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Edited by

Darren J. N. Middleton and Dennis Horton
Baylor University

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February 28–March 2, 2025

The Association for the Scientific Study of Religion

Presents

The Year 2025
Annual Proceedings of the ASSR

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Annual Meeting
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President's Note

I am delighted to bring you the 2025 *Proceedings* of The Association for the Scientific Study of Religion (ASSR).

Typically, the *Proceedings* offer papers and presentations from both our perennial authors and presenters as well as new academic talents who bring with them fresh topics and innovative approaches. In addition to our professional academic papers, the ASSR also includes student papers in the *Proceedings* as submitted and presented at the annual meeting, and in addition to the Frank P. Forwood Award for Excellence in Presented Research for professional papers, two student awards are now available—the Harry Hale Prize for Graduate and Undergraduate Research.

The quality of these *Proceedings* discloses the outstanding work that has been accomplished by the efforts of many who participate and promote our meetings through research, writing, attending our sessions, and sponsorship via generous donations and the purchase of this collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps to make the ASSR what it has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR only costs $20.00 yearly (or a one-time $100 lifetime membership) and we value your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, contributing to the *Proceedings,* and attending the presentations of others. It is important for our future that every member of the ASSR not only encourages new membership at every opportunity but solicits scholars throughout the colleges, universities, and organizations at which you reside to become involved in our group through chairing sessions, writing and submitting papers, or serving as an officer.

I hope all of you have a productive year and the ASSR will be looking forward to your participation in the ASSR in 2025-2026. Be sure to visit us online at: www.assronline.org, complete with online publications of papers from past meetings (see the **Archives** on the site). Hopefully you will share this site with colleagues and students alike. Thanks.

Appreciatively,

Darren J. N. Middleton, 2024-2025 ASSR President/Co-Editor (with Dennis Horton)

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* undergraduate paper, Hale Prize

A Material Culture of Death: A Story of Disruption

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La Santa Muerte (Most Holy Death) is an icon of Death whose folk saint status originated in Mexico but developed from Grim Reaper like images signifying a Good Death (known as "*la buena muerte*") in the context of *cofradías* (lay brotherhoods) in colonial Mexico (Chesnut 2012, 4, 27-33; Graziano 2007, 78; Gruzinski 2001 [1995], 164; Gruzinski 1990, 219; Malvido 2005, 20). Since *Muertistas* (adherents of La Santa Muerte) relate to Death as a saint, La Santa Muerte adherents are in violation of Roman Catholic doctrine (Castells Ballarin 2008, 14, 22-23; Kristensen 2014, 2-3). In addition to the Roman Catholic Church's formal rejection of La Santa Muerte as blasphemous in 2013, Muertista interactions with Death as an embodied presence rather than a symbolic representation, is a violation of Catholic Counter-Reformation doctrine (see Council of Trent 1995 [1545-1563], 234-235; Orsi 2016, 4-7). Practitioners engage La Santa Muerte's iconicity (a resemblance of the medieval Grim Reaper) as if it were an embodied entity (see Bromley 2016, 6; Clifton 2016, 343; Hanegraaff 1998, 502; Hanegraaff 2012, 303, 369; Hedenborg-White and Gregorius 2016, 10-11). Practices that treat any icon as an embodied presence conflict with Western Christian discourses on devotional objects that disregarded such practices as idolatry, magic, or both (per Bynum 2011, 31-32; Cervantes 1994, 20-21; Eire 1986, 4-5; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 4; Kristensen 2014, 13; Martín 2014, 204-206; Michalik 2011, 163, 174-175; Orsi 2005, 193; Orsi 2016, 2-5; Sebald 1980, 173; Styers 2004, 17-19). What follows analyzes how medieval understandings of a Good Death developed into an embodied presence in medieval Spain that was extended into the modern context via 16th century Spanish colonization. This analysis of the material culture of Death exposes how 16th century colonial encounters created modern religious categories used in academia today.

A Good Death and Purgatory

Death imagery utilized within the 21st century cult of La Santa Muerte first shows up in the historical record during the Black Death era in Europe, but is conceptually rooted in a "Pagan" or Pre-Christian Mediterranean cultures. Contemplating the pervading regularity of human dying during the 14th century in Western Europe occurred through "Good Death" materiality and rituals that assuaged Christian death bed concerns of "unbelief, despair, impatience, pride, and avarice" (Binski 1996, 41). *Ars Moriendi* (art of dying) illustrated manuscripts and *memento mori* (remembrance of death) sculptures, engravings, and *tavolettas* (double sided tablets featuring Christian imagery) were artistic forms used to instruct a Good Death that developed, in part, from Ancient Greek ethical speculation on the Good Life (Ariès 1981 [1977], 301-306; Seaton 1996, 235-237). A historical thread appears to exist, in which, medieval European notions of devotion, confession, repentance, and atonement related to a Good Death developed from the Ancient Greek conception of a Good Life determined by heroism and virtue (see Korpiola and Lahtinen 2017, 1-2; Tkacz 2012, 67-69).

Binski (1996, 30), for example, stated that early Christian ideas regarding a Good Death followed ancient Mediterranean practices for curing a sickness of the "soul" stemming from its relation to the body. For Plato, (in Cooper 1997, 1220; Wan 2017, 147-148) the Good Life, or *eudaimonia*, was a concept derived from being under the influence a "good daemon" (a personal protector or tutelary being). Daemons that Plato (in Cooper 1997, 1217-1223) directly mentions in relation to human death and the hope for a Good Life are the Fates, who predetermined an individual's eschatological outcome before birth by assigning every individual a daemon to guide them based on a lot they had drawn. During the 4th and 5th centuries when Christianity redefined the Roman Empire, the Fates became the *Parcae* (plural) and *Parca* (singular) (Forty 2004, 274). The Parcae remained part of Christian material culture related to death, as demonstrated in their depiction in the 16th-century tapestry "The Triumph of Death" based on Petrarch's 14th-century poem "Triumphs" (see Forty 2004, 275). *La Parca*, derived from the Latin equivalent of the Greek Fates, is also the Spanish term for the English Grim Reaper (Malvido 2005, 23; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52).

Kenny (2011, xv) further suggests that Augustine and Aquinas both utilized Aristotle's notion of "*eudaimonism*" (the Good Life resulting from a happiness arising within human flourishing and virtue) but articulated it as an ecstatic state achievable only in the in the afterlife. This interpretation extended and reinterpreted from Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*, then, appears to have completely shifted to a virtue that required one to "die well" prior to the beginning of the 14th century (ibid., xvi). These late medieval articulations of a Good Death as the reward for a Christian life lived well was central to the development of literature and artwork associated with the cult of the dead in Purgatory (Ariès 1981 [1977], 107, 153-154, 288, 305-306). The Catholic conception of Purgatory may also be rooted in the ancient Mediterranean world, as it appears that the Roman Stoic adoption of Platonic philosophy along with the diffusion of Eleusinian Mystery rites were both catalysts for altering perceptions regarding the afterlife that would directly impact 1st-century Christianity (Le Goff 1984 [1981], 23-25, Luck 1973, 148).

The Eleusinian Mysteries, and similar cults, most likely influenced Christian communities when the latter first developed in the Mediterranean region (Angus 1975 [1928], vii,1-4). For example, the New Testament book of Ephesians was a letter that counseled 1st-century Hierapolis' Christians living among the *Galli* (Kreitzer 1998, 51-53). The Galli were castrated temple attendants within a Phrygian cult of Cybele in southwest Anatolia that paralleled the Eleusinian Mystery (ibid.). The letter to Ephesians, Kreitzer (ibid.,53, 76) argues, reveals a need Paul (or his assistant) saw in instructing early Christian communities to relinquish their attachment to these "pagan" or pre-Christian cultural practices associated with the Phrygian cult of Cybele. As Hanegraaff (1998, 407; 2012, 180-190) has shown, however, our modern understandings of a "pagan" past are more than likely historical reproductions developed during the Renaissance. Dante's use of Greco-Roman "pagan folkloric" imagery in his depictions of Purgatory seems to support Hanegraaff's (1998, 407; 2012, 180-190) point (see Le Goff 1984 [1981], 337).

The most obvious link between Dante's (1909 [1320], 147-287) vision of Purgatory as relatable to a pagan past, is that he chose Virgil as his guide through Hell and into Purgatory until the Roman poet could not ascend any higher. A slightly deeper

look reveals that the sixth book of Virgil's *The Aeneid* (in Fagels 2006, 200-201) contains a depiction of the Underworld that is symmetrical to Dante's description of Purgatory when describing pathways to Hell (Tartarus in *The Aeneid*) and Heaven (Elysium in *The Aeneid*) (see also Le Goff 1984 [1981], 24). Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, Virgil's *The Aeneid*, and Homer's *The Odyssey* all contain a *katabasis* (journey into the Underworld) and a *nekyia* (dialogue with a psychopomp or a deceased person in the Underworld to gain knowledge) (Luck 1973, 148; Solmsen 1972, 31-32). According to Solmsen (1972, 31-32) historians and philologists have utilized similar comparative analyses of *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* to describe how Greco-Roman perceptions of the afterlife transformed over time. What is at least obvious for the purposes herein, is that Dante reproduced Ancient Greek and Roman plot devices and visions of the dead through his own cultural/religious lens.

Le Goff (1984 [1981], 352-353) suggested that Dante's description of Purgatory came as a relief to anxious Christians consumed with questions regarding what happens between individual death and the Last Judgement. Between the 3rd and 7th centuries, Christian anxieties among the *non valde mali* (not bad living) arose because they might die with the taint of original sin or venial sins not removed during Extreme Unction (Brown 2010, 45-46; 2015, 54-61). These anxieties logically enmeshed with concerns regarding the time lapse between individual death and the Last Judgment, which resulted in practices like the veneration of martyrs and alms giving (Brown 2015, 8-16, 42-46). At this time then, a reordering of social values concerning the dead and the living occurred as Heaven and Earth became conceived as being close to one another (ibid., 43). This reordering eased anxieties of the laity because it featured relics of Christ and Christian martyrs, which served as tangible links between the living and the dead (Brown 1981, 6). Purgatory, then, became a place where the possibility of interactions between the living and the dead could exist from the era of the Black Death through the Counter-Reformation in the 16th century (Aberth 2010, 272).

During the 14th century, Christian anxieties regarding death were reinvigorated, in part, because of the trauma of the Black Death (Aberth 2010, 252). Due to Pope Benedict XII's papal bull regarding the Beatific Vision, Purgatory practice in the 14th century developed prayers and petitions to Mary as an advocate for the release of souls trapped in purgation (Ariès 1981 [1977], 305-306; Binski 1996, 121-122). Mary's Assumption—a 4th-century belief claiming that the mother of Christ ascended to heaven in full body—perceived her in angelic terms, distinguished her from other saintly intercessors, and made her the model for a Good Death (Rothkrug 1980, 28). The growing use of the Ave Maria prayer in the rite of Extreme Unction may have been used to calm anxious Christians that were uncertain about their afterlife destination (Ariès 1981 [1977], 607). Another shift, then, in medieval Christian thinking appears to have taken place as a greater emphasis was placed on individual death. This shift in thought had been slowly developing since the 12th century due to a change in theological discussions regarding the "ascension of the immortal soul" (Brown 2015, 43; Bynum 1995, 290-291, and see McMahon 2006, 1-9). Ariès (1981 [1977], 606) has suggested that this concentration on an individual and immortal soul created a sense of social distance between the living and the dead.

Ariès (1981 [1977], 607) claims that the Christian need for Purgatory dissolved as the living and the dead grew farther apart because the afterlife of individuals became

a greater Christian concern and focus than the collective eschatology of the Last Judgment. Eire (1995, 15) disagrees with Ariès' (1981 [1977], 607), noting that 16th-century Spaniards still conceived of Purgatory as a place that kept the living and the dead in proximity with one another. Le Goff (1984 [1981], 97) seems to support Eire's (1995, 15) argument as the former scholar cites Isadore of Seville and Julian of Toledo as 7th-century Iberian theologians who were precursors to Dante's creation of Purgatory as a physical place. For Julian of Toledo, souls were semi-corporeal substances allowing for the possibility of torture so that the soul could experience purgation with varying intensities of fire (ibid., 99). In the 12th century, when Purgatory became official Church doctrine, Julian of Vézeley drew from Isadore of Seville to write about his own demise and how Death would drag his soul into Purgatory on Mount Etna, Sicily (in ibid., 99, 202-203). Dante's vision of Purgatory, then, was not novel in giving a physical place for divine retribution for the individual on Earth, but was an idea already well-established on the Iberian Peninsula (Le Goff 1984 [1981], 99, 202-203; Muir 2005, 55-56).

Dante's understanding of Purgatory as a physical place may have also resulted from a blending of Augustinian notions of the ascent of the immortal soul and Thomistc notions of the "subsistent soul" (Le Goff (1984 [1981], 2-4, 271-278; McMahon 2006, 1-9). While Augustine of Hippo (2014 [419], 108) and Thomas Aquinas (1947 [1270], 482-483) both argued against the corporeality of the soul, their respective ideas—regarding the soul's ascension (Augustine 2006 [397-400], 66, 195) and the soul's need for purgation after death resembling living penance (Aquinas 1947 [1270], 4030-4031)—contributed to late medieval popular beliefs resembling Dante's (1909 [1320], 147-282) description of Purgatory as a physical place (see Le Goff 1984 [1981], 62, 278; McMahon 2006, 5). Regardless of where the belief stemmed from exactly, Eire (1995, 15) cites the belief in the proximity between the living and the dead in 16th-century Spain as an underlying cause for Purgatory remaining a physical place located in local graveyards. Spanish understandings of Purgatory as a material reality located in local graveyards probably developed within local brotherhoods that devoted themselves to souls trapped in Purgatory and who were responsible for the burying of the deceased (Christian 1981, 143; Eire 1995, 15).

