. For an overview of sexual immorality in Thessalonica in particular, see J. A. D. Weima, "'How You Must Walk to Please God': Holiness and Discipleship in 1 Thessalonians," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. R. N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 104-6. W. Meeks suggests that "the assertion that the 'gentiles' indulge in 'the passion of lust' is not an objective description of pagan society, but another example of the labeling of outsiders as vicious" (*The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983] 101). However, even though Paul's description of the Gentiles may be a bit stereotyped, it does not follow that it is "not an objective description." What is more important in this case, however, is the fact that such language would still call to mind sexual behavior that falls beyond the pale of dishonorable marital intercourse.

sions is in view than simply marital intercourse that is lustful or dishonorable.

(2) The structure of the passage, specifically the concern over πορνεία in v. 3b and sexual transgression against a "brother" (ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν . . . ἀδελφόν) in v. 6,<sup>90</sup> does not lead one to expect an injunction concerning an honorable approach to *marital* intercourse but rather a prohibition of sexual relationships outside marriage.<sup>91</sup> In other words, a command that intercourse within marriage be honorable would seem to have little connection with concerns over illicit sex or wronging a fellow Christian sexually.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, if the infinitival clause εἰδέναι . . . τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι κτλ. in v. 4 explains ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας (v. 3b), as many understand, then Paul, according to this view, applies the term πορνεία to marital intercourse that is characterized by lustful passion.<sup>93</sup>

90. Verse 6 is probably a reference to sexual sin (NAB<sup>2</sup>, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NRSV, REB, TEV) rather than a new ethical issue concerning business matters, lawsuits, or the like (NEB<sup>mg</sup>; RSV<sup>mg</sup>). For a defense of this position and an overview of the debate, see Collins, "Unity," 329, 333-35; "Will of God," 317-19; Yarbrough, *Gentiles*, 73-76; and also Baumert, "Brautwerbung," 329-32; Best, *Thessalonians*, 163-66; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 84-85; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 110--12; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 509-10; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 154-55; Witherington, *Women*, 64-65.

91. Marshall considers this a "decisive reason" for exploring other interpretive options (*Thessalonians*, 108). See also Baumert, "Brautwerbung," 332; Légasse, "Vas suum possidere," 109-10; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 198; Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 506; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 152.

92. It could of course be countered that the topic in v. 6 has changed and no longer concerns sexual morality, but this is unlikely. See Bassler, "Σκεῦος," 64, and in v. 6 note ἐν τῷ πράγματι ("in this matter") with its anaphoric article (which persists even after the preposition). Also see n. 90 above. The "brother" in v. 6 could be one's own wife, but if that were the case, one would not expect such a general designation. The term ἀδελφός probably refers to a member of the Christian community rather than simply a "neighbor" in the wider sense. See, e.g., Collins, "Will of God," 319 n. 117; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 153; T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKKNT 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986) 162-63; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 50; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 188; Witherington, *Women*, 251 n. 237; cf. 1 Cor 6:8; 1 Thess 2:10; 3:12; 4:12; and the use of ἀδελφός in 1 Thess 4:1, 10.

93. Collins suggests that the logic of the passage is as follows: avoid πορνεία (v. 3)—that is, respect your wife (vv. 4-5) and your brother's wife (v. 6) ("Will of God," 316; see also Witherington, *Women*, 67). Such a view is possible but seems unlikely not only because of the reasons cited in the text above but also because the admonition for an honorable approach to marital intercourse as a means of fulfilling the command to avoid πορνεία would be of very limited applicability (in how many marriages was there a dishonorable/lustful approach to marital intercourse?). The logic of the passage accords much better with the first interpretive option: avoid πορνεία (v. 3) by taking a wife (vv. 4-5) and avoiding your brother's wife (v. 6); or the third interpretive option: avoid πορνεία (v. 3)—that is, control your own body in holiness (vv. 4-5) and avoid sexual offenses (v. 6).

However, such a classification is unparalleled in Paul and the rest of the NT, as well as the LXX and other Jewish writings of the Second Temple period.<sup>94</sup> And it is doubtful whether Paul would ever classify marital intercourse under the heading of πορνεία<sup>95</sup>—a point that seems confirmed by 1 Cor 7:2, in that (1) the contrast between πορνεία and marital intercourse suggests that Paul understood πορνεία as sexual intercourse occurring outside the marriage relationship,<sup>96</sup> and (2) the injunction "let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" suggests that Paul views marital intercourse as a prophylaxis against πορνεία.<sup>97</sup>

### INTERPRETATION THREE: "CONTROL YOUR OWN BODY IN HOLINESS AND HONOR"

The third interpretation, that "each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor," is similar to the second interpretation in understanding κτάομαι as having durative force ("to possess," "to control")<sup>98</sup> but differs dramatically from the first two

94. G. Fitzer, "πορνεία," *EDNT* 3.137-39; F. Hauck and S. Schulz, "πόρνη κτλ.," *TDNT* 6.584-95; J. Jensen, "Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication? A Critique of Bruce Malina," *NovT* 20 (1978) 161-84; B. Malina, "Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication?" *NovT* 14 (1972) 10-17; H. Reisser, "πορνεύω" *NIDNTT* 1.497-501. There is some evidence from later rabbinic usage that the term πορνεία could be applied to marital intercourse. See Hauck and Schulz, "πόρνη κτλ.," 589-90 and esp. *t. Yebam.* 6.8-9. However, a parallel to the kind of situation suggested for 1 Thess 4:4 seems to be lacking.

95. Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul*, 161; idem, "Brautwerbung," 332; Vogel, "Deutung von 1 Thess.," 84.

96. See Jensen, "*Porneia*," 182. The same line of thinking seems to lie behind 1 Cor 7:9, 36-38.

97. See Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 101. A similar line of thought is found in Tob 4:12; *T. Levi* 9:9-10; *b. Qidd.* 29b; *b. Yebam.* 63b.

98. See Best, *Thessalonians*, 162-63; Hiebert, *Thessalonians*, 181; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 365; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 49; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 505. Moulton and Milligan take the present infinitive κτᾶσθαι ingressively and understand this in the sense of "gradually obtain the complete mastery of the body" (MM, 362). See also Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 109; Olshausen, *Commentary*, 5.273-74. But as C. A. Auberlen and C. J. Riggensbach note, the adverbial μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας is not adapted to such a meaning for κτάομαι ("The Two Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians," in *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* [NT in 10 vols.; ed. J. P. Lange and P. Schaff; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.] 8.62). See also Lightfoot, *Notes*, 54; Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 109; and cf. n. 49 above concerning Jowett. Moreover, as Légasse points out, such a meaning for κτάομαι is without precedent, and we should probably expect κατακυριεύω, or δουλαγωγώ (see 1 Cor 9:27) if this were the intended meaning ("Vas suum possidere," 113). Williams follows MM in understanding κτάομαι ingressively but avoids the criticism of Auberlen and Riggensbach, as well as Légasse, by defining κτάομαι "to be in the process of gaining possession, i.e., control" (*Thessalonians*, 73). Cf. P. Tebt. 1.5.241-43: "take possession of [κτᾶσθαι] . . . tools"; Josephus *Ant.* 4.1.1. §5: "to take possession

interpretations in taking σκεῦος as a reference to the human body. According to this interpretation, 1 Thess 4:4 encourages self-control with regard to sexual sin and provides little, if any, instruction focused specifically on the marriage relationship.