In 16th-century Spain and New Spain, Purgatory may have kept the distance between Heaven and Earth relatively close ideologically, but an individual's time spent in purgation seemed to coincide with a strict and uneven Iberian social structure (Brown 2010, 44-47; Eire 1995, 15, 249; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 152; Lomnitz 2005, 100-101, 205; Muir 2005, 55-56). In the colonial context, for example, Spaniards believed the feast days of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day were practices capable of altering Indigenous Central Mexican social relations between the living and the dead (Lomnitz 2005, 100-101). As Lomnitz (ibid.) suggests, *El Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) was a Spanish construction used to further instruct the Catholic belief in Purgatory to Indigenous Central Mexicans. The Mexican Día de los Muertos, however, became a harvest festival incorporating former Indigenous Central Mexican notions of community and reciprocity into Christian beliefs regarding death and the afterlife (Lomnitz 2005, 114-116). Spaniards hoped that eventually the Day of the Dead would lead to Indigenous communities accepting the Catholic notion of Purgatory (ibid.). Instead, Indigenous Central Mexican resistance to the doctrines of Purgatory and All Saints'/All

Souls' Days became further evidence of continued Indigenous "ancestor worship" and "idolatry" (Lomnitz 2005, 100-101).

By the late 16th century, Spanish friars already noticed differences between Día de los Muertos and All Saints'/All Souls' Days (Lomnitz 2005, 113-114). Conflicting Indigenous understandings of the Days of the Dead and All Saints'/All Souls' Days appeared to Spanish authorities as an ongoing act of defiance (ibid., 100-101). From a Spanish perspective, Indigenous Central Mexicans struggled to fully adopt the All Saints and All Souls doctrines. For evangelizers in New Spain, then, defying Purgatory demonstrated Indigenous reluctance to relinquish their "idolatrous ways" (ibid.). The doctrine of Purgatory further introduced the Western European Christian concept of an individual and immortal soul to Mesoamerican worldviews and thus undermined reciprocal social relations connected to ancestors (ibid, 205). Colonial authorities consistently reinforced Iberian notions of the individual soul through practices related to Purgatory throughout the 17th century (ibid, 200-205). Purgatory, then, became a tool to establish social control in colonial environment (ibid., 105, 114-116).

The Church in New Spain sought to establish belief in Purgatory among Indigenous Central Mexicans through catechisms in *Nahuatl* (the main Indigenous language in Central Mexico) (Burkhart 2004, 47-49). Nahuatl didactic translations included those of "the art of dying a Good Death," which further assumes an unmet need among Indigenous Mexicans to receive the rite of Extreme Unction (ibid., 48). Late medieval Spanish Christian representations of La Parca also became intertwined with instructing Indigenous peoples on the European concept of Purgatory (Aberth 2010, 222-224; Binski 1996, 158-163; Le Goff 1981 [1984], 17-34; Malvido 2005, 23; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52). In the Americas, La Parca became a female figure of Death that seemingly corresponded with Mary and functioned as a social leveler (Malvido 2005, 23-25; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52). Burkhart (2004, 48-52) suggests that this figure of Death was meant to provide a contemplative focal point for Indigenous Mexicans that were unable to receive a Good Death. As the death toll approximated forty million after the first century of colonization, the Spanish occupation of Mesoamerica nearly doubled the estimated loss of human life during the European Black Death (Restall 2004, 128, 187n.80). Spanish images of Death, therefore, became ubiquitous throughout New Spain due to the physical devastation caused by colonization and the Spanish imposition of Purgatory on Indigenous cultures (Lomnitz 2005, 184-185).

The Dance of Death, *Testament of Abraham*, and Mary on the Iberian Peninsula

The colonial Mexican portrayal of Death as an embodied skeletal figure that abates all hierarchical social structures began with the Dance of Death in medieval Europe (Aberth 2010, 231; Eire 1995, 10). Various forms of poetry, artwork, and performances circulated throughout medieval Europe that featured skeletons leading people of all social classes to their deaths and celebrated their dying (Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52; Seaton 1996, 235). In contrast to the focus on individual death—as noted in the *Ars Moriendi*, the rite of Extreme Unction, memento mori, and transi tombs—artists oriented the Dance of Death toward social well-being (Aberth 2010, 233, 238; Ariès 1981 [1977], 607; Muir 2005, 57). By the end of the 15th century, the Dance of Death had the psychological effect of projecting a utopian vision of an afterlife without social rank onto

human death and dying (Muir 2005, 57). The Dance, however, likely originated as an illustrated poem that merely portrayed Death as a psychopomp-like figure who brought souls to their ultimate judgment without discerning judgment of its own (Aberth 2010, 229-231; Jones 2010, 81).

While debates remain regarding the origins of the Dance of Death, Whyte (1977 [1931], vii-xi, 52-60) suggested that the *Testament of Abraham* led to its particular use in Spain. Allison (2003, 38-39, 324-325) further suggests that Hellenized Jews between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE conceived of Death as an angel in the *Testament of Abraham* because *Thanatos*—the Greek daemon that embodied death itself—had wings. Allison (ibid., 324-325) describes the Angel of Death as follows,

> Death resembles the angels in 12:1, because he can look like an archangel (v.6), and because he dwells in heaven (see on v.2), he is some sort of angel.… Later Judaism, personified Death as the Angel of Death… This angel acts at God's bidding… He is often called Sam(m)ael, which may mean "poison of God"…16.2. Michael, the incorporeal, who is (in contrast to Abraham) obedient as always, goes away and speaks to Death, who is evidently not far away.

In the *Testament of Abraham*, God orders Michael to bring Abraham's soul into paradise (in Allison 2003, 319-363). When Michael is unable to convince Abraham that his time on Earth is over, God tells the archangel to remind Abraham that all descendants of Adam and Eve are born to die (see Ginzberg 1998 [1909], 126-127). God sent Michael to receive Abraham's soul into heaven as a demonstration of his love for the patriarch by withholding the sickle of Death from him (ibid.). Michael shows Abraham where judgment of the deceased occurs but the angel fails to retrieve the patriarch's soul (ibid., 127, 151). After Michael's failure, God sends the archangel Samael to collect Abraham's soul. People's souls would reportedly leap from their bodies by merely glancing at Samael (Allison 2003, 320-321; Ginzberg 1998 [1909], 128, 519). Abraham intensifies his negotiations to remain alive after Samael reveals itself as Death; however, when the angel tricks the patriarch into touching Death's hand, Abraham immediately ascends into paradise (Allison 2003, 320-321, 382). Abraham's negotiations to delay his own demise failed because he touched Death's "hand" (ibid., 382).

In this depiction, Death is obviously an embodied figure juxtaposed as an opposite to Michael, yet shares the latter's role of acquiring souls at God's command (Diamond 1995, 77-78, Ginzberg 1998 [1909], 519, Mirguet 2010, 253-254). Samael and Michael function as mirrors to each other in their actions and in their characteristics, however, the former is depicted as an embodied, obdurate, and callous executioner of God's will that treats all humans the same without favors (Allison 2003, 44-45, Mirguet 2010, 269, 271-273). Unlike the *Ars Moriendi*, the *Testament of Abraham* depicted negotiations with the Angel of Death as impossible (Allison 2003, 391; Jones 2010, 80; Whyte 1977 [1931], 55). The Spanish performances of the Dance of Death (*La Danza de la Muerte*) would further maintain Death as both a social leveler (*Ars Moriendi*) and an obdurate negotiator (*Testament of Abraham*), but added the redemptive powers of Mary—as the dance was performed in honor of the Virgin mother (Whyte 1977 [1931], 41-43, 51, 63).

Iberian forms of piety seem to have expressed a dualistic tendency in penitent movements that stressed Mary's presence during Christ's crucifixion but also regarded Death as a singular feminine entity (Whyte 1977 [1931], 43, 63). The connection between Mary and an embodied female figure of Death was most likely part of a common Eva-Ave typology that resulted from the dualistic perception of life in medieval Iberia (life and death; good and evil; desire and law) (Burke 1998, 5). Medieval Spanish literature and theatrical performances utilized this Eva-Ave typology to fashion an aesthetic juxtaposition wherein Eve was the sinful progenitor of death while Mary was the innocent creator of life (Burke 1998, 5). Medieval Europeans undoubtedly associated Mary with life and purity, and Eve with death and sin (Binski 1996, 174, 202). This dichotomous cosmos—derived most likely from Platonic philosophical influences on early Christianity—facilitated diametrically opposed images like that of heaven and hell (ibid., 166-167). The dichotomy of the spiritual and the material—found throughout medieval Europe—was conflated in Spanish conceptions related to Death due to the aforementioned understanding of Purgatory as physical place, the use of Death in liturgical theatre, and in the gendering of Death (see Binski 1996, 157; Guthke 1999, 115; Le Goff 1984 [1981], 99, 202-203; Muir 2005, 55-56; Whyte 1977 [1931], 47, 51).

Gendering of Death in artistic depictions also appears to coincide somewhat with whether a culture blamed Adam or Eve as the individual responsible for original sin (Guthke 1999, 4). The associations of women with Death in the medieval context, then, was part of the gendered discourse within Christianity that sought to expose the female as treacherous, alien, and aberrant (Binski 1996, 163). Christian medieval artwork often transformed the Greek conception of death as the male Thanatos into a feminine figure (Binski 1996, 158-163; Guthke 1999, 10-32). For example, 13th-century European Christian artwork often intertwined feminine images of Death with Eve and serpents (Binski 1996, 158). The 14th-century painting, *The Triumph of Death* in the Camposanto at Pisa, features Death as a female with a scythe and bat-like wings (Binski 1996, 163). The image of a female Death was a central aspect of theatrical performances of the Dance of Death in Spain that led to a combining of the material and the spiritual in (Binski 1996, 157; Guthke 1999, 115; Whyte 1977 [1931], 47, 51). According to Whyte (1977 [1931], 51), Death is without question female in *La Danza de la Muerte*, which was performed as a devotion to Mary on the Iberian Peninsula.

La Danza de la Muerte existed in at least six forms during the 15th and 16th centuries: *La Dança general de la Muerte* (The General Dance of Death); *Las Coplas de la Muerte* (The Couplets of Death); *La Farsa de la Muerte* (The Farce of Death); *El Coloquio de la Muerte* (The Colloquium of Death); *Farsa Llamada Dança de la Muerte* (Farce Called the Dance of Death); and *Las Cortes de la Muerte* (The Courts of Death) (ibid., 50, 52, 71, 80, 93, 100). *La Danza de la Muerte* is a corpus of devotional songs and performances accompanied with musicians and choregraphed dancers (ibid., 38). The corpus extends from *Ad Mortem festinamus* (we rush into death) a devotional song that begins, "Arise from your mortal sleep! Death comes swiftly and spares no one;" and ends, "Let us cease to sin! May the Virgin be our mediator when this earthly exile is over" (Whyte 1977 [1931], 38). *La Danza de la Muerte* and *Ad Mortem festinamus* were both devotional practices that honored the Virgin of Montserrat (ibid., 38, 42-43). *La Danza de la Muerte* performances were the end point of pilgrimages to the Montserrat

monastery where devotees climbed mountainous terrain as a form of Marian devotion and penance (Whyte 1977 [1931], 42-43).

Whyte (1977 [1931], 62-65) interprets *Las Coplas de la Muerte* in terms of Death being an embodied female who brings souls of the deceased to the compassionate mercy of Mary in Purgatory. At the end of *Las Coplas de la Muerte*, Death guides a pilgrim lost in Purgatory, despite pleas for his life, to the celestial court where Christ judges his soul (ibid., 62-63). A demon and an angel both claim ownership of the soul in the celestial court; however, the soul remains in Purgatory until the Last Judgment due to the intercession of Mary (Ibid.). Juxtaposing Mary with a female Death reveals a relationship where Death brings the soul before the stern judgment of Christ while Mary advocates for the soul to enter Purgatory (ibid., 63). *La Farsa de la Muerte* depicts Death in bodily terms when an old man claims Death's weakness exists in her being both a woman and the daughter of sin (Sánchez de Badajoz 1985 [1554] and in Whyte 1977 [1931], 79). Through the dialogue in *La Farsa de la Muerte*, Death is an embodiment of the "gate to eternal life" that Christ's death and resurrection opened for humanity (Sánchez de Badajoz 1985 [1554] and in Whyte 1977 [1931], 79). *La Dança general la Muerte* juxtaposes dancers painted as skeletons with a scythe wielding female Death who speaks directly to the audience (Whyte 1977 [1931], 46-48). *Las Coplas de la Muerte* is indicative of Death becoming increasingly thought of as a participant in the reckoning of individual souls, a gateway to the afterlife, and an emblem of social justice in the Last Judgment (Aberth 2010,231, 269; Jones 2010, 81; Whyte (1977 [1931], 52-65).