This interpretation is supported by several important arguments:

(1) There is sufficient evidence, as we have seen, to show that the durative sense of κτάομαι was not confined exclusively to the perfect or pluperfect tenses but was extended to other tenses, including the present, as in 1 Thess 4:4.

(2) There are numerous biblical and extrabiblical parallels to the figurative use of σκεῦος for the "body." In Barn. 7.3, for example, the body of the Lord is called "the vessel of his spirit" (τὸ σκεῦος τοῦ πνεύματος), and in 21.8 the Christian's body is referred to as the "good vessel" (καλὸν σκεῦος).<sup>99</sup> In 2 Cor 4:7, Paul himself speaks of having

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of [κτήσασθαι] that land"; 4.4.3 §67: "they should gain the possession of [κτησαμένους] the land"; *Ant.* 19.2.1 §162: "They saw that it was out of the question for a democracy to control [κτήσασθαι] such a mighty realm." See also Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 83; M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (5th ed.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996) 618; and esp. Auberlen and Riggenbach, "Thessalonians," 62 note‡. It seems possible, then (pace Légasse, 113; Witherington, *Women*, 67), to arrive at the meaning "to take possession of" or "to control" by understanding κτάομαι either ingressively or duratively. Thus, as Elgvin notes, "The debate over ingressive vs. durative senses of κτάσθαι might not be so crucial as claimed by a number of scholars" ("To Master His Own Vessel," 613). Similarly, both C. J. Ellicott and B. Rigaux call attention to the difficulty of distinguishing between the ingressive and durative sense of κτάομαι (Ellicott, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians* [4th ed.; London: Longman, Green, 1880] 52; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 505).

99. Note that τὴν σάρκα μου in *Barn.* 7.5 parallels to τὸ σκεῦος τοῦ πνεύματος in v. 3. For additional examples of the use of σκεῦος for the body, see *Barn.* 11.9; *Herm. Mand.* 5.1.2 (33.2); cf. 5.2.5 (34.5); 11.13 (43.13). In the *Apoc. Mos.* 31.4, Adam refers to his body as God's "own vessel [σκεῦος] which he formed." A Christian magical prayer, which cannot be dated with precision, also equates σκεῦος with the body: "I adjure you to come out from this vessel [σκεύους] and be parted from his members [μελῶν] and do not be concealed in any member [μέλει] of his body [σώματος]" (F. Pradel, *Griechische und suditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* [Religionsgeschichtliche Versuch und Vorarbeiten 3/3; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1907] 9, lines 11-13). The *Apoc. Sedr.* (11:2, 6-7) clearly uses σκεῦος for "body": "O hands . . . through which the body [σκεῦος] is fed" (v. 2). However, its date (second to fifth century CE) is noticeably late. In Latin, Seneca refers to the body (*corpus*) as a "vessel [*vas*] that the slightest shaking, the slightest toss will break" (*Marc.* 11.3). See also 4 Ezra 4:11; 7:88; cf. 7:100. For rabbinic parallels that refer to the body as a "vessel," see n. 25 above. Furthermore, the idea that the physical body (often σῶμα or σάρξ) is a vessel (usually ἀγγεῖον) that serves as a container for the mind or the soul was coming into general use around this time. See LSJ, 1607; and, e.g., Cicero *Tusc.* 1.22.52; *Corpus Hermeticum* 10.17; Dan 7:15 (θ'); Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 12.59; 4 Ezra 7:88, 100; Ign. *Smyrn.* 5.2; Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 3.440-44, 554-57, 790-93; 5.137; Marcus Aurelius *Med.* 3.3; 4.41; 7.68; 8.27; 9.3; 10.38; 11.3; 12.1-3; Philo *Det.* 170; *Migr.* 193, 197; *Post.* 137; *Somn.* 1.26; *T. Ab.* B 14.6; Wis 9:15.

"this treasure in earthen vessels" (ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν)—a reference clearly focused on the corporeal aspect of Paul and his colleagues.<sup>100</sup> He also repeatedly uses σκεῦος in Rom 9:20-23 to refer to human beings as he employs imagery that highlights the corporeal aspect of humanity—the figure of God as the potter and humankind as clay (πηλός, v. 21) vessels made by his hands.<sup>101</sup> And in 2 Tim 2:21 he refers to the person who cleanses himself or herself from impurity as a "vessel for honor" (σκεῦος εἰς τιμὴν). Although σκεῦος in this case refers to the whole person and not specifically to the body, it does include the physical body and is not a reference to a wife.<sup>102</sup> The LXX also provides an important parallel for the use of σκεῦος in a context that concerns sexual intercourse. In 1 Sam 21:4 (MT v. 5), Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, answers David's request for provisions by indicating that he has "only holy bread—provided that the young men have kept themselves from women." David in turn (v. 5) assures the priest that "the vessels [כֵּלִים] of the young men are holy." Here כֵּלִים appears to refer specifically to the sexual organs of David's companions.<sup>103</sup> And

100. If the reference here is not solely corporeal, it certainly highlights the corporeal. This is borne out by the adjective ὄστράκινος; and by the use of σῶμα in 4:10; 5:6, 8; θνητὴ σὰρξ in 4:11; ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος in 4:16; and ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία in 5:1 (cf. 5:4). See also BAGD, 754.2; E. Plümacher, "σκεῦος," *EDNT* 3.250-51; J. Dupont, ΣΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ: *L'union avec le Christ suivant Saint Paul* (Bruges: L'Abbaye de Saint-Andre, 1952) 122-23; M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994) 1.323.

101. For this imagery, see Job 10:9; 38:14; Ps 2:9; Isa 29:16; 45:9-10; 64:7; Jer 18:1-6; Lam 4:2; Sir 33:10-13; cf. 1QS 11:21-22; 1QHa 9:21; 11:23-24; 12:9, 29; and esp. *T. Naph.* 2:2: "Just as the potter knows the pot [σκεῦος] . . . so also the Lord forms the body [σῶμα]."