Death—throughout *La Danza de la Muerte* corpus—was neither abstract nor an incorporeal entity, rather, the drama depicts Death as an embodied being with teeth, rough hands, and an ugly face (Whyte 1977 [1931], 51). The figure of Death was an embodied eschatological actor with god-like powers in the Last Judgment who had the ability to bring about incorruptible and unbiased justice (Aberth 2010, 222-224). The conceptualization of Death as a herald of the Last Judgment and as a psychopomp that brings souls to justice without personal attachment and discrimination is the basis for popular imagery referred to as the Grim Reaper in English and La Parca in Spanish (Aberth 2010, 252; Jones 2010, 80; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52; Turner 1996, 78). This Grim Reaper-like embodiment of Death is a composite of metonyms designed for the Christian contemplation of one's own demise (Coulson and Oakley 2003, 75; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52).

Death as a Metonymic Composite

Radden and Kövecses (1999, 21) define metonymy as a blending of two distinct objects in which the first leads one to think of the second by way of a culturally patterned conceptualization. Metonyms are not arbitrary signifiers but arise from causal associations in everyday experience that provide insight into how cultural representations remain continuous over time (Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980], 39-40). Metonymy is a form of cognitive modeling that produces cultural meanings within a "contained-as-a-part relationship" (Lakoff 1987, 18-19). The Grim Reaper's scythe, for example, is only a small part of Revelation's apocalyptic plotline yet the scythe contains, through its relationship to Revelation, the meaning of the eschatological harvest in

medieval Christendom (see Aberth 2010, 231-237; Lakoff 1987, 18-19; Revelation 14:13-20).

Each metonym within the Grim Reaper composite carries historical significance connected to apocalyptic beliefs associated with the Black Death. The clothing of priests attending to funerals and the rites of the dying during the Black Death era forms the metonymy of the Grim Reaper's cowl (Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84). The metonymical relationships contained within the Grim Reaper are a series of Christian referents, like the scythe from Revelation 14:13-20, linking skeletons in the Dance of Death with priests consoling the communities affected by large numbers of people dying from disease (Coogan 2010, 1789n.13; Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84; Jones 2010, 81). The connection of priests to the eschatological harvest through apocalyptic sermons during bouts of epidemics, blends the cowl to the scythe while the skeleton blends to the scythe through the metonymical links of reaper, death, killer, and skeleton (Aberth 2010, 125; Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84; Jones 2010, 80; Turner 1996, 78).

Fauconnier and Turner (1999, 77-84) refer to the Grim Reaper's composite structure as a conceptual integration network because the cowl, skeleton, and scythe are metonyms that "blend" or combine their meanings to create an emergent structure with its own meaning. For example, the cowl, skeleton, and scythe metonymically refer to disparate social actors (i.e., a priest, a dead human, and a reaper), yet each referent together created a culturally recognizable fourth social actor (i.e., the Grim Reaper) (ibid., 83-84). The Grim Reaper conceptual integration network is a "topology" because additional elements may blend new meanings into the already established significance of the original metonymic composite (ibid., 85). As both a conceptual integration network and a metonymic topology, then, Grim Reaper imagery transforms death from a culturally constructed concept of the end of a person's life into an embodied material composite capable of taking on new meanings as additional blends occur (Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84-85; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562).

The scythe, the skeleton, and the cowl form a material composite embodying an abstract concept that Págan Cánovas (2011, 562) refers to as a causal tautology (Death causes death). In this tautology, the scythe transforms from a harvesting tool to an eschatological instrument because it combines with the skeleton of a deceased human and the cowl worn by Christian monks (Turner 1996, 80). The Grim Reaper as a causal tautology exemplifies how material composites can experience longevity within cultures (Págan Cánovas 2011, 574). As a material composite that emerged out of the Black Death milieu, the Grim Reaper is a causal tautology that contains the metonymic relationships of a scythe (eschatological instrument) which blends to a skeleton (deceased person), and then blends to a cowl (used in medieval Christian death rites) (Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84; Jones 2010, 81; Lakoff 1987, 18-19; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562).

As a causal tautology, the Grim Reaper is a logical psychopomp for envisioning and contemplating the Christian conceptions of life and the afterlife (Eire 1995, 10, 309; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562). The Grim Reaper parallels psychopomps of ancient Greece and Rome as well as the Angel of Death from Judaism in terms of shared characteristics (obdurate, unyielding, and pitiless) and similar function (a guide to the afterlife) (Cooper 1997, 1217-1223; Faraone 1991, 3-6; Graf 1991, 191-197; Kastenbaum and Kastenbaum 1989, 205-206, 211; Littleton 2002, 194-195; McLerran

and McKee 1991, 66-67; Exodus 12:23-29; 2 Kings 19:35; Revelation 6:4, 20:14). The Grim Reaper is an icon signifying through resemblances of characteristics found within already existing figures of Death (see Keane 2003, 239; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562; Peirce 1998 [1895], 13).

The Grim Reaper, then, is an icon of Death derived in characteristics and function from Greek, Roman, and Judaic conceptions of death that blended with apocalyptic Christian referents—as per the metonyms of scythe, cowl, and skeleton—constituting an emergent structure (Chesnut 2012, 6; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52; Turner 1996, 77). The scythe, the skeleton, and the cowl within this iconic structure portray the material composite of Death as an embodied eschatological actor (Turner 1996, 78). The Grim Reaper is such a common blend of Christian imagery and apocalyptic allegories that the mere inclusion of Death into a work of art or fiction connotes an eschatological actor devoid of personal volition but who acts upon divine orders (Coulson and Oakley 2003, 75). The Grim Reaper further connotes mystery, solitude, and non-ordinary human social interactions (Fauconnier and Turner 1999, 84).

Cognitive processes shared by humanity form the metonymic composition of Death; however, the Grim Reaper only exists in societies exposed to apocalyptic Christian referents (Kövecses 2005, 282). The metonyms of skeleton, scythe, and cowl formed the Grim Reaper as an icon—featured in Dance of Death performances, on transi tombs, and within the *Ars Moriendi* literature and rites—that became understood as an eschatological actor present at the Apocalypse described in Revelation (Aberth 2010, 252; Págan Cánovas 2011, 562, Turner 1996, 77). In late medieval Western Europe, this Grim Reaper-like icon further connoted social leveling within an eschatological context (Eire 1995, 309; Jones 2010, 80-81).

Holy Death in Central Mexico and Beyond

Spaniards brought this Grim Reaper-like icon of Death from Iberia, which not only represented but also embodied a particular cultural understanding of death (Brandes 1998, 199; Lomnitz 2005, 184-185). Death as a servant of God was a feature originating in *The Testament of Abraham*, that appeared in liturgical dramas in Iberia, and utilized by early friars in New Spain in didactic plays (Burkhart 2004, 31, 51; Whyte 1977 [1931], 42-44). Friars used these didactic plays featuring the figure of Death alongside angels, demons, Jesus, and Mary to instruct Indigenous Central Mexicans on Christian notions of sin, the 10 Commandments, the immortal soul, and a bifurcated retributive afterlife (Burkhart 2004, 32-38). The icon of Death—in plays like *How to Live on Earth*, *Final Judgment*, and *The Life of Don Sebastían*—was an embodied actor depicted as a skeleton carrying a scythe who worked as the “Constable” for the “Just Judge,” or Christ, and alongside Mary as the “Advocate” for souls who were on trial (Burkhart 2004, 31).

In these didactic plays, contemplating Death was hoped to be a means to educate Nahuatl speaking peoples on how to be conscious of one’s sins and to perceive death as a natural and spiritual good for the true Catholic (Burkhart 2004, 38). In *The Life of Don Sebastían*, for example, a demon brings Don Sebastían in front of Death who then tells the dead man, “Abandon the things of the earth, the pleasures…Save your soul; may your sins trouble you” (ibid., 287). Death reads off the

charges levied against Don Sebastían, which correspond directly to the 10 Commandments while a chorus of demons and angels confirm the dead man's sins (ibid., 299-303). In *The Final Judgment*, Death announces the arrival of the Last Judgment and proclaims that the people of Earth are "piteous" and "blind" (ibid., 195). The clergy further taught Dance of Death songs and plays to Indigenous Central Mexican children to inculcate Iberian social structure in New Spain (Malvido 2008, 64-65). Children's versions of the Dance of Death revealed Death to be both an abstraction and an embodied actor (ibid., 66). Using Death in the abstract demonstrated that human mortality resulted from original sin (ibid., 64-65). As an embodied actor, Death was the executer of "divine justice," corresponding to associations of Death as the great social leveler (ibid., 69-71).

Since didactic plays like *The Final Judgment* portrayed Christ, Mary, Michael, the Devil, and Death together as ethical teachers, the emerging "Holy Death" (*Santa Muerte*) imagery became vital to converting Indigenous Central Mexicans (Burkhart 2004, 29, 50-51). Focusing on the figure of Death in popular forms of Holy Death imagery, however, angered some Catholic authorities since the Church deemed images of Mary and Saint Joseph (Mary's husband) as the only proper representations of a Good Death (Burkhart 2004, 48-49; Lomnitz 2005, 130-131). Spanish portrayals of Death as an embodied actor led to an understanding among Indigenous Central Mexicans that Death was a person-like figure in Catholic cosmology (Burkhart 2004, 52). Indigenous Central Mexicans thus adopted in their own way, an Iberian figure of embodied Death that Spaniards presented to them in didactic plays derived from the Dance of Death (Malvido 2008, 66 and see Whyte 1977 [1931], 46-47). This icon of Death that arrived in New Spain as a tool for conversion, then, would later become a means to cope with the trauma of colonialism (Burkhart 2004, 51; Malvido 2005, 25; Malvido 2008, 62-63; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 54).

According to Gruzinski (2001 [1990], 164), Indigenous Central Mexican imagery that Catholic officials admonished as idolatry—including a depiction of *Justo Juez* (Just Judge) as a red skeleton carrying a bow and arrow—was intentionally subversive. Indigenous Central Mexicans transformed the European image of the Just Judge as a depiction of Christ's crucifixion into a red skeleton as part of a growing corpus of Holy Death imagery utilized to contest Spanish authority, which intertwined with imagery of Mary because she was the main protagonist of a Good Death, and her imagery was vital to New Spain's power structure through cofradías (Burkhart 2004, 48-49; Gruzinski 1990, 206; Gruzinski (2001 [1990], 164; Lomnitz 2005, 130-131). During large scale epidemics, colonial inquisitorial records further show that Indigenous Central Mexicans whipped images of both Christ and Death at funeral services (Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 199). There were also instances where subversive images of Holy Death, depicted as "a skull of green stone with enormous teeth, and wearing golden earrings" received offerings for curing and ending epidemics (ibid., 164). The apocalyptic hope of establishing a New Jerusalem in the Americas and the desire to eradicate so-called Indigenous "idolatrous beliefs" were comingling forms of Catholic instruction that fostered colonial subjugation (Burkhart 2004, 195, 299-303; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 32-33, 164; Malvido 2008, 64-68).

Conflicting views of death were a source of contention that Spaniards used to reinforce New Spain's social hierarchy (Burkhart 2004, 29; Lomnitz 2005, 153-156, 200,

261-262; Poole 1995, 21). New Spain's Iberian Death imagery became emblematic of *mestizo* (Spanish and Indigenous mixed ancestry) culture because Death as a social leveling person-like entity provided an outlet to colonial trauma (Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 164; Lomnitz 2005, 184-185, 199-204, 261-262). This use of Death as a social leveler is part of a larger historical process dating back to pre-Christian European folk traditions (see Caciola 2016, 346-348; Faraone 2003, 49-51; McLerran and McKee 1991, 11, 67; Versnel 1991, 64; Wilburn 2016, 197, 215). The combining of pre-Christian European folk traditions and the confused idea of Death as a divine actor in pre-Columbian Mesoamerican traditions hides the medieval Spanish Christian understanding of Death as a divine agent of God.

This ignoring of medieval Christian conceptions of conflating the material and spiritual through Death perpetuates analyses found in the modern academy that assert such a conflation is rooted in a pagan past and not a truly Christian sentiment. As Caciola (2016, 349-350) states,

> [F]olk traditions that associated the deceased with fertility and abundance were reformulated as commentaries on a retributive afterlife. Likewise, the ancient role of seer and psychopomp was recuperated by clerics in order to offer insights into the world beyond the grave…Missionaries, religious chroniclers, and clerics reinterpreted indigenous pagan traditions according to their own priorities, of course, and it is chiefly these reformulated versions, not the original ones, that we encounter in the written record. Yet the traces of their pagan past may readily be discerned.

Caciola's (2016, 349-350) discussion of "reformulated" pre-Christian traditions resonates with de Certeau's (1984, xiii) modern description of reproduction (secondary production) as a "manipulation by users who are not its makers." Reproduction here refers to everyday practices that perpetuate and transform past social interactions within structured categories of thought and action (following Bourdieu 1977 [1972], 79; de Certeau 1984, xiii; Sahlins 1981, 67). Reproduction, in one sense, refers to the facilitation or prevention of practices and discourses within the organizing social forces of things and people (Smith 1999, 11). How individuals reproduce discourses and practices, however, is not a "mechanical reaction" (Bourdieu 1977 [1972], 79). Sahlins (1981, 67, 70) notes that while reproduction does not occur without alteration, such transformation remains limited to the cultural categories available to social actors. Within these cultural categories, individuals employ tactics according to their own logics, interests, and desires (de Certeau 1984, xviii-xix).