102. For additional examples of the use of σκεῦος for the whole person, see Acts 9:15, where Paul is called God's "chosen instrument" (σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς); *Apoc. Mos.* 26:1; 16:5: "The devil said to him, 'Don't fear; only become my vessel [σκεῦος]';" *T. Naph.* 8.6; Polybius 13.5.7: "Damocles . . . was a handy tool [σκεῦος], full of resources in the management of affairs"; 15.25.1: "Sosibus . . . appears to have been a dexterous instrument [σκεῦος] of evil." See also 4QTest (4Q175) 25 and 4Qapocr-Joshua<sup>b</sup> (4Q379) 22 ii 11, where the accursed of Belial are called "instruments [כֵּלִים] of violence." Cf. Ps 30:13 (cf. 1Q1-la 12:9) and Jer 22:28, where both the psalmist and Coniah are compared to a broken or worthless "vessel" (σκεῦος). For a similar use of σκεῦος, see Epictetus *Diatr.* 2.4.4-6; 2.22.31; 3.24.33; 3.26.25. Mason maintains that σκεῦος in 1 Thess 4:4 is "'an instrument' or 'implement' for *doing* something" and not "a receptacle for *containing* something" ("Thessalonians," 138). Thus, according to Mason, passages such as 2 Tim 2:21 and Acts 9:15 are closer parallels to 1 Thess 4:4 than are 2 Cor 4:7 and *Barn.* 7.3, 21.8. This may be true, but it does not exclude a reference to the physical body in 1 Thess 4:4, for the body is often viewed as an "instrument for doing something" (see BAGD, 799; Rom 6:13; 12:1; 1 Cor 6:20; 2 Cor 4:10; 5:10; Phil 1:20; 4 Macc 13:13).

103. See KBL, 439; and Avotri, *Possessing One's Vessel*, 46-47; G. Bressan, *Samuele* (La Sacra Bibbia; Turin: Marietti, 1954) 344-45; P. A. H. de Boer, "Research into the Text of 1 Samuel xviii-xxxi," *OTS* 6 (1949) 35; P. Dhorme, *Les livres de Samuel* (EBib; Paris:

although the sense of v. 5 is obscured by the LXX, כְּלִי is rendered by σκεῦος, suggesting that it (σκεῦος) is used as a euphemism for the genitalia.<sup>104</sup> This suggestion appears to find important confirmation in 4Q416 2 ii 21 ("And also do not treat with contempt the vessel of your [bo]som," וּגַם אֵל תְּקַל כְּלִי [ח] יִקְבֹּה),<sup>105</sup> which also appears to use 'In (the Hebrew equivalent of σκεῦος) as a euphemism for the genitalia.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, other ancient writers also use σκεῦος or ἄγγειον ("vessel") or their Latin equivalent *vas* as a euphemism for the genitalia. Among the most explicit is that of Antistius Vetus (d. 65 CE), who in an epigram refers to the erect penis on a statue of the garden god Priapus as an "appendage" (σκεῦος), which has become the object of laughter and jesting.<sup>107</sup>

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Gabalda, 1910) 195; H. W. Hertzberg, *Samuel* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 177 note c; pace A. Caquot and P. de Robert, *Les livres de Samuel* (CAT 6; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1994) 259; H. J. Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT 8; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1973) 393; cf. DCH, 4.424.8; *HALOT*, 479.4.b; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 360. Lev 15:16-18; 22:4-6; and 2 Sam 11:11 supply the background for this passage. These texts in conjunction with the clauses "provided that the young men have kept themselves from women" and "indeed women have been kept from us" in vv. 4a and 5a (MT 5a, 6a) are decisive for the meaning of כְּלִי as "sexual organ" or "body" vis-à-vis "clothing," "gear," or "weapons." F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman point out that these alternate renderings for כְּלִי are unlikely, since it is difficult to see how the sacral status of these items would determine the men's eligibility to eat the sacred bread ("Another Look at 4QSam<sup>b</sup>," *RevQ* 14 [1989] 15). Moreover, if כְּלִי refers simply to the body in general, a more common term such as בָּשָׂר should probably be expected, especially since כְּלִי is never used with this meaning elsewhere in the OT and since בָּשָׂר is the term used in the parallels of Lev 15:16-18 and 22:4-6. See also *b. B. Mes.* 84b (see n. 13 above for text, translation, and parallels), which according to Elgvin reflects the wording of 1 Sam 21:6 (note the common terms כְּלִי, קוֹדֶשׁ, חוֹל) and uses כְּלִי with the meaning "sexual organ" ("To Master His Own Vessel," 610, esp. n. 22). Elgvin also argues that כְּלִי in *b. Meg.* 12b (and the parallel *Midr. Esth.* 3.13 [on 1:11]) has the same meaning. However, the parallelism within that passage suggests the broader but related meaning of "woman as a sexual object" for כְּלִי.

104. See Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 83; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 108; J. Whitton, "A Neglected Meaning for SKEUOS in 1 Thessalonians 4.4," *NTS* 28 (1982) 142-43.

105. F. G. Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 2.850-51. Although this text and accompanying translation are not entirely certain, they do represent an emerging consensus. See Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 606; Daniel J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (London: Routledge, 1996) 43; John Strugnell, "More on Wives and Marriage in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q416 2 ii 21 [cf. 1 Thess 4:4] and 4QMMT §B)," *RevQ* 17 (1996) 538.

106. See Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 607-9; J. E. Smith, "4Q416 2 ii.21: Another Look at a Critical Parallel to Thess 4:4," *CBQ*, forthcoming.

107. *Anth. plan. (Anthologica Graeca)* 16.243.4. Concerning Priapus, H. J. Rose indicates that "his symbol was the phallus and indeed he himself may almost be said to have been a phallus provided with a grotesque body. . . He was adopted as a god of gardens, where his statue (a misshapen little man with enormous genitals) was a sort of combined scarecrow and guardian deity" ("Priapus," *OCD*<sup>2</sup> 876).

*Excursus 2: Σκεῦος as a Euphemism*

Other examples of the use of σκεῦος or ἄγγειον or their Latin equivalent *vas* as a euphemism for the genitalia include the following texts:

1. Aelian *Nat. an.* 17.11 (ca. 165-230 CE): Aelian maintains that one of the symptoms of a spider bite is that the victim's "member stands up" (ὀρθοῦται τὸ σκεῦος).
2. Pseudo-Callisthenes *Alexander Romance* 1.8.4: In explaining the "sealing-up" of his wife's womb, Philip's dream-interpreter indicates, "For no one seals up an empty vessel, but only one that has something in it" (οὐδεὶς γὰρ κενὸν ἄγγειον σφραγίζει, ἀλλὰ μεστόν). That ἄγγειον (a synonym of σκεῦος) is a euphemism for the womb is suggested by three factors: (1) the immediate context, which concerns sexual intercourse and pregnancy; (2) the fourth-century Latin version of the *Alexander Romance* by Iulius Valerius Alexander Polemius, which understands "womb" as the referent (see J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982] 88); and (3) the parallel use in 1.8.2 and 1.8.3 of φύσις, which refers to the "female organ" (LSJ, 1965). The text in its present form is from the third century CE; however, this text was in all likelihood substantially in place by the third century BCE. See W. Kroll [ed.], *Historia Alexandri Magni* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1926) xv; R. Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin, 1991) 8-10. See also Ps.-Lucian *Asinus* 6, where χύτρα ("earthenware pot," "vessel") seems to be used in a play on words with the double meaning: "saucepan," and "pudenda." Cf. the parallel in Apuleius *Metam.* 2.7.
3. Plautus *Poen.* 863 (Act 4 scene 2; ca. 250-184 BCE):

*Milphio*: What are you doing?

*Syncerastus*: Something seldom accomplished by adulterers, once they're caught.

*Milphio*: What is that?

*Syncerastus*: Taking my utensils [*vasa*] home intact.

That *vas* here refers to the male organ is accepted by the P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) 2014. Also cf. the possible double entendre in *Poen.* 847: "Here I am bringing back these utensils [*vasa*] from Venus temple."

4. Petronius *The Satyricon* 24.7 (d. 66 CE): "'Why then,' said she, 'has he not kissed me?' And so calling him to her, she fell to kissing him sweetly; next she also let her hand drift into his lap and handled his little tool [*vasculo*]." Cf. 57.8, where one of Trimalchio's freedmen identifies Ascylltus as a "limp scrap of wet

leather" (*lorus in aqua*, i.e., a flaccid penis; cf. 134.9) after inadvertently calling him a "crock" or "clay-pot" (*vasus fictilis*, i.e., an erect penis). See Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 42. Also cf. *The Satyricon* 130.4, where *instrumentum* ("tool," which overlaps semantically with σκεῦος) is used as a euphemism for the penis.

5. The *Priapea* 68.23-26:

What else we read? How Circe—And Calypso too—  
Dulichian Ulysses for his fine tool [*vasa*] they woo.  
Alcinous' daughter wondered at it next: its size  
Was such that leafy bough could not its bulk disguise.

For the text and translation, see W. H. Parker, *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God* (London: Croom Helm, 1988). That *vas* here refers to the male organ is accepted by Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 2014. L. C. Watson identifies the *Priapea* as a collection of poems "about the phallic god Priapus . . . dated to the Augustan period, to 100 CE, and to various points in between" ("Priape(i)a," *OCD*<sup>3</sup> 1244).

6. Augustine *Civ.* 14.23: "The organ [*vas*] created for this work would have sown its seed." *Nupt.* 2.5.14 (PL 44:444): "The difference of the sexes has to do with the organs [*vasa*] of the parents." This translation is from the series *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (ed. J. E. Rotelle; Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1998).

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(3) Understanding τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι as a reference to controlling one's own body makes good sense of the logic of the paragraph, which, as we have seen, leads one to expect a reference in vv. 4-5 to the avoidance of sexual relationships outside marriage. It also makes good sense "in the context of a pagan environment like Thessalonica," where "this general instruction would seem to have greater positive value than the more specific exhortation on sexual behavior within marriage especially since we lack any firm evidence that sexual problems within marriage were an issue for the new converts as was the case in 1 Cor."<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, such general instruction (i.e., "control your bodies") seems to be most consistent with the injunction to avoid πορνεία (v. 3b), which should be understood in its general sense of any wanton sexual behavior, including incest,

108. Carras, "Ethics," 311. Concerning the general nature of this instruction, Collins notes "that a consensus within contemporary exegesis has been reached . . . to the effect that the first six verses of 1 Thess. 4 contain general ethical instruction" ("Unity," 327; cf. idem, "Will of God," 307-8).

homosexuality, prostitution, adultery, and fornication.<sup>109</sup> And finally, it seems to accommodate, vis-à-vis the first interpretive option, Paul's preference for celibacy as expressed in 1 Cor 7:7-8,25-40.<sup>110</sup>

(4) Paul's concern for the body (σῶμα) in other passages treating sexual morality (Rom 1:24; 6:12; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 7:34; 12:22-24; 1 Thess 5:22-23) or morality in general (Rom 8:13; 12:1; 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Cor 5:10; 7:1 [σάρξ]) suggests that σκεῦος refers to the body.<sup>111</sup> The force of this argument is clearly seen in a closer examination of several of the key parallels:

(a) Numerous verbal and conceptual similarities appear to exist among 1 Thess 4:3-8; Rom 6:12-13, 19; and 1 Thess 5:22-24. These similarities can be seen in a parallel display of the texts (key conceptual parallels are noted by underlining and the use of italics; key verbal parallels are noted by reproducing the Greek terms):

<p>Rom 6:13b, 12-13a</p> <p><u>Present</u> your members (μέλος) to God as instruments (ὄπλον)<sup>b</sup> of righteousness.</p>	<p>1 Thess 4:3, 4, 5, 7, Abstain from (ἀπέχω ἀπό) sexual immorality (πορνεία). <u>Control</u> your own vessel (σκεῦος) in sanctification (ἀγιασμός) and honor.</p>	<p>1 Thess 5:22, 23, 24 Abstain from (ἀπέχω ἀπό) every form of evil (πονηρόν).<sup>a</sup> May the God of peace himself sanctify (ἀγιάζω) you entirely; and <u>may your . . . body</u> (σῶμα) <u>be kept sound and blameless.</u></p>
<p><u>Do not let sin exercise dominion</u> in your mortal body (σῶμα) so that you obey its lusts (ἐπιθυμία). <u>No longer present your members</u> (μέλος) to sin as instruments (ὄπλον) of wickedness.</p>	<p><u>[Do] not [control] your own vessel</u> (σκεῦος) in lustful (ἐπιθυμία) passion.</p>	

109. So most interpreters, including Best, *Thessalonians*, 160; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 82; Collins, "Will of God," 310-11; von Dobschiltz, *Thessalonicher-briefe*, 163; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 147; Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, 156; Jensen, "Porneia," 180; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 107; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 187; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 502; Schlier, *Der Apostel*, 65; Whiteley, *Thessalonians*, 60; and esp. Carras, "Ethics," 311-15; and Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 151. Such a general sense for πορνεία fits the general and inclusive nature of the paraenesis, which is clearly indicated by vv. 1-3a, 7-8. For a further discussion of the general nature of the paraenesis, see above, nn. 38,86, and pp. 54-56,74-75.

110. See Whitton, "SKEUOS," 143.

111. See Hock, "The Will of God and Sexual Morality: I Thessalonians 4.3-8 in Its Social and Intellectual Context" (a paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL in San Francisco, 1982) 40-41; and also Buzy, *Thessaloniens*, 155; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 49; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 506; K. Staab, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe und die Gefangenschaftsbriefe* (4th ed.; RNT 7/2; Regensburg: Pustet, 1965) 29-30.