The cultural categories of Death, materiality, embodiment, and divine actor discussed herein result from an intellectual internalization of past socio-cultural interactions that individuals reproduce through externalized discourses and practices (Bourdieu 1977 [1972], 79). For example, medieval Europeans reproduced pre-Christian folk traditions associated with death and fertility as a retributive and apocalyptic eschatological actor (Aberth 2010, 130, 215-224; Caciola 2016, 349-350; Pagels 2012, 37). Colonialism brought the icon of Death to the Americas, where Spaniards reproduced the Dance of Death liturgical performances as didactic plays for conversion (see Burkhart 2004, 51; Whyte 1977 [1931], 42-44). Mexican Catholics later reproduced imagery signifying a Good Death in confraternities to challenge oppressive

Iberian socio-religious conventions (see Gruzinski 2001 [1995], 164; Kelly 1965, 108; Lewis 2011 [1961], 290; Malvido 2005, 25; Navarrete 1982, 25-40; Perdigón Castañeda 2008, 123; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 53; Toor 1947, 145).

Death as a retributive social leveler articulated in the 1st-century *Testament of Abraham*—an obdurate negotiator and a divine actor working at God's behest—appears to have remained continuous from the medieval European Black Death era through the colonization of Mexico and into modern articulations of lived Catholicism (Aberth 2010, 252; Allison 2003, 391; Binski 1996, 158; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 164; Guthke 1999, 90-91, 115-117; León 2004, 124; Lomnitz 2005, 184-185, 199-204, 261-262, 490; Malvido 2005, 23-25; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 52; Whyte 1977 [1931], 46-48, 51). Orsi's (1997, 9) understanding of lived Catholicism provides the overarching framework for analyzing the historical and contemporary reproductions of materiality and practices discussed herein (Knauft 1996, 106-107; Ortner 1984, 148). Orsi (1997, 9) defines lived religion as, "[T]he necessary and mutually transforming exchanges between religious authorities and the broader communities of practitioners, by real men and women in situations and relationships they have made and that have made them." Lived religion is an analytical framework developed from sociocultural theories of practice that examine quotidian life as a relationship between structured systems of power and individual agency (Knauft 1996, 106-107; Ortner 1984, 148).

While clerical authority never approved propitiations made to Death iconography, lived Catholicism in Mexico and Europe developed other cults to devotional objects that counter official doctrine (see Malvido 2005, 21; Head 1990, 17; Orsi 1997, 12). Differing cults to the Virgin, for example, propitiate variations on Marian icons as divine presences, despite theological rejection of such conflations of signifier and signified (Bynum 2013, 10-16; Carroll 1992, 59-62; *Council of Trent* 1995 [1545-1563], 234-235; Lee 2007, 108; Orsi 2010 [1985], xvi). Propitiations that seek miraculous intervention are conducive to approved saint veneration; however, ecclesiastics dismiss petitions as magic, witchcraft, or idolatry when they conflate the presence of a holy figure with its material representation (*Council of Trent* 1995 [1545-1563], 234-235; Hanegraaff 2012, 162; Orsi 2010 [1985], xvi; Orsi 2016, 4-11, 38, 249-252; Styers 2004, 220; Thomas 1971, 55).

The labeling of practices as folk Catholic have coincided with these devotions that seek miracles from specific icons as sacred entities in material form (see Head 1990, 200; Lee 2007, 108; Orsi 2010 [1985], xvi; Orsi 2011, 14; Orsi 2016, 4-7). Thaumaturgic-like use of devotional objects thus continued in lived Catholicism despite receiving official repudiation in the Council of Trent's (1995 [1545-1563], 234-235) "On the Invocation, Veneration, Relics of Saints, and Sacred Images" (Brown 1981, 111; Thomas 1971, 55; Tuchman 1978, 318). In the Mexican colonial context, censured practices concerning divine presence in materiality during the Counter-Reformation remained justified as sources of salvation until the 18th century within Franciscan nominalism (Cervantes 1994, 129-132; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 151, 158). Nominalists claimed that punitive discipline of idolatry was part of a divine process that led to true faith (Cervantes 1994, 129-132; Ingham 1986, 35). Nominalism prevailed in colonial Mexico from the 16th century until 18th-century Enlightenment thinking overturned it (Cervantes 1994, 129-132 and see Hanegraaff 2012, 162).

The Catholic Church, however, did not delineate a clear canonization process for sainthood until the 20th century (*Catholic Encyclopedia* 1918, 10-11; Orsi 2016, 35-36). Folk or thaumaturgic-like propitiations of saints that resembled Catholic concerns of idolatry, therefore, continued clandestinely into modernity (see Head 1990, 197-200; Hughes 2012, 4-5; Kleinberg 1992, 37, 39; Rothkrug 1980, 183; Vauchez 1997 [1988], 94, 448, 452, 536). Enlightenment intellectuals understood associations between divinity and materiality—including imagery related to an embodied figure of Death—as irrational superstition (Hanegraaff 2012, 162; Viqueira 1981, 44-45). Practices related to the icon of Death, therefore, entangled with discourses on idolatry, magic, and witchcraft, but were finally disregarded once and for all as superstitions (see *Council of Trent* 1995 [1545-1563], 234-235; Gruzinski 1990, 219; Hughes 2012, 4-5; Malvido 2005, 25; Orsi 2010 [1985], xvi; Orsi 2016, 4-11, 38, 249-252; Perdigón Castañeda 2008, 32-33, 122-127; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 53; Smith 2019, 58-83; Styers 2004, 220).

For example, colonial legislation of Mexico in 1775 sought to eliminate "idolatrous" Death iconography from confraternities (Malvido 2005, 25). A century later in the 1860's, Reform Laws of the new independent Mexican government lessened Roman Catholic political authority, yet these same laws further promoted the removal of "superstitious" Death iconography in confraternities (González Torres 1996, 6; Malvido 2005, 25; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 53). Good Death imagery pervaded New Spain due to an overwhelmed clergy unable to contend with administering rites of the dying amidst catastrophic mortality (Burkhart 2004, 48-52; Hughes 2021, 23-26; Lomnitz 2005, 184-185). In 1576 alone, an epidemic took the lives of two million people, and within one century, Spanish colonization almost doubled the mortality rate of the European Black Death (Hughes 2021, 26; Restall 2004, 128, 187n.80). Such excessive mortality rates in New Spain led to the creation of a cult of death that propitiated Good Death imagery to end epidemics (see Brodman 2011, 39; Burkhart 2004, 50-51; Chesnut 2012, 27-33; Graziano 2007, 78; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 163-166, 201; Malvido 2005, 20, 25).

Death imagery utilized in petitions to end epidemics eventually evolved into a means to subvert colonial authority (Gruzinski 1990, 206, 217-219; 2001 [1990], 164, 199). The use of Holy Death as a devotional object surfaced in inquisitorial records of the 18th century (Gruzinski 1990, 219). During this time, Holy Death devotional objects had developed into a means to cope with the trauma of colonialism (see Burkhart 2004, 51; Malvido 2005, 25; Malvido 2008, 62-63; Reyes Ruiz 2011, 54). The marginalized blended cultures of colonial Mexico gravitated to Death iconography as an embodied divine actor because it enacted (not just represented) a social leveling entity within a rigid social hierarchy (Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 164; Lomnitz 2005, 184-185, 199-204, 261-262). In promoting Mary as the ideal of dying well, however, Catholic authorities labeled subversive devotions to Death as idolatrous (Gruzinski 1990, 206, 217-219; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 164, 199; Lomnitz 2005, 130-131; Malvido 2008, 66). Consistent exposure to high mortality rates in New Spain, then, transformed Good Death iconography from a contemplative focal point into "idolatrous" devotional practices because it resembled the intercessory power of saints (see Brandes 1998, 214; Brown 1981, 4; Graziano 2007, 78; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 164, 201; Head 1990, 197).

The Roman Catholic Church has never wavered on prohibiting veneration of Death images (Malvido 2005, 21). Lived Catholicism in Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere, however, have long histories of the faithful engaging in everyday

relationships with devotional objects rather than strictly adhering to official doctrine and clerical authority (Orsi 1997, 12). Communities in New Spain venerated the figure of Death despite disapproval from Catholic authorities since the 17th century (Navarrete 1982, 25-40). Likewise, in Argentina, veneration of San La Muerte (a male Death Saint resembling the Grim Reaper) began in the 18th century and continues to this day (Graziano 2007, 98). By the 19th century, Central Mexicans began conflating the figure of Death with Satan, the Devil, and the dragon from Revelation 12:1-17 (Ingham 1986, 105-110). The conflation resonates with motifs found in the *Testament of Abraham* and Revelation, and results in a juxtaposition of Death and Satan with the archangel Michael (Allison 2003, 44-45; Coogan 2010, 1786n.3; Ginzberg 1998 [1909], 49, 131-132; Mirguet 2010, 269).

Iberian Death imagery rearticulated in New Spain's colonial context, then, remained an important signifier as Mexico developed from part of the Spanish Empire to becoming a nation-state (Lomnitz 2005, 26, 28, 495). León (2004, 124), for example, shows how Mexican cultures commonly view Death when quoting the following story,

> A very poor man who always made sacrifices to provide for his large family decides that just once he would like to know the feeling of a full stomach. He asks his wife to prepare a special lunch for him that he may take off into the countryside and have all to himself. To his dismay he runs into an old man who asks him to share his food. He refuses and feels justified when he learns that the old man is God, for God is not just in his dealing with men. [God] provides some [people] with wealth, while He condemns others to poverty. [The man] is about to settle down once more to his meal, when he is approached by an old woman… When he learns that she is Death, he very willingly shares with her, exclaiming that Death does treat all men equally.

León (2004, 124) and Lomnitz (2005, 490) independently reference La Santa Muerte as "Death the social leveler," which is consistent with medieval iconography. La Santa Muerte, then, resembles the medieval icon of Death transferred to the colonial context of New Spain and reborn in the 21st century as a popular saint.

End Discussion

In discussing the power of icons in particular contexts, Chidester (2018, 82) writes, "[I]n many religious traditions, visual images, or icons, have often been perceived as imbued with sacred power that is presentational rather than representational." Orsi's (2010 [1985]:xviii-xix) study on Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Italian Harlem is instructive regarding the notion of a presentational sacred power within lived or vernacular forms of Catholicism. La Santa Muerte is often referred to as a presence felt by those that believe in her as a personal caretaker. As with devotees in the cult of Mary, Muertistas maintain that there is only one Death and yet, devotees also establish personal relationships with their own La Santa Muerte effigies (see Kristensen 2014, 13). Conflating an icon with what it resembles results in relationships that attribute person-like qualities to effigies within a familial-like network of things and people (following Gell 1998, 123). As Kristensen (2014, 13) suggests, when devotees view Death as an icon

that simultaneously embodies and resembles, they treat their own effigies in a relational manner. In this conflation of signifier and signified, La Santa Muerte's iconic form becomes a person-like presence that allows devotees to create intimate relationships with Death (see Kristensen 2014, 13; Maniura 2011, 52; Orsi 2010 [1985], xvi; 2011, 14).

Not only is veneration of Death strictly prohibited by the Roman Catholic Church (Castells Ballarin 2008:14, 22-23, Kristensen 2014:2-3); Muertista beliefs that La Santa Muerte, like Mary, manifests in distinct forms and personalities in association with differing depictions is a further violation of official doctrine beginning with the Council of Trent (1995 [1545-1563]: 234-235 and see Orsi 2016:4-7). As Orsi (2010 [1985]:xvi) states, "[B]y the distinctive devotional logic of presence, the Madonna was understood to be present in a special way in this statue." Perceiving the icon of Death as a divine presence, like the Madonna of 115th Street, is a consequence of Western Christian discourses on devotional objects (see Bynum 2011, 31-32; Cervantes 1994, 20-21; Eire 1986, 4-5; Gruzinski 2001 [1990], 4; Orsi 2005, 193; Orsi 2016, 2-5). In the 13th century, Western Christian theologians began debating the credibility of divine presence in devotional materiality (Bynum 2011, 19-20; Maniura 2011, 52; Orsi 2016, 2; Whitehead 2010, 97). These late medieval debates on materiality extended from Christ's incarnation to ontological questions regarding the immanence of God (Bynum 2011, 33).

By the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation both rejected the presence of divinity in materiality (apart from the Eucharist within the latter) (*Council of Trent* 1995 [1545-1563], 234-235; Eire 1986, 2-3, 28-35, 311-313; Orsi 2016, 37-38; Thomas 1971, 70). Discourse on the proper use of devotional objects (e.g., saint iconography and relics, as well as Eucharist wafers and the monstrance) are abundant in Western Christian theology from the 12th century through the end of the 16th century (Bynum 2013, 16-17; Orsi 2016, 27-29, 48-49). According to Bynum (2011, 31-32), late medieval debates regarding the material presence of divine power run parallel to current sociocultural theories of attributive agency of objects (see Gell 1998, 17), subject/object hybrids (see Latour 1993 [1991], 59), and responses to the perceived presence in images and objects (see Freedberg 1989, xxiii). Bynum (2011, 30-35) warns, however, that late medieval debates on efficacious matter differ from the recent sociocultural theories in that the former involved specific ontological questions including: what is the relationship between divinity and matter, are sacred objects divine presences (e.g., the image *is* the saint, the Eucharist wafer *is* Christ's body), and the possibility of manipulating matter (e.g., alchemy, thaumaturgy).