Rom 6:13b, 12-13a, 19 For (γάρ) just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) . . . . so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification (ἀγιασμός).	1 Thess 4:3, 4, 5, 7 For (γάρ) God has not called (καλέω) us for the purpose of impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) but in sanctification (ἀγιασμός).	1 Thess 5:22, 23, 24 Faithful is the one who calls (καλέω) you.
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a. Πονηρόν may be a play on πονρεία, as it seems to be in 1 Cor 5:1-13. See πονρεία (v. 1); πονηρία (v. 8); πόρνος (vv. 9, 10, 11); πονηρός (v. 13); and cf. P. S. Zaas, "Cast Out the Evil Man from Your Midst' (1 Cor 5:13b)," *JBL* 103 (1984) 259-61.

b. There is substantial overlap in the meanings of ὄπλον and σκεῦος. See L&N §6.1-3; LSJ, 1240, 1607; and note that in the LXX both terms translate כֶּלֶב. It is just possible that Paul sees these two terms as partially synonymous and that the use of Oraon elsewhere as a euphemism for the male sexual organ (see LSJ, 1240) has influenced the meaning of σκεῦος in 1 Thess 4:4.

Since both Rom 6:12-13,19 and 1 Thess 5:23 refer to "controlling" one's body and seem to parallel 1 Thess 4:4 closely, σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι should probably also be understood as a reference to controlling one's body rather than to some activity directed toward one's wife or potential wife.

(b) A similar but even more persuasive argument can be made from 1 Cor 6:18-20:<sup>112</sup>

1 Thess 4:3, 4 ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας "abstain from sexual immorality"	1 Cor 6:18, 20 φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν "flee sexual immorality"
τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ "control your own vessel in sanctification and honor"	δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν <sup>a</sup> "therefore glorify God in your body"

a. F. J. A. Hort observes that τιμῇ and the nominal cognate of δόξαζω are essentially synonymous: "The precise distinction between them [δόξα and τιμῇ] is not easy to seize" (*The First Epistle of St. Peter: 1:1-2:17* [London: Macmillan, 1898] 44). Cf. Exod 28:2, 40; 2 Chr 32:33; Job 37:22; 40:10; Ps 8:6 (ET, v. 5; MT, v. 6); 28:1 (29:1); 95:7 (96:7); Dan 2:37; 4:30; 1 Macc 14:21; 2 Macc 5:16; Wis 8:10; Sir 3:11; Rom 2:7, 10; 1 Tim 1:17; Heb 2:7, 9; 1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 1:17; Rev 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 21:26. Also note that the term immediately preceding δοξάσατε is τιμῇ, which is present in 1 Thess 4:4.

These parallels and their concerns over sexual purity and behavior that, is honorable or glorifying, suggest that Paul's thought is moving

112. Cf. Buzy, *Thessaloniens*, 155; Rigaux, *Thessaloniens*, 506; Staab, *Thessalonicherbriefe*, 29-30.

in the same direction in both of these passages and that σκεῦος is conceptually equivalent to σκεῦος. The fact that these two texts are closely related seems to be confirmed by the close affinity that exists between 1 Cor 6:19 and 1 Thess 4:8:<sup>113</sup>

1 Thess 4:8	1 Cor 6:19
τὸν θεὸν τὸν [καὶ] διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς	τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος . . . οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ
"God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you"	"the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have [received] from God"

Additionally, a number of conceptual parallels further strengthens the connection between 1 Cor 6:12-20 and 1 Thess 4:1-8.

1. In 1 Corinthians, Paul indicates that he "will not be mastered by anything" (v. 12). The Thessalonians, on the other hand, are to "control their own bodies" (v. 4).
2. In 1 Corinthians, Paul indicates that "the body is not for immorality" (v. 13) and responds to the question, "Shall I . . . make them members of a prostitute?" with "May it never be!" (v. 15). The Thessalonians are to "abstain from sexual immorality" (v. 3).
3. The Corinthians are reminded three times of what they should already know, "Do you not know [οἴδατε]?" (vv. 15, 16, 19). The Thessalonians are reminded three times of Paul's previous instruction: "you know [οἴδατε] what commandments we gave you" (v. 2), "just as we also told you before" (v. 6), and "just as we also solemnly warned you" (v. 6).
4. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they are "members of Christ" (v. 15), "joined to the Lord" (v. 17), "temples of the Holy Spirit" (v. 19a), "not their own" (v. 19b), and "bought with a price" (v. 20). In 1 Thessalonians, he reminds the believers that they are no longer pagans "who do not know God" (v. 5).
5. In 1 Corinthians Paul prohibits any breach in one's relationship with God with a negative response to the question, "Shall I then

113. 1 Thess 4:6 also appears to parallel 1 Cor 6:8, "No one wrong and defraud his brother in this matter [τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ]"; "But you yourselves wrong and defraud—and brothers at that [ἀλλὰ ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε καὶ ἀποστερεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς]." Perhaps little should be made of this, but it might further suggest a connection between 1 Thess 4:3-8 and 1 Cor 6:12-20. For a further discussion on possible connections between 1 Thess 4:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 5-7, see P. Richardson, "Judgment in Sexual Matters in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11," *NovT* 25 (1983) 49-50. The presence in 1 Corinthians 6 of key or related terms from 1 Thess 4:6 might also suggest a connection between these chapters. See πρᾶγμα in 1 Cor 6:1; πλεονέκται in 6:10 (cf. 1 Cor 5:10, 11; 2 Cor 7:2); and also P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940) 17-19.

take away the members of Christ?" (v. 15). He also reminds the one who does not reject God but who "joins himself to the Lord" that he is "one Spirit with him." In 1 Thessalonians, Paul warns believers that one who rejects his instruction "rejects God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you" (v. 8).

6. In 1 Corinthians Paul indicates that the sexually immoral man "sins against his own body" (v. 18). The Thessalonians, on the other hand, are not "to wrong or exploit" another sexually (v. 6).

(c) Another similar and equally persuasive argument can be made from Rom 1:24. In 1 Thess 4:4-5, the Thessalonians are not to dishonor (τιμῆ) their σκεῦος through lustful passion (πάθει ἐπιθυμίας) like the Gentiles (ἔθνη) who do not know God. In Rom 1:24 on the other hand, the Gentiles dishonor their bodies (ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν) through the lusts (ἐπιθυμίας) of their hearts.<sup>114</sup> Again, Paul's thought seems to be moving in the same direction, and σκεῦος appears to be more or less conceptually equivalent to σῶμα. Moreover, this conclusion and these parallels are even more convincing when seen in light of the larger context of Rom 1:18-32 and 1 Thess 4:3-8:

1. The Thessalonians are instructed in the "will of God" (v. 3). In Romans, the Gentiles "know God's decree" (v. 32).
2. In 1 Thessalonians, the Gentiles "do not know God" (v. 5). In Romans they "suppress the truth" (v. 18), "became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened" (v. 21), "became fools" (v. 22), "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images" (v. 23), "exchanged the truth about God for a lie" (v. 25), and "did not see fit to acknowledge God" (v. 28).
3. In 1 Thessalonians God is an "avenger" of sin (v. 6), while in Romans he gave the Gentiles over to their sins (vv. 24, 26, 28), and they are objects of "the wrath of God" (v. 18), receive "the due penalty for their error" (v. 27), and "deserve to die" (v. 32).
4. The Thessalonians are warned against "rejecting God" (v. 8). In Romans, the Gentiles "did not honor him as God or give thanks to him" (v. 21), are "God-haters" (v. 30), and ignore "God's decree" (v. 32).
5. A number of verbal parallels exist between Rom 1:18-32 and 1 Thess 4:3-8, including the following terms: ἀκαθαρσία and its opposite, ἁγιασμός (Rom 1:24; 1 Thess 4:4, 7); πάθος (Rom 1:26; 1 Thess 4:5); and πλεονεξία—πλεονεκτέω (Rom 1:29; 1 Thess 4:6).

114. Paul makes two additional references to dishonor or shame in Rom 1:26-27 (πάθη ἀτιμίας; ἀσχημοσύνην) and one additional reference to lust in Rom 1:27 (ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει).

(d) Finally, the linkage among "honor" (τιμὴ or ἄτιμοῦς), the body (σῶμα), and the genitalia (ἀσχήμων) in 1 Cor 12:22-24 suggests a similar linkage in 1 Thess 4:4. And these connections, coupled with similar ideas in Rom 1:24 and 1 Cor 6:20 concerning the σῶμα and honor, suggest a rather consistent pattern in Paul's thinking involving τιμὴ and the body or genitalia.<sup>115</sup>

(5) Verse 3b and vv. 4-5 of 1 Thessalonians 4 share a common structure (each has an infinitive that defines τοῦτο, v. 1),<sup>116</sup> a common audience (ὑμᾶς; ἕκαστον ὑμῶν), and a common focus of concern (πορνεία; πάθει ἐπιθυμίας). These parallels suggest that the admonition in v. 4a (σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι) has the same general applicability (i.e., audience) and intent as the injunction in v. 3b ("that you abstain from sexual immorality").<sup>117</sup> These two factors in turn suggest not that the bachelors of Thessalonica are to protect themselves from sexual immorality by acquiring a wife (view #1) or that the Thessalonian men are to act in an honorable way toward their wives (view #2) but that each of the Thessalonians (ἕκαστον ὑμῶν), both male and female, is to protect himself or herself from sexual immorality by learning how to control his or her own body sexually. In other words, σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι appears to be an injunction concerning πορνεία that applies to all of the Thessalonians.<sup>118</sup> This rules out the first interpretation, which applies only to unmarried men. It

115. R. E Hock argues that Paul's use of τιμὴ in 1 Thess 4:4 suggests that σκεῦος is a metaphor for a wife, since "τιμὴ refers not to inherent dignity but to honor rendered to another" ("The Will of God and Sexual Morality," 41; see also von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-briefe*, 166). However, this argument overlooks Paul's use of the τιμὴ word-group with reference to the body in Rom 1:24; 9:21; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 12:22-24; 15:43; 2 Tim 2:20-21. Moreover, it appears that honor is ascribed to the body because of its inherent value and dignity (see esp. 1 Cor 6:12-20).

116. The infinitive ἀπέχεσθαι is understood by nearly all to be in apposition to τοῦτο (or alternately, ἁγιασμός). Εἰδέναι, on the other hand, is understood as either (1) parallel to ἀπέχεσθαι and thus in apposition to τοῦτο (Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 126; Ellicott, *Thessalonians*, 52; Hiebert, *Thessalonians*, 179-80; Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 108; Maurer, "σκεῦος," 366 n. 57; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 50; Robertson, *Grammar*, 1059, 1078; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 151; Williams, *Thessalonians*, 74; Zerwick and Grosvenor, *Grammatical Analysis*, 618), or (2) exegetical to ἀπέχεσθαι (H. Alford, *The Greek New Testament* [5th ed.; 4 vols.; London: Rivingtons, 1871] 3.268; Best, *Thessalonians*, 165-66; Collins, "Unity," 329-30; Deidun, *Morality*, 248; W. Hendriksen, *I and II Thessalonians* [New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955] 100; B. Hennecken, *Verkündigung und Prophetie im ersten Thessalonicherbrief* [SBS 29; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969] 57 n. 37; Lenski, *Thessalonians*, 309; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 107, 111; Richard, *Thessalonians*, 187, 194, 198; Witherington, *Women*, 67). In either case, εἰδέναι ultimately identifies τοῦτο.

117. Cf. Carras, "Ethics," 310; Whitton, "SKEUOS," 143.

118. For a further discussion of the view that the injunction σκεῦος is directed to all members of the community, see nn. 38, 86, and pp. 54-56 above.

also rules out the second interpretation, which applies only to married men and has little to do with πορνεία. But it accords well with the third interpretation, namely, that each one, married or unmarried, male or female, is to control his or her own body in a holy and honorable way.

This third interpretation, although it unifies the overall context of 4:1-8 and makes good sense of the details of the passage, has not gone unchallenged. Several objections have been leveled against it:

(1) The context suggests not a repetition or mere periphrasis of the preceding infinitival clause (ἀπεχέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας) but a statement on the positive or permitted side, antithetical to this prohibition—namely, "the requirement *to satisfy the sexual impulse in chastity and honour*"<sup>119</sup> This objection, however, is not persuasive, for it wrongly assumes that the only antithetical and yet positive statement that Paul can make concerns the satisfaction of sexual desire through marriage. In other words, it ignores the fact that the injunction to learn how (εἰδέναι) to control one's own body in sanctification and honor is also an antithetical statement on the positive or permitted side.<sup>120</sup>

(2) Without a qualifying adjective or defining genitive such as "earthen" (ὄστράκινος) as in 2 Cor 4:7,<sup>121</sup> σκεῦος, does not refer to the body.<sup>122</sup> And, in the passages that are usually cited to prove the contrary, σκεῦος has its usual meaning, "instrument" or "vessel," and only the full expression (σκεῦος + a qualifying adjective or defining genitive) serves as a circumlocution for the body.<sup>123</sup> This objection is not persuasive either, for numerous texts show that even without a qualifying adjective or defining genitive, σκεῦος does indeed refer to the body.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, a qualifying adjective or genitive does not seem to be needed here with σκεῦος since, as Lightfoot notes, "The

119. Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 109; see also Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 3.269; Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 129-30; Ellicott, *Thessalonians*, 53; Jowett, *Epistles of St. Paul*, 45; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 308 n. 138.