What Bynum (2011, 30-35) anticipates in issuing her warning is that many scholars interested in material culture and religion may use her research to support universalizing socio-cultural theories, and ignore the particularity of the historical context she investigates. Her warning is well-taken, but what this history of the medieval Good Death to La Santa Muerte illustrates is just the opposite of Bynum's (2011, 30-35) warning. It is the very particularity of that historical trajectory that reveals the very discourse on religion as belief oriented and internalized, or intellectualized, that now results in socio-cultural theories that struggle with the "material-ness" of religious belief (Chidester 2018, 2; Long 1986, 9; Orsi 2011, 15; Vásquez 2011, 6). The automatic

assumption here may be what Lopez (1998, 34) warns against, in that, what appears to be the materiality of religious belief is the result of a common assumption that internal thinking precedes and produces outward practice. Instead, I think this history of the material culture of Death is a clear example of Chidester (2018, 209) stating "Everything is material, including beliefs that arise within material conditions and texts that have material consequences in the world." Obviously, death too is a material condition of the human body, it is not ideational.

Once Death becomes a causal tautology (Death causes death), it is one small step to conceptualizing the representation of death as an embodied actor with sacred or holy power existing within a network of things and people (following Gell 1998, 123). Historically speaking this small step occurs within a negotiation of interpretations within the colonial context of New Spain (Gruzinski 2001 [1995], 164; Gruzinski 1990, 219; Malvido 2005, 20). Negotiated interpretations, like those that created Holy Death in New Spain (and in a myriad of colonial contexts including Africa, India, the Americas, etc.) produced the basic categories of thought that we use today in the modern academic study of religion (Chidester 2018, 113-115). As Orsi (2011, 15) suggests, religious studies has slowly moved toward understanding the "relational nature" of body/mind, or the spiritual/material aspects of religious belief/practice. The study of the material culture of Death, then, not only necessitates the "slashing" ("/") of old religious categories but is itself the very result of a history that produced our present-day categories within religious studies that remain rooted in the Reformations and Western European colonization of the 16th century, but remain not challenged nearly enough.

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Paul, Caesarea Maritima, and Herod's Harbor: A Summary Update

Patrick Scott Smith
World History Encyclopedia

Introduction

Besides its cosmopolitan character where people with diverse cultures and religions, including Greeks and Jews, resided, the New Testament tells of early Christian activity at Caesarea Maritima. According to the book of Acts, after his travel to Gaza and Azotus - where en route he baptized the Ethiopian notable - Phillip the Evangelist came to reside at Caesarea.[1] Too, after Peter the Apostle converted the church's first gentile member, Cornelius the Roman centurion, the Apostle Paul would sail into the city's harbor on his way to Jerusalem to report to the elders the results of his second and third missionary journeys. Then after being held prisoner for two years on charges of sedition during Felix and Festus' tenures as Roman Governors of Caesarea, Paul would sail out of city's harbor for his final journey to Rome. In this paper a summary update of past presentations for the ASSR and ASOR will be offered discussing Caesarea's history, Paul's travels as they relate to the Mediterranean trade and a rendition of the city's harbor as to its construction and probable appearance.

A City Built from the Ground Up

Caesarea Maritima was a city built over two thousand years ago (c.22-10 BC) on the coast of the eastern Mediterranean. With Roman engineering and largesse Herod the Great accomplished this feat by constructing a whole metropolis, with a colossal harbor that would make Caesarea the maritime trading oasis of its day. While we normally think of city growth in terms of incremental expansion and development**,** the remarkable thing about Caesarea is the city's main infrastructure was built ready for habitation. Yet, as Herod was known to do with all his monumental building programs, the buildout at Caesarea was done with lavish flair. Josephus, a reliable historian and eyewitness of the day, describes the splendor of the town as buildings were built with "white stone" and the city was "adorned with several splendid palaces."[2] Of the palaces, perhaps splendorous of all was Herod's residence. Called the Promontory Palace by modern excavators, as it sat on a jut-out overlooking the sea, it's lower level boasted an expansive inner courtyard containing an equally expansive pool.

Edifices also punctuating the skyline view would have included a hippodrome for chariot races, an amphitheater for sporting events like boxing and wrestling, and a smaller theatre for the arts that is still in use today. Yet, one of the most visible

[1] Acts 8:26-40.

[2] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 1.21.5.408; 1.21.6.411. Also, Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews,* 15.9.6.331.

structures would have been the temple. Juxtaposed between city and harbor, with ornate Corinthian columns; the temple towered close to 100 feet.[3] As the temple met the city's traffic grid, the *Cardo Maximus* was the main thoroughfare. Compared to a 38 feet wide modern highway, the *Cardo Maximus* was 54 feet in width. Almost a mile long, it was bordered with mosaics and was impressively lined with 700 columns certainly of the Corinthian type.[4]

Caesaria's Purpose

Situated on the southeastern coast of the Mediterranean Caesarea served as Rome's power base both commercially and militarily. North of Alexandria and south of Tyre, the location of the city/harbor complex in relation to ship and trade flows indicates a purposeful plan to capture income. The substantial flow of eastern goods going west to the eastern Mediterranean coast and the general counterclockwise movement of ship traffic in the Mediterranean made the city/harbor complex a gateway to the west. Goods from India and Indonesia would have moved west, then northwest through the Arabian and Red Seas. Goods from Egypt and Africa would have moved north up the eastern Mediterranean coast for distribution there, then west throughout the Mediterranean. Likewise, as the harbor was en route for emptied or loaded vessels circuiting the Mediterranean and for loaded ships moving north up the coast from Alexandria, the harbor/town complex also interacted with Gaza, which received goods from Africa, Arabia, India, and Indonesia, the most lucrative of which would have been pepper and frankincense.[5] In respect to Gaza, it is important to note, though Trajan would take over Petra in 106 AD, Augustus granted Gaza to Herod 136 years earlier. Thus, not only did Caesarea own Gaza's markets and worked cooperatively with Alexandria it would capture trade flows from Petra with its location en route to Gaza. As Gary Young points out incense was in fact carried from Petra by road to Gaza.[6] By owning Gaza, with its diverse markets, Caesarea was placed in a position to not only dominate sea trade, but overland trade to consumer cities inland, like Bostra, Samaria and Jerusalem. A number of trading scenarios would also include the movement of building materials, weapons and military personnel to these cities and other towns in the eastern end of the Mediterranean as the empire expanded. Specific ways in which Caesarea could also have generated income for Rome would include harbor and duty fees; income from the control and trade from mining operations; freighter service charges; its own buying and selling of bulk and refined goods; the reprocessing of goods coming from the east and north; and money saved by owning its own fleet of

[3] John W. Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 64, 105-150. See also, Nigel Rodgers, *The Architecture of Ancient Rome* (Leicestershire, England: Lorenz Books, 2013) 49.
[4] Janet Crisler, "Caesarea World Monument" in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, vol., 8, no. 3, May/June 1982. 41.
[5] Roberta Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper* (London: Duckworth, 2008) 16.
[6] Gary K. Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy 31 BC-AD 305* (New York: Routledge, 2001) 92, 97.

freighters.[7] Moreover, as an administration center with its own means of exchange Robert Bull summarizes, "In AD 6 the Romans made Caesarea the seat of provincial administration. Roman procurators, residing in Caesarea, were charged with collecting taxes, overseeing civil affairs and recruiting personnel from the local population to serve as auxiliary legionaries. The troops were paid in bronze coins struck from a mint at Caesarea licensed by Rome. The coins were also used as a means of exchange in the area's rapidly developing economy."[8]

History of Caesarea

Dedicating the city to Caesar Augustus, the area on which Herod chose to build began as a locale of habitation by the Phoenician city-state of Sidon. Sidon, like Herod, may have realized the location's potential in relation to trade flows. Presumably named after king Straton I (r. 365-352 BCE) of Sidon the place is known as Straton's Tower. Of the descriptive name given it by Josephus and other ancient writers, it is not known if Straton's "Tower" indicates a lighthouse, a warehouse, or perhaps a grain silo, since Sidon shipped raw goods and Straton's Tower was en route "the long-established Phoenician-Egyptian run."[9] Interestingly, silos recently found in Egypt, dating to around 1600 BCE are up to 6.5 meters (21 feet) in diameter suggesting a conspicuous degree of height.[10]

Sidon's certain nadir began, alongside Persia's defeat, with her capture by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.[11] Soon after, on Alexander's death, one of his generals, Seleucus I Nicator (r. 305-281 BCE) began the Greek Seleucid takeover of former Persian territories including Phoenicia. Today, from the ruins of Caesarea, excavators have found Hellenistic pottery and coins dating "from early in the 2nd century B.C."[12] Additionally, evidence of a pre-Herodian fortification associated with a Hellenistic presence is dated to the same time period, "from the second century B.C."[13] Such discovery perhaps suggests a relatively brief Seleucid presence at Straton's Tower. The area was then, "captured by the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus in

[7] Such ownership is indicated from one of the inscriptions found on the pedestals at Herod's palace dating from the 2nd century to as late as the 4th century CE. Interestingly, along with the honoring of rulers, the philosopher Titus Flavius Maximus as friend and patron of Varius Seleucus, curator of ships of the colony of Caesarea, was also honored. Such honor among dignitaries including the "curator of ships" indicates the importance of ship ownership and oversight. Barbara Burrell, Katheryn L. Gleason, and Ehud Netzer, "Uncovering Herod's Seaside Palace" in *Biblical Archaeology Review,* 19:3, May/June (1993) 57.

[8] Robert J. Bull, "Caesarea Maritima: The Search for Herod's City" in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, vol., 8, no. 3, May/June (1982) 27.

[9] Bull, 26.

[10] Archaeologists find silos and administration center from early Egyptian city | University of Chicago News (uchicago.edu)

[11] Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage* (New York: Simon and Schuster) 467. Frederick Carl Eiselen, *Sidon: A Study in Oriental History* (New York: Macmillan, 1907) 110-23; Sidon - Google Books.

[12] Duane Roller, 36. Hellenistic Pottery from Caesarea Maritima: A Preliminary Study on JSTOR

[13] Avner Raban, 86. The City Walls of Straton's Tower: Some New Archaeological Data on JSTOR

103 BCE." Then, during Rome's zenith "it was attached to the province of Syria by Pompey in 63, then given to Herod by Octavian in 30 BCE."[14]

Built on the area's ruins, after its inauguration and dedication to Caesar by Herod in 13/12 BCE, Caesarea became a cosmopolitan city of Jews, Christians, Samaritans, Greeks and Syrians living in their own districts. Within its original walls the city contained 164 acres. But during the time of the *pax Romana* - when Roman legions on the borders of the empire made a protective wall unnecessary - the city expanded far beyond the original Herodian wall. With an urban sprawl five miles long and over two miles inland, Caesarea,[15] at its height, became home to tens of thousands of residents.[16] As Barbara Burrell, et al. show, the period of Roman presence is evident with a recent find at Herod's palace of "two column-shaped pedestals with inscriptions honoring four Roman procurators that date from the 2nd century to the early 4th century CE."[17]

In the meantime, after Herod's death, Rome took steps for more direct control. In 6 CE, as Herod's palace "became the official residence of the Roman governor, his kingdom became a Roman province with Caesarea as its main port and administrative capital."[18] Then when the first Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE) was crushed with thousands of Jewish lives lost by Roman soldiers garrisoned at Caesarea, Vespasian elevated the city to the status of a Roman colony. Then when the second Jewish Revolt (132-135 CE) ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, the provincial governor of Judea was raised to senatorial rank, and Caesarea became the capital of the Roman province, Syria-Palestina.[19]

Religious Diversity in Caesarea

As part of the early Christian sector at Caesarea, according to the New Testament, Phillip, the evangelist settled there; Peter preached there; and Paul the Apostle was held prisoner there before his trial in Rome.[20] After this, little is known about the early Christians at Caesarea until a significant presence emerges in the early third century, reflected in the establishment of a major library of 30,000 volumes by Origin (c. 185-253 CE) the theologian. Utilizing that library Eusebius (d. 339) the church historian, wrote and oversaw Constantine's request for 50 copies of the Bible at Caesarea's *scriptorium*. Likewise, around the same time, though the Jews had been decimated at Caesarea, their own cultural resurgence occurred with the establishment of a school for the study of Judaism by Rabbi Hoshaiah who died in 250 CE. That school produced several outstanding teachers, including the Rabbi Abbahu.[21] Jewish presence and resurgence at Caesarea is also indicated with the building of a synagogue dating to

[14] Edith Mary Smallwood; Tessa Rajak, "Caesarea in Palestine" in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by Simon Hornblower, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2012) 262.
[15] Bull, 27.
[16] Crisler, 41.
[17] Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) 112. Burrell, "Uncovering Herod's Seaside Palace", 57.
[18] Ibid., 56.
[19] Bull, 28.
[20] Respectively, for Phillip, Acts 8:40, 21:8; Peter, 10:1-11:18; Paul, 23:33-35.
[21] Bull, 28.

the 4th century CE. Built over the site of a house-synagogue dating to the Herodian period this place was used until a new one was built over its ruins in the middle of the 5th century.[22]

Additional evidence of the religious diversity at Caesarea came with the surprise discovery of the only Mithraeum found in Israel. With a sole focus on Mithra, a single savior/god of light and truth portrayed in Persian and Indian literature, Mithraism, as it also became popular among Roman troops, involved a male only secret society requiring rigorous initiation rites.

The discovery first started with the excavation of a Roman building from the 3rd century CE called the Honorific Portico. The site yielded short columns bearing inscriptions honoring military notables on which presumably stood statues bearing their likenesses. However, further excavation revealed the building accessed and stood on top a Mithraeum below. The Romans had converted one of Herod's underground storage vaults into a space for the practice of the cult's rites, complete with an altar, benches, and frescoes of the life of Mithra.[23]

Additionally, while the literary record falls silent about Caesarea Maritima after the 4th century, material evidence of Byzantine presence comes in the form of a Byzantine fortified wall longer than the original Herodian wall. That its encirclement protected, at least in part, the expanded suburbia of Caesaria indicates a continuation of urban activity by the Byzantines. Other discoveries do as well. The Joint Expedition to Caesarea found a Byzantine structure thought to be part of a greater municipal complex. Situated along the original *Cardo Maximus* was a building dubbed the Archive Building. As mosaic was a particularly popular medium of Byzantine artistic expression - along with mosaic floors dating to the Byzantine period, mosaic inscriptions citing New Testament verses, were found. In addition the largest inscription - the reason for the site's moniker - stated, "Christ, Help Ampelios, the keeper of the archives and Musonius, the financial secretary, and the other archivists of the same depository."[24]

Finally, while the Sassanid Persians conquered the city in 614 CE and the Byzantine emperor Heraclius retook it in 627-628,[25] reflecting Caesarea's demise as a thriving municipality and commercial enterprise, Bull believes, the Archive Building was destroyed in 639/640 CE as part of the Islamic conquest of all the Middle East and north Africa.[26] Thus cutoff from the west, with its trade network diminished and harbor dysfunctional, the final ruins of this once magnificent metropolis became a quarry, as farmers burned statues and marble for lime, and stone and marble blocks were hauled off for the building of cities elsewhere.

However following the 7th century devastation, while never again playing an important role in the wider network of Mediterranean trade, Caesarea experienced a seesaw of restoration and ruin. During the centuries before the Crusades, under Arab rule the locale began a slow recovery as a farming district under the Rashidun Caliphate to a Muslim stronghold protecting a vibrant area. Nasir Khusraw, the

[22] Ibid., 32-33.
[23] Ibid., 33-37.
[24] Ibid., 38-41.
[25] Burrell, 57.
[26] Bull, 38.

Persian poet and traveler, describes in 1047, in his Book of Travels, a place of lush gardens and fountains.[27] William of Tyre also mentions the taking of the same stronghold by the Crusaders.[28] Though diminutive in comparison to the original Herodian and Byzantine fortifications, as the Crusaders made their own fortified enclosure adjacent to the diminished harbor, they occupied it in battle with Muslim forces from 1101 to 1187 and again from 1191 to 1265.[29] As Bull mentions, "While the Crusader ruins contain structures that date from early in the Crusades, the prominent visible remains today - the moat, escarpment, citadel and walls containing some sixteen towers - date from 1251 when King Louis IX of France spent a full year restoring the fortifications."[30] Finally, from the time the Mamlukes retook the Crusader fortification in 1265, destroying Crusader presence, it is believed the area became uninhabited, until it was sparsely repopulated during the Ottoman period in the mid-17th to early 19th centuries. In modern times. in 1884, Muslim refugees fleeing the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia, established a small colony on the remains of the Crusader city. Their mosque can still be seen inside the Crusader walls.[31]

Paul Travels and Trade in the Mediterranean

As Paul's four journeys by land and sea totaled over an estimated 10,000 miles he traveled through Caesarea on three of his four journeys and was held prisoner there before his last voyage to Rome.[32] Considering common travelers in ancient times hitched their rides on merchant vessels, the water portion of Paul's trips, as with all his seagoing travels, were aboard cargo ships performing trade transactions. As we will see from the New Testament account Caesarea Maritima was an important stop for Paul, confirming its importance as a port of trade in the Mediterranean. However Paul's homebase was Antioch. Located in Syria at the northeast end of the Mediterranean on the Royal Persian road and at one time rivaling Alexandria in its commercial forte, Antioch benefited from its terminus location in relation to the Silk Road and its latitude proximity to Anatolia Greece, and Italy. Besides its own wine and olive oil production[33] and as a center for the fulling of cloth products; silk from China, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, dyeworks from the Levant, weaved silk from Damascus would all have found their way through Antioch for distribution throughout the northern Mediterranean areas.[34] As it lay on the Orontes River Antioch communicated commercially with the harbor of Seleucia 26 km (16 miles) west on the Mediterranean. Thus Paul's first missionary journey was by sea from Antioch of Syria to Cyprus, then

[27] Guy Le Strange, 474. Palestine under the Moslems; A description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500.
[28] *Historia*, 10.15.
[29] Denys Pringle, Secular Buildings in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem - Google Books (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 43.
[30] Bull, 33.
[31] Ibid, 29.
[32] Eckhard Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2008) 121.
[33] Ibid., 103.
[34] David L. Kennedy, "Roman Empire" in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, vol. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 439.

by land to Asia with stops at Antioch of Asia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. As Cyprus was Paul's first stop, with a prominent location at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, it was also known for its wine and olive oil production. A scenario for trade was likely a combination of Eastern goods loaded alongside refined and agricultural products accumulated at Antioch with a stop at Cyprus for partial distribution while its products would have been added for final distribution in Anatolia.

After returning to Antioch, Paul soon wanted to revisit Asia. In Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15-18) after traveling throughout Anatolia and Greece, he leaves Corinth's port of Cenchreae in Greece for Ephesus, then he leaves for Caesarea Maritima. One of the largest cities of Greece, Corinth was once a busy trading center. With land access to the Peloponnese it dominated trade in the Saronic Gulf to the east and the Gulf of Corinth to the west and through these waters, with access to the Adriatic and Aegean Seas, Corinth may have exported, to some degree, their own perfume and textile products.[35] As to their bronze making skills and exports, Carol Mattusch declares "Corinthian bronze was highly prized for its color, and the Corinthian metalworking industry was highly respected . . . Athenaeus (5.199e) refers to two famous Corinthian bowls with capacities of more than 360 liters each, with seated figures on the rim and relief figures on the neck and body."[36] Pliny states Corinthian bronze, concerning its utility, was more valuable than silver and almost as valuable as gold, and was "the standard of monetary value." He further declares, it was so celebrated in antiquity there was a "mania" for possession of it and relates how Gegania, a wealthy lady, paid fifty-thousand sesterces for a Corinthian lamp-stand.[37] Mattusch also points out, "Bronzeworking and ironworking were carried out in the Forum Area at Corinth from the sixth century B.C. to as late as the twelfth century A.D."[38] Yet, only small finds of Corinthian bronze have been discovered thus far throughout the Greek mainland and Macedonia,[39] which perhaps can be explained, that because of its intrinsic durable value as a product able to be remolded and reused, tracing bronze and surmising production may be difficult; therefore, volume of find may sometimes be a tapered reflection of real production.[40] Two other products from Corinth likely produced for wider export were stone and roof tiles. A facility known as the Tile Factory was found not far from the center of Corinth and significant use of Corinthian stone and roof tiles is evident in the construction of the fourth-century temples at Epidaurus and Delphi.[41] Additionally, though it's value to Corinth's

[35] J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) 117-20.
[36] Carol Mattusch, "Metal Working and Tools" in *The Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, ed. John Peter Oleson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 433-34.
[37] Pliny the Elder, *The Complete Works of Pliny the Elder: Natural History*, trans. John Bostock, Henry Thomas Riley, 1855 (Hasting, United Kingdom: Delphi Classics, 2015) XXXIV.1, 3, 6.
[38] Mattusch, 434.
[39] Salmon, 118.
[40] Though iron was an important source for tools, weapons and armor, bronze appears to have had the most universal of use. It was used to make sickles, nails, roof sheeting, coins, mirrors, chandeliers, tableware, kitchen utensils, surgical instruments, shears and combs. John F. Healy, *Mining and Metallurgy in the Greek and Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) 238-39, 241-43, 246-52. Pliny mentions the use of bronze to make dishes, wash-basins, lamp-stands, feet for furniture; and to adorn tables, banqueting-couches and buffets. He also mentions that temple statues, doors and capitals were made of bronze. Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXIV.3-9.
[41] Salmon, 122-24.

economy is debated,[42] Corinthian pottery was a famous export with significant range in the Mediterranean. Specifically, as J. B. Salmon affirms, "The overwhelming preponderance of Corinthian vases in North Africa, Sicily and Italy up to the Straits of Messina demonstrates that a conscious effort was made to establish and maintain a market for Corinthian vases in these areas."[43] Though in lesser volume, Corinthian pottery has also been found on islands in the Aegean, at Delos in graves, and in the sanctuary of Hera; on the western coast of Asia Minor; and inland, such as at Sardis. Corinthian pottery has also been found in Greek colonies on the Black Sea, on non-Greek sites on the southern coast of Asia Minor, and in the Levant.[44] The two main ports on the Isthmus of Corinth was Lechaeum and Cenchreae. Lechaeum was the port for Corinthian goods going west and Cenchreae (the port Paul left from) for those headed east.[45] However, despite its significant commercial past, after the enervating Corinth-Corcyra, Peloponnesian and Corinthian wars[46], Corinth was finally destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC. But, with its rebuilding by Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE), it likely resumed production of some of the products it was familiar with, exported them to places like Ephesus and Caesarea.

Like his second journey Paul's third missionary journey would effectively end at Caesarea. On his second call on brethren in Macedonia and Achaia, leaving from Antioch, Paul would travel through Asia then spend two years in Ephesus. From Ephesus Paul likely took the Troas/Phillipi water route to Macedonia and Achaea. On his return trip back, after staying seven days at Troas, typical of commercial activity Paul's trip back east involved several junkets along the way. From Assos he would sail to Mitylene. With a three day sail from Mitylene, with two stops at Chios and Samos, Paul arrived at Miletus, an important Ionian port serving Ephesus. From Miletus the trip to the Lycian port of Patara, a commercial center for Anatolia, involved two stops along the way, at Kos and Rhodes. At Patara Paul boards another ship for the longer non-stop route to Tyre, where it would "unload its cargo", with a final stop at Caesarea. Patara's commercial significance was as a conduit of goods from Anatolia. Concerning the nature of those goods, Robert Shepard states, "Anatolia has been termed the 'cradle of mining' with reference to the appearance of iron in Hittite times, and evidence of the export of this valuable metal being found at important trading posts on the Mediterranean coast."[47] Moreover, as its metal production goes back to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, James Muhly adds, "Anatolia is a land blessed with abundant natural resources, including a wealth of mineral deposits and abundant forests, the two elements necessary for a major metal industry."[48] With

[42] Ibid., 117, 132-33.
[43] Ibid., 140. Though Attic black figure ware grew in popularity and began to take market share from Corinth in the mid-6th century BC, this does not mean Corinth stopped their pottery production, it just was not as dominant.
[44] Ibid., 107-9.
[45] Ibid., 143-45.
[46] It is likely no coincidence Corinth's commercial decline is traced to the fourth century BC when Corinth's involvement in the Greek wars began.
[47] Robert Shepherd, *Ancient Mining*; published for the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy (New York: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1993) 219.
[48] James D. Muhly, "Metals and Metallurgy" in *Ancient Anatolia: 10,000-323 B.C.E*, ed. Sharon R. Steadman, Gregory McMahon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 858-59, 859-876.

sufficient food production in the easternmost part of the Mediterranean the likely goods thus imported from Anatolia by way of Patara would have been of a metal nature shipped in ingot form.[49] As it relates to Tyre, besides the production of its famous purple-dyed cloth, according to the Biblical account in 1 Kings 7:13-45, in mid-900 BCE, as he built the temple, Solomon sought help from Tyre for the manufacture and furnishing of bronze finished products such as pillars, capitals, figures, shovels, stands, basins, and bowls. Moreover, as Tyre was known by other ancient writers for its finished metal products and as mentioned since Caesarea had its own mint producing bronze coins - such material demand for this kind of production again suggests a metal load from Anatolia. While his usual point of disembarkation for Jerusalem was Caesarea, when Paul's ship first stopped at Tyre this reflects the typical successive servicing of merchant ships. As Tyre, Ptolemais and Casarea were port cities along the Phoenician coast in relative proximity, Paul stayed a week with brethren at Tyre then sailed for Ptolemais where he stayed a day. At Ptolemais Paul boards a ship for Caesarea, his final stop by water on his final missionary journey.[50]

After landing at Caesarea then traveling to Jerusalem for his usual report to the Christian elders, while attending the temple for a rite of purification he was grabbed by some Jews from the province of Asia accusing him of sedition. When a riot ensued surrounding the incident Paul was arrested by the Roman commander and held at the Roman barracks. After the commander took Paul before the Sanhedrin and chief priests to hear the charges against him, on hearing of a plot to kill him, Paul was taken by infantry and cavalry to Caesarea.[51] At Caesarea, with hearings before Felix the Roman governor, then Festus, his successor, Paul was accused by the high priests as "ringleader of the Nazarene sect" of starting riots and desecrating the temple.[52] As he was held by Felix for two years, with no proof of the charges, when Festus came he appealed that his case be heard in Rome.[53] For his final journey, as prisoner of Rome, Paul boarded a ship from Adramyttium[54] from the northwest coast of Anatolia[55] headed for Myra on Anatolia's southern coast. After leaving Caesarea the Adramyttium ship stopped at Sidon, a short journey north.[56] Once providing ships and goods for Achaemenid Persia,[57] Sidon was also an important manufacturer of luxury goods such as glass, dyes, and embroidered garments.[58] Furthermore, as alluded, as Caesarea was built over the ruins of Straton's Tower, which was named after king Straton I (r. 365-352 BCE) of Sidon, Strabo (c. 63 BCE-24 CE) reports it had its own

[49] Though gold and silver could be circulated as finished products in the form of bracelets, rings, beads, etc. and bronze in the form of tools, household products and weapons, all [including iron] could be circulated and shipped in ingot form. Michel, "Kārum", 325,
[50] Acts, 20:13-38; 21:1-16.
[51] Ibid., 21:17-23:35.
[52] Ibid., 24:5.
[53] Ibid., 23-25:12.
[54] Ibid., 27:2.
[55] A harbor on the coast of Asia, southeast of Troas and east of Assos. *New International Version Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1995) 1699.
[56] Acts 27:3.
[57] Durant, 467. Eiselen, 110-23.
[58] Richard Miles, *Carthage Must be Destroyed : The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization* (New York: Viking; Penguin Books, 2010) 50, 52.