120. See Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 49; and also Hiebert, *Thessalonians*, 180; Morris, *Thessalonians*, 119-20; Olshausen, *Commentary*, 5.273; Thomas, "Thessalonians," 271; Whitton, "SKEUOS," 143; cf. Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 3.268.

121. Simple possessive ("his" or "her") or demonstrative ("this" or "that") adjectives are not included in making this distinction.

122. See Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 3.268-69; Bornemann, *Thessalonicher-briefe*, 168; Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 127-28; Ellicott, *Thessalonians*, 53; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 149; Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 109; Witherington, *Women*, 250 n. 232.

123. See Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 109; and also Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 3.268-69; Collins, "Will of God," 311; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 149.

124. See Aelian *Nat. an.* 17.11; *Anth. plan.* (*Anthologica Graeca*) 16.243.4; *Barn.* 21.8 (the qualifying adjective καλός is inconsequential); *Herm. Mand.* 5.1.2 (33.2); 1 Kgdms 21:6; *Apoc. Mos.* 31:4; *Apoc. Sedr.* 11:2, 6-7; Pradel, *Griechische and süditalienische Gebete*, 9, lines 11-13.

sense suggests itself at once."<sup>125</sup> In other words, a qualifying adjective or genitive does not seem to be needed, since the context, which concerns sexual immorality, immediately suggests "body" as a likely referent for σκεῦος.<sup>126</sup>

(3) The pronoun ἑαυτοῦ ("his own") is emphatic, and such an emphasis is inappropriate if σκεῦος refers to one's "body" but is appropriate if it refers to one's "wife."<sup>127</sup> This objection, however, is irrelevant, since ἑαυτοῦ was losing much of its emphatic force in Hellenistic Greek and was often used in place of the possessive pronoun (αὐτοῦ—"his"; αὐτῆς—"her")<sup>128</sup> and since Paul uses ἑαυτοῦ elsewhere with reference to a person's own body (Rom 4:19; Eph 5:28-29).<sup>129</sup>

125. Lightfoot, *Notes*, 54; see also Olshausen, *Commentary*, 5.273.

126. Or at least it has to many throughout the history of interpretation. Also, one should note that σκεῦος is already modified by the genitive ἑαυτοῦ, and the addition of any other modifier would tend to make the phrase cumbersome.

127. See Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 3.269; Eadie, *Thessalonians*, 129; Ellicott, *Thessalonians*, 53; Frame, *Thessalonians*, 150; Laub, *Eschatologische Verkündigung*, 54; Lünemann, *Thessalonians*, 109; Thomas, "Thessalonians," 272 n. 4. For the rationale behind this argument, see n. 129 below. Thomas suggests that ἑαυτοῦ is "emphatic in meaning and by position" (see also Alford, Eadie, Ellicott, and Lünemann). However, this pronoun is probably not emphatic by position, since it is normally found in the first attributive position, as here in 1 Thess 4:4. See BDF, §284.2; R. Funk, *The Syntax of the Greek Article: Its Importance for Critical Pauline Problems* (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1953) 247; Turner, *Syntax*, 190; cf. S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; Biblical Languages: Greek 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 291. For the emphatic meaning of ἑαυτοῦ ("his own" vs. "his"), see U. Schoenborn, "ἑαυτοῦ.," *EDNT* 1.368; BDF, §284.2; Turner, *Syntax*, 190; Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 10:29; Gal 6:4; Eph 5:28, 33; and esp. 1 Cor 7:2. Mason understands the reflexive pronoun here as a genitive of apposition: "the vessel or instrument which consists of himself" ("Thessalonians," 138). Few follow Mason's proposal, and the parallels in Rom 4:19; 5:8; 8:3; 16:4, 18; 1 Cor 7:2, 37, 38; 10:24, 29, 33; 13:5; Gal 6:4, 8; Eph 5:28, 29, 33; Phil 2:4, 12, 21; 1 Thess 2:7, 8, 11; 2:12; 2 Thess 2:6; 3:12 suggest that the genitive is one of possession.

128. See G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937) 126; BAGD, 212.4; BDR, §283.4 n. 6; Légasse, "Vas suum possidere," 109; MM, 177.

129. Rom 4:19: τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ σώμα; Eph 5:28: τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα; Eph 5:29: τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα. Also see Rom 16:4: τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον; 16:18: τῆ ἑαυτῶν κοιλία; 1 Thess 2:8: τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς; and cf. 1 Cor 4:12; 7:37; Eph 4:28; 1 Thess 4:11; and esp. 1 Cor 6:18; 7:4, all of which use ἴδιος instead of ἑαυτοῦ in similar constructions. Even if ἑαυτοῦ is emphatic in 1 Thess 4:4, the rationale behind Lünemann's assertion that "a reference to the body of an individual cannot be emphatic" or of those who argue that it is more natural to speak emphatically of one's "own wife" than one's "own body" is difficult to understand (*Thessalonians*, 109; see also Ellingworth and Nida, *Thessalonians*, 79; Thomas, "Thessalonians," 272 n. 4). As Hiebert notes, "There is no reason one's own body should not be emphatically referred to; nothing material is more a man's own than his body" (*Thessalonians*, 181). Moreover, Moulton points out that the pronoun is not "an emphatic assertion of property" but would be "simply a method of laying stress on the [noun]" (J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena* [3d ed.; ed. J. H. Moulton; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908] 89).

## CONCLUSION

In making a final choice among the three major interpretations of the phrase τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι, the evidence seems to favor the third and final option, that τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι refers to controlling one's own body. At least three key factors point in the direction of this conclusion: (1) it best accounts for the lexical and grammatical details of the paragraph, (2) it unifies the argument of the paragraph by maintaining the same audience and theme (the avoidance of sexual relationships outside marriage) throughout, and (3) it, unlike either of the first two options, does not suffer from any decisive objection.