"station for vessels."[59] With its location, in the midst of shipping and trade routes, north of Alexandria and 120 km between Gaza and Sidon, Straton's Tower reflects Sidon's scale of commercial influence.[60] After leaving Caesarea, that the ship stopped at Sidon a short journey north on its way to Myra, a grain storage center,[61] indicates it likely added Sidon's finished products to merchandise it was already carrying, possibly ivory or tortoise shell from Africa or papyrus from Egypt or spices and incense from the east. At Myra Paul and his fellow prisoners would be transferred to an Alexandrian ship, loaded with grain,[62] headed for Rome.[63] Since Myra shared the same Aegean coastline south of the great cities of Ephesus and Smyrna it is likely these cities would have shared in the products from Caesarea and Sidon. That Paul disembarked this vessel at Myra for the Alexandrian one, indicates the Adramyttium ship obviously did not load grain for Rome, since that is where Paul was headed and would have stayed on board. Neither did it need to load grain to take back to Caesarea since Caesarea was already adequately supplied, but may have, with an empty hold, trekked back to Caesarea to start the same circuit over, or one similar. Paul's boarding at Myra onto an Alexandrian ship full of grain and prisoners headed for Italy may indicate Myra was part of its itinerary to first unload some of its cargo at Myra to make room for the prisoners it would transport to Rome. The Alexandrian ships were known as the giant freighters of their day. One such ship, the Isis, as described by Lucian, had a length of 55 meters (180-feet) and beam of 14 meters (45-feet); with a cargo hold depth of 13.5 meters (44-feet)[64] it could carry 1200 tons of product.[65] Likewise, reflecting their wide range of use, after the wreck of the Alexandrian ship on the island of Malta, Paul's company would board another Alexandrian vessel that had wintered at Malta and with the advent spring would head for Rome.

Herod's Harbor

As Paul traveled through Caesarea for his reports to the elders in Jerusalem it would be the city's harbor through which he would sail. As both were built simultaneously with a continuous encirclement of fortification, the city and its harbor was a seamless complex of commercial and military activity. As it directly adjoined the city, Caesarea's harbor was an engineering feat and visual wonder of its world.

Two vital considerations that went into the construction of the harbor were certainly military and hydrodynamic. The foundation of the harbor would have dealt with hydrodynamic aspects; its superstructure would have addressed Rome's military

[59] Strabo, "Geography" in *The Complete Works of Strabo of Amaseia* (Hastings, East Sussex, United Kingdom: Delphi Classics, 2016) 16.2.27

[60] Caesarea is 120 km (75 miles) from Sidon to the north and the same to Gaza in the south.

[61] NIV, 1700.

[62] We know it carried grain because before it wrecked the crew "began to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea." Acts 27:38.

[63] Acts 27:6.

[64] Lucian of Samosata, "The Ship: Or the Wishes", verse 5, paragraph 12, in *The Works of Lucian*, vol. 4, trans. H. W. Fowler, F. G. Fowler, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949) 35. And Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1971) 173, 186-187.

[65] Ibid., 173.

concerns. The marvel of harbor is; first, it was artificial. In the coastal area where Herod chose to build, there was no significant bay or promontory to build on or to add to. In addition, the biggest hurdle for Herod's builders was the tremendous wind and wave action moving north up the coast. As these same conditions exist today in this area of the Mediterranean, Josephus mentions,

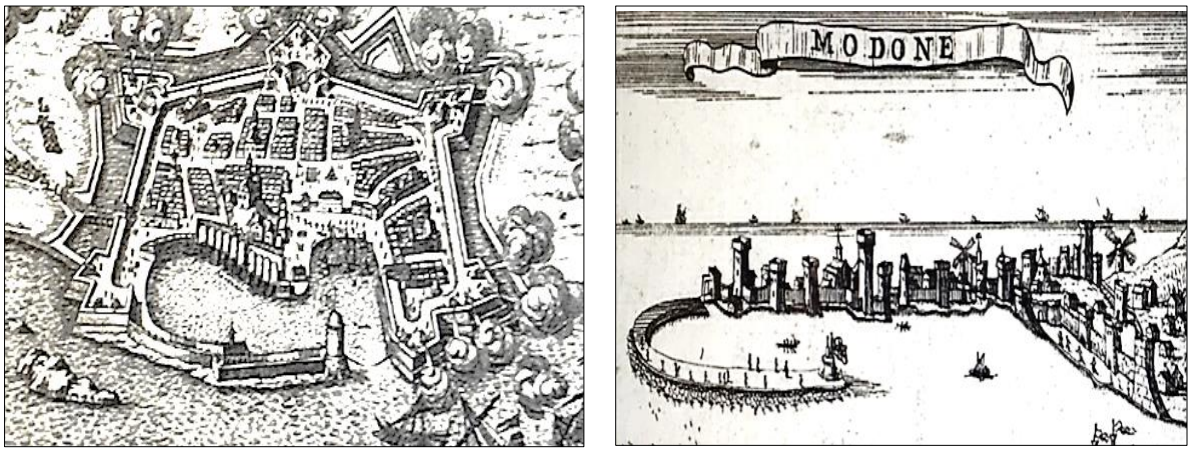
> ***For the case was this, that all the seashore between Dora and Joppa, in the middle, between which this city is situated, had no good haven, insomuch that everyone that sailed from Phoenicia for Egypt was obliged to lie in the stormy sea, by reason of the south winds that threatened them; which wind, if it blew but a little fresh, such vast waves are raised, and dash upon the rocks, that upon their retreat the sea is in a great ferment for a long way.***[66]

However, with foundation structures called moles, the harbor ultimately provided a safe haven for ships. These moles were laid out on an interesting circular course to mitigate erosion. Josephus describes the harbor as a "circular haven."[67] Housing around 40 acres of water, of the two 100-foot wide moles, the southern arm extended 1000 feet west out to sea as it curved north 1600 feet. The northern breakwater also extended 1,000 feet west. Both arms terminated at the harbor's northwestern 60-foot wide entrance.[68] Some of the foundation blocks comprising the mole structures weighed up to 50 tons.[69] Josephus mentions one block measuring 50 feet in length, 18 feet in width, and 9 feet thick.[70] However, the use of hydraulic concrete for some of the foundation work is just as remarkable. As Yorke and Davidson show, one

[66] Josephus, *Wars*, 1.21.5.409. Whiston translation, Henrickson publishers.
[67] Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 15.9.6.339.
[68] Avner Raban, "Recent Research," International Journal for Nautical Archaeology 21 (1992) 229-51; “Sebastos, the Royal Harbor at Caesarea Maritima: A Short-lived Giant," International Journal for Nautical Archaeology 21 (1992) 111-24.
[69] Lindley Vann, “News from the Field: Herod’s Harbor Construction Recovered Underwater,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* (May-June 1983) 10-14.
[70] *Wars*, 1.21.6.411.

Ruins at Caesarea Maritima National Park

scenario is wooden forms were hauled by boat to the area of placement, which were then, in stages, filled with Roman concrete as they were lowered in place.[71] However, in conjunction with the use of concrete blocks, as John Oleson points out, solid quartz sandstone blocks were also used at the entrance area for the foundation of the southern mole, while formed concrete was used at the northern mole.[72]



Venetian Harbors with Encircling Arms: Candia and Modone

The Harbor's Superstructure

[71] R.A. Yorke and D.P. Davidson, "Survey of Building Techniques at the Roman Harbors of Carthage and Some Other North African Ports" in *Biblical Archaeology Review International Series 257; Harbour Archaeology: Proceedings*, (1985) 158.
[72] John Peter Oleson, "Herod and Vitruvius: Preliminary Thoughts on Harbour Engineering at Sebastos; the Harbour of Caesarea Maritima" in *Biblical Archaeology Review International Series 257; Harbour Archaeology: Proceedings,* (1985) 165.

Thus with significant commercial interests in mind, Herod's Harbor was built on a massive scale. Nevertheless, in addition - with Rome's ever-expanding military objectives - surmounting the mole's foundation was a superstructure of towers and walls meant to repel any military invasion. Such a complex would have made the harbor appear like a massive fortress-at-sea.

Josephus mentions "edifices all along the circular haven" and "very large towers on a stone wall that ran around it." (*Antiquities*, 15.9.6.339; *Wars*, 1.21.6.412) While Josephus fails to give exact sizes of towers at the harbor, he does give dimensions of Herod the Great's and Herod Agrippa's fortification work at Jerusalem. There, common towers ranged between 30 and 36 feet square, while curtain wall heights were 30 feet.[73] Of wall thickness: with a typical curtain wall thickness half the wall's height, 15 to 18 feet is probable. But with common Roman bridge widths in the 18-foot range, mirroring that workspace makes it possible that the wall-width at Herod's Harbor was 18 feet, supporting an argument for 36-foot square towers. If like at Jerusalem, with their height twice the width, tower-plus-curtain-wall-height at Herod's Harbor would have been a whopping 60 or 72 feet.[74] Finally, based on the effective trajectory of arrows shot from composite bows of the day, space between towers would have approached a distance of 90 to 100 feet for adequate crossfire protection. Like at Jerusalem, battlements would have topped all towers and curtain walls.

Additionally, like any fortification, where the entrance is most vulnerable, towers at the entrance to Herod's Harbor had to have been definitively outsized, perhaps reaching widths of 60 feet or more, with dizzying heights reaching over 90 feet. That Josephus refers to Drusium as the "principal" tower at the harbor suggests a larger size, as does the fact it was named after a significant person, Caesar's son-in-law, Drusus.[75] Similarly, Herod also assigned people's names to the largest towers in Jerusalem. For comparison, a twin for Drusium would be the tower named Phasaelus, after Herod's brother. It was 60 feet square.[76] If Drusium was comparable in size to Phasaelus, it would have been set on the already established 36-foot high curtain wall for structural continuity. That makes the total tower-plus-curtain-wall height of Drusium at 96 feet. Furthermore, "at the eastern face of the channel leading into the harbor basin" has been found evidence of extraordinary reinforcement.[77] That at this locale, the use of blocks fastened together with iron clamps set in lead, reveal as Avner Raban says, "a special function which imposed exceptional physical stress on the structure."[78] Similarly, Josephus describes the use of lead and iron clamps between blocks at a section of the temple in Jerusalem to secure foundational integrity for a building "which proceeded to a great height."[79] The additional effort to produce such foundational support suggests a larger structure, perhaps a lighthouse.[80] Either way,

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[73] *Wars*, 5.4.2.152-55. 5.4.3.156, 163.
[74] Ibid., 5.4.2.155-5.4.3.156.
[75] Ibid., 1.21.6.412.
[76] Ibid., 5.4.3.166.
[77] Oleson, "Herod and Vitruvius", 165.
[78] Avner Raban, "Harbours of Caesarea Maritima: Results of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavations Project, 1980-1985", vol. 1, part 2, ed. John Peter Oleson in *Biblical Archaeological Review, International Series 491*, 1989, 280.
[79] Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15.11.3.398-99.
[80] Roman Lighthouses in the Mediterranean Sea | Roman ports

larger towers would have been employed at the harbor's entrance for defensive measures.

Herod's Harbor Rendition by Lithodomos and Patrick Scott Smith, 2024

Other Structures: Aesthetic and Essential Functions

Other structures at the harbor that served essential or aesthetic function include:

- Edifices and colossi at the entrance
- An adjoining temple
- *Procumatia*
- A causeway

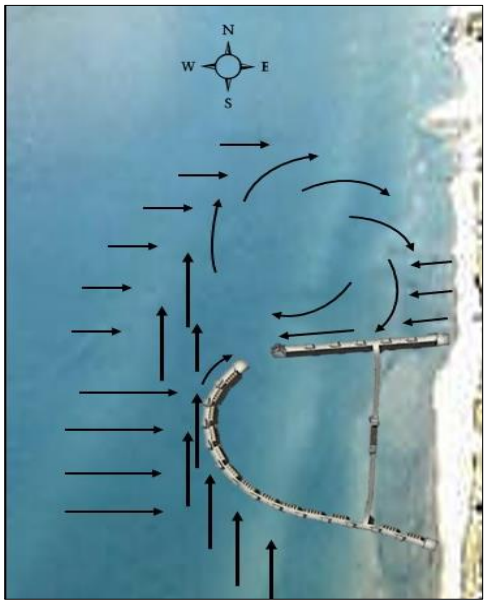
As mentioned the importance of protecting the entrance with outsized towers, especially with a watery entrance, would have required added measures. As we begin to look at the unique multi-functional purpose of the two unattached edifices at the entrance, this explains, in part, one of their uses, as missile platforms; the other two were hydrodynamic and aesthetic. About these edifices, Josephus relates,

> ***At the mouth of the haven were on each side three great Colossi, supported by pillars, where those Colossi that are on your left hand as you sail into the port, are supported by a solid tower; but those on the right hand are supported by two upright stones joined together.***[81]

[81] Josephus, *Wars*, 1.21.6.413.