While the evidence seems to favor the third interpretation, it must be admitted that τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι is a rather unusual way to express the idea of controlling one's own body. An expression using some combination of σῶμα and the verb ἐγκρατεύομαι ("to exercise self-control") would seem to be the more natural choice.<sup>130</sup> However, the unusual nature of Paul's expression might be explained by the fact that σκεῦος is used elsewhere as a euphemism for the sexual organs and that euphemisms, by their very nature, often consist of unusual linguistic combinations.<sup>131</sup> In other words, the obscurity of the expression in 1 Thess 4:4 may be explained by Paul's choosing to use a euphemism to describe self-control in the sexual realm.<sup>132</sup> Evidence for such a choice by Paul exists not only in the use of σκεῦος elsewhere as a euphemism for the sexual organs, both male and female,<sup>133</sup> but also in the strong phallic symbolism of the cults of Dionysius, Cabirus, and Samothrace, which were popular at Thessalonica in Paul's day,<sup>134</sup> and in Paul's apparent preference for euphemism when

130. See 1 Cor 7:9; 9:25; cf. δουλαγωγέω "to bring under control" in 1 Cor 9:27; and Legasse, "Vas suum possidere," 113 esp. n. 41. Other possibilities include ἀίχμα—λωτίζω, "to gain control over" (see 2 Tim 3:6), or ὑποτάσσω, "put in subjection" (see Rom 8:20; 1 Cor 15:27; Phil 3:21).

131. Cf. κοίτην ἔχουσα (Rom 9:10); περιπατήσωμεν . . . μὴ κοίταις (Rom 13:13); and euphemisms in the English language such as "to make love."

132. See Ellingworth and Nida, *Thessalonians*, 79; cf. Collins, "Will of God," 312; L&N §23.63; J. M. Reese, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (New Testament Message; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1979) 44. This may also further reduce the difficulty of the use of the present tense of κτᾶομαι in a durative sense.

133. If σκεῦος were used exclusively as a euphemism for the male sexual organ, this would suggest that Paul may be addressing only men in vv. 4-5. But Augustine, as we have seen (see *Excursus 2*), used vas for the genitalia of both sexes, so it is likely that σκεῦος can refer to the sexual organs of both sexes. Furthermore, Pseudo-Callisthenes used ἄγγειον as a euphemism for the womb (see *Excursus 2*). Even if σκεῦος did indeed refer primarily to the male organ, it seems to be a small step for Paul to broaden its referent, especially since a euphemism is involved, to include the genitalia of both sexes.

134. This argument has also been put forward by Weima, "How You Must Walk to Please God," 108; see also K. P. Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica and the

discussing sexual matters (Rom 1:26-27; 9:10; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:1; 7:1, 2, 3, 5; 12:23; 1 Thess 4:6;<sup>135</sup> cf. Eph 5:3, 12, which may advocate the use of such euphemisms). It is also possible that Ep Jer 58 has influenced Paul's wording at this point. The verbal parallels are impressive:

τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι (1 Thess 4:4)  
τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνδρείαν ἢ σκεῦος . . . ὁ κεκτημένος (Ep Jer 58).

Furthermore, the recurring references to idolatry in the Epistle to Jeremiah seem to find parallel in the reference in 1 Thess 4:5 to "the Gentiles who do not know God." But what is particularly suggestive is the Epistle of Jeremiah's use of the term ἀνδρεία, which seems to be used as a euphemism for the male sexual organ: "Therefore it is better to be a king who shows his own manhood [τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνδρείαν] . . . than these false gods."<sup>136</sup> Thus, it seems preferable to

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Thessalonian Correspondence," *NTS* 31 (1985) 337, 342; Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 373-75; cf. 1 Thess 1:9. But see H. Koester, who cautions against the uncritical application of evidence concerning these cults to the Thessalonica of Paul's day ("From Paul's Eschatology to the Apocalyptic Schemata of 2 Thessalonians," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence* [ed. R. E Collins; BETL 66; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984] 441-45). For the cults and their phallic symbolism, see L. J. Alderink, "The Eleusinian Mysteries in Roman Imperial Times," *ANRW* 11.18.2:1491-97; Avotri, *Possessing One's Vessel*, 57-69; S. G. Cole, "The Mysteries of Samothrace during the Roman Period," *ANRW* 11.18.2:1564-98; Donfried, "The Cults of Thessalonica," 337-42; C. Edson, "Cults of Macedonia," *HTR* 41 (1948) 153-204; R. M. Evans, *Eschatology and Ethics: A Study of Thessalonica and Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians* (Princeton, N.J.: McMahan, 1968) 68-79; B. Hemberg, *Die Kabiren* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1950) 205-10; H. L. Hendrix, "Thessalonica," in *Archaeological Resources for New Testament Studies* (ed. H. Koester and H. L. Hendrix; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 9, 24, 26; R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (FF; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 126-32; K. Lehmann, *Samothrace: A Guide to the Excavations and the Museum* (5th ed.; Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1983) 24-38; R. E. Witt, "The Kabeiroi in Ancient Macedonia," in *Ancient Macedonia II* (ed. B. Laourdas and C. Makaronas; Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1977) 67-80.

135. I.e., ἐν τῷ πράγματι, "in this matter"; see BAGD, 697; Best, *Thessalonians*, 166; Hennecken, *Verkündigung*, 57 n. 37; LSJ, 1457; H. G. Liddell and R. Scott (eds.), *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889) 666; C. Maurer, "πράγμα," *TDNT* 6.640; Whiteley, *Thessalonians*, 62.

136. See LSJ, 128. To indicate the utter worthlessness of idols, the author of the Epistle of Jeremiah compares idols to four phenomena: (1) "a king who shows τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνδρείαν," (2) "a household utensil that serves its owner's need," (3) "the door of a house," and (4) "a wooden pillar in a palace" and finds them (idols) inferior to each one. In this text ἀνδρεία is usually translated "courage," but such a rendering does not fit the context. As C. J. Ball notes, "The fitness of the first comparison is far from being self-evident. It goes without saying that a king giving proof of life and vigour in the face of attack is superior to a 'god' who can do nothing to defend his own person" ("Epistle of Jeremy," in *APOT*, 1.608). However, if this first comparison is a reference to a royal figure shamelessly degrading himself by "showing" his genitalia (cf. 2 Sam 6:14-22), then the author dramatically makes his point about the worthlessness of idols.

conclude that by τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἀγιασμῶ καὶ τιμῇ Paul means that each one is to control his or her own body in holiness and honor or, more specifically, that each one is to control his or her sexual organ in holiness and honor.<sup>137</sup>

It seems necessary, then, to propose another translation of 1 Thess 4:4 besides the three renderings that begin this essay. I offer the following: "that each one of you know how to control your own member in a holy and honorable way," in which "member" could be understood simply as "body" but strongly hints at the meaning "sexual organ."<sup>138</sup> But even if one does not find my conclusion thoroughly convincing, hopefully the impasse over this crux is now closer to resolution because of my analysis.

137. See Avotri, *Possessing One's Vessel*, 70-90; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 83; Elgvin, "To Master His Own Vessel," 609-19; Ellingworth and Nida, *Thessalonians*, 79; Légasse, "Vas suum possidere," 111-12; Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 108-9; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 152-53; Whitton, "SKEUOS," 142-43.

138. Cf. the NAB.; Aelian *Nat. an.* 17.11 (LCL).