Supporting Josephus' description of edifices near the entrance, four blocks were discovered approximately 26 feet from a line parallel to the outer face of the northern breakwater.[82] Two blocks, nineteen feet apart, just west of the entrance on entering, corresponds with the structure Josephus describes as joined at the top. The blocks are approximately 38 feet in diameter, corresponding to a common tower size of 36 feet.[83] A 38-foot support structure would have adequately supported a 36-foot diameter edifice. The single block discovered just east of the entrance, with a similar diameter, also agrees with Josephus' placement of a solid tower to the left on entering. For function and symmetry, their platform heights would have approximated the curtain wall heights at the harbor. Moreover, these platforms would undoubtedly have served as a height from which to rain down missiles on any hostile vessels attempting a breach at the entrance.

Interestingly, Robert Hohlfelder points out the “unusual” axis of the two contiguous blocks in relation to the entrance and the breakwaters.[84] With such placement, and that the two blocks, 19 feet apart, supported two uprights, creating an opening for water to flow through, indicates a deflective hydrodynamic function. As Oleson and Branton state, "They may have been designed to break the force of waves rolling around the barrier of the southern breakwater towards the harbor entrance . . . shielding the inner basin from disturbance."[85] Yet this structure would also have produced a redundant eddy effect, which was mitigated by its flow-through feature.



North Directed Winds and Waves; Shore Directed Energy; Eddy Effect; Undertow

[82] Oleson and Branton, “Technology” in *Caesarea Papers*, 55.
[83] J. P. Oleson and G. Branton, “The Technology of King Herod’s Harbor” in *Caesarea Papers: Straton’s Tower, Herod’s Harbour and Roman and Byzantine Caesarea*, ed. Robert Lindley Vann (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1992), Fig. 4.
[84] Robert L. Hohlfelder, “Caesarea’s Master Harbor Builders: Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied?” in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective After Two Millennia*, ed. Avner Raban, Kenneth G. Holum, (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996) 83–84.
[85] Oleson and Branton, “Technology," 56.

Still, the remaining amount of kinetic energy moving past the entrance, as it was pushed toward the shore by shore-bound waves, would have eddied back toward the entrance. With respect to this, two blocks discovered in this area, just east of the entrance, explain a lot.[86] Of the round tower associated with the block closest to the entrance – also 38 feet in diameter – Josephus mentions it's deflective purpose. "On the left hand, as you enter the port, [there is] a round turret, which was made very strong in order to resist the greatest waves."[87] The other structure is located just 20 feet northeast of the tower block[88] was likely low-slung (perhaps just under the surface since Josephus missed it in his observations), which would also have deflected energy before it hit the round tower. As angles produced more eddy, the round tower would have produced less. Thus the edifices at the entrance, with their hydrodynamic purpose, would have helped calm the water at the entrance.

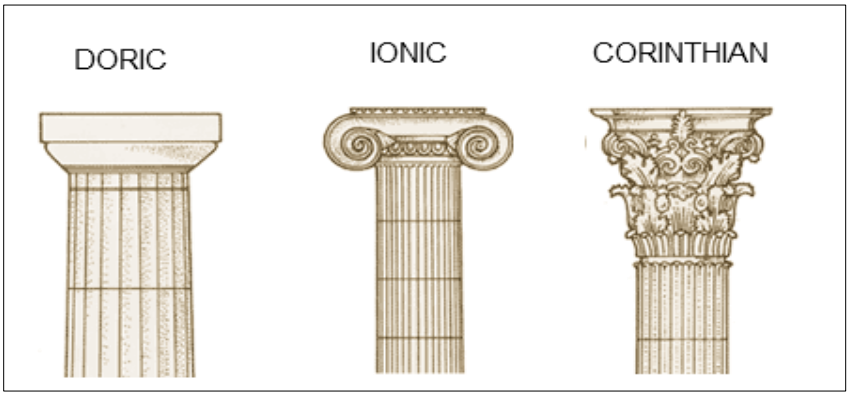
As to aesthetics, Josephus mentions that the harbor was ornately finished for its final stage of completion.[89] The most conspicuous aesthetic structure would have been the temple adjoining the harbor and the statues at the entrance as they stood on columns from a lofty height. However, what did the columns and statues at the entrance look like? As Mark Wilson Jones points out, the Corinthian column became

Edifices and Colossi at the Entrance

the order of choice for the emperors, starting with Caesar Augustus, and "was embraced with surprising rapidity throughout the empire."[90] Additionally, as Ehud Netzer points to the fragmentary evidence from debris at Caesarea's temple site,

[86] This block, associated with the round tower, is estimated by CAHEP to also have been 38-feet in diameter, but 49-feet long. Avner Raban, "Harbours", 127.
[87] *Antiquities*, 15.9.6.338.
[88] Vann, "News," 12. See also Hohlfelder, "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders", fig. 5.
[89] *Wars,* 1.21.6.411.
[90] Mark Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 139.

suggesting Corinthian columns there, the Corinthian was the likely column of choice at the entrance.[91]



Classical Orders of Columns

As to the statues, while no remains have been found, since bronze was a durable medium of choice for statues exposed to the elements, especially ocean air, the colossi were probably made of bronze. Finally, while Josephus does not specifically identify who the images were, it is easy to deduce their probable identity from Josephus' statements about the temple and his summary statement about the harbor. Josephus says the temple adjoining the harbor housed the colossi of Caesar and Juno, Rome's patron goddess. Then right after, he states, "So he dedicated the city to the province, and the haven to the sailors there."[92] It makes sense - the third image for the colossi at the harbor's entrance would have been representative of the sea, sailors, and maritime trade, all of which came under the protection of the god Neptune.

Images of Caesar, Juno, and Neptune

[91] Ehud Netzer, *Architecture,* 103.
[92] *Wars*, 1.21.7.415.

Thus, the images at the entrance, as they mirrored each other - three on the left and three on the right - were likely of Caesar, Caesarea's namesake; Juno, as a symbolic tribute to Rome; and Neptune, the ultimate protector of maritime trade, which is what the harbor was all about.

The other main ornate feature was the temple. At the foot of the harbor, with its Corinthian columns and cascading steps to the quay, lay the temple through which visiting notables passed.[93] Josephus says the temple could be seen from "a great way off"[94] and was "excellent both in beauty and largeness."[95] To compare, while the platform measurement of the Greek temple of Apollo at Corinth was 70 by 175 feet, and the greatest temple in Rome, of Jupiter, was 175 by 205 feet;[96] housing the colossi of Juno and Caesar,[97] the temple at Casearia was 95 by 150 feet.[98] Thus, as vessels approached from the sea, the view of the harbor's ornateness would have started with the temple that could be seen from a distance. Then on closer approach, as intended, Rome's power and level of sophistication would have impressed the minds of all who sailed between the imposing edifices with their towering colossi.

Moving from the entrance to the back of the harbor at the southern mole, though less conspicuous but perhaps the most functional, was *Procumatia.* Without it, the harbor would have quickly eroded into rubble, especially, as mentioned, considering the extreme conditions of wind, waves, and currents moving north. Of the structure, Josephus states,

> ***He enlarged that wall which was thus already extant above the sea, till it was two hundred feet wide; one hundred of which had buildings before it, in order to break the force of the waves, whence it was called Procumatia or the first breaker of the waves; but the rest of the space was under a stone wall that ran around it.*[99]**

With both northern and southern moles being 100 feet wide, *Procumatia*, which ran parallel with the southern mole, would also have been 100 feet wide. Recent material discovery in this area confirms a low-slung structure[100] but freestanding from the mole.[101] As *Procumatia* was low slung, to dissipate the scouring effect of incoming waves and currents more effectively, when Josephus says *Procumatia* had "buildings before it, in order to break the force of the waves," this is remindful of today's "baffle blocks" serving as energy dissipaters at the spillways of dams, reservoirs or other water catchments to reduce downstream erosion.

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[93] Kenneth G. Holum, "Building Power", 41, 57.
[94] *Antiquities*, 15.9.6.339.
[95] *Wars*, 1.21.7.414.
[96] Stamper, *Architecture,* 64, 105-150. A significant part of Augustus' building program was restoring existing temples (eighty-two in Rome) and building new ones, the grandest of which was Mars Ultor in his new Forum. Rodgers, *Architecture,* 49.
[97] *Wars*, 1.21.7.414.
[98] Holum, 41, 57.
[99] *Wars*, 1.21.6.412.
[100] Avner Raban, *The Harbour of Sebastos (Caesarea Maritima) in its Roman Mediterranean Context*, ed. M. Artzy, B. Goodman, Z. Gal (Oxford: Biblical Archaeological Review, International Series 1930, 2009) 102, 104.
[101] Hohlfelder, "Caesarea's Master Harbor Builders", 81.

Use of Baffle Blocks at Dam Spillways

Finally, of functional structures, a causeway at the harbor certainly would have expedited commercial and military activity. As the whole harbor area has been divided into the larger outer-harbor and the much smaller inner-harbor - where warships carrying commanders and dignitaries of the highest rank would have parked near the temple - dividing the two is a structure identified as a "harbor-divide."[102] However as

the moles were virtually separated from each other by the unbridgeable entrance; and the adjoining temple - an area of political and religious sanction - this structure was most likely a causeway spanning the diameter of the harbor as it served several

[102] While a precise figure is difficult to obtain because the strewn rubble field obscures the original outline of the harbor's original dimensions, Hohlfelder estimates the inner harbor to have "had a working area of 10,000 square yards, one-twentieth the size of the outer harbor." This amounts to a total surface water area of 43.38 acres. Robert Hohlfelder, "Herod the Great's City on the Sea: Caesarea Maritima", National Geographic (February 1987) 279. In the CAHEP 1980-1985 summary, the outer basin of the harbor is estimated to have contained a surface water area of 200,000 square meters, with the inner basin encompassing 5000 square meters. This comes to 50.65 acres. Raban, *Harbours: Results*, part 2, 288. Both figures compare to many fortresses Romans built on land.

practical purposes. Commercially, if high traffic made the berthing of an incoming ship intended for one arm unavailable, a vessel could be parked at the other arm while its goods were hauled directly over to the arm intended for off-loading. A ship with mixed cargo destined for southern and northern locales could unload completely at one arm without having to be moved. With a causeway, immediate in-place unloading, reloading, and quick dispersal is possible no matter where the initial docking would have been. Militarily, when it came to the outfitting and manning of the towers and curtain wall, a causeway would have offered a high degree of flexibility. Likewise, in times of war if the harbor was under assault a practical course between the two moles would be essential. In the event of emergency, it would have been impossible for military personnel stationed at one mole to move quickly to the other side. With a connecting causeway, if soldiers and equipment were needed to flood one side of the harbor to the other when one area of the wall was harder pressed, a diameter route would have been expedient.

Conclusion

The stories of Paul, Caesarea, and Herod's Harbor are inextricably bound. As Caesarea Maritima was meant to be Rome's commercial and military base in the east, as it became such, it would be Caesaria that Paul would travel through in three of his four journeys and where he would be held as a prisoner of Rome. By tracing the water portion of Paul's journeys insights can be gained about trade at the turn of the first millennium BCE and the significant role Caesaria played as a commercial hub at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Serving its dual purpose as a commercial center and military post, with a rich history as an urban center with residents of diverse cultural and religious background, as the city was built from the ground up by Rome's client king, Herod would spare no expense insuring the city's splendor and structure as it represented Rome's level of power and sophistication. Then, servicing the city was Herod's Harbor, itself a structural wonder. Met with almost impossible odds against extreme conditions, the master builders of the harbor certainly introduced innovative engineering techniques to accomplish the task. Not only were answers given to unique hydrodynamic and meteorological problems, as the harbor was built on a massive scale expecting to monopolize trade, its size was also equaled by its level of splendor.

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Towards a Theory Understanding Homophily in Church Political Socialization

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the ways in which minority voters tend towards identification with the Democratic party despite having similarly conservative or more conservative religious beliefs than their White counterparts. I use a comparative approach in analyzing Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters' party preferences and how those preferences are affected by religiosity and opposition to social issues such as gay marriage and abortion. I first create a theory of *racial-religious community marginalization* based in a wide range of literature that posits that homoracial religious spaces persist because of historical and current conditions, and that a socializing process happens in homoracial religious spaces that causes voters from these spaces to engage with politics in a community-based manner, leading to these groups supporting the Democratic Party generally. This paper applies models of political socialization in the Black church onto religious spaces of Hispanic and Asian people. This paper finds that high church homophily is correlated with more Democratic party identification. Finally, the paper finds that substantive issues are sometimes better predictors for party identification than social issues for minority voters.

Introduction

The focus on religiously-charged social issues (such as abortion and gay marriage) in the culture wars of American Politics has affected the way Americans view their religious and political identities. However, the same religious motivations against a perceived downfall of American values caused by an anti-Christian 'Woke' agenda has not, for the most part, elicited the same reaction in religious People of Color, with Black and Hispanic voters tending to vote Democrat, even though these groups are less likely to agree with same-sex marriage and abortion respectively. As such, the interactional relationships involved in the relationship between race and religion may have a different effect on the voting behavior of religious voters. Thus, the question: How does race affect voting behavior on issues tied to religion?

Understanding the nature of the relationship between race and religion with regards to voting behavior sheds light on the motivations of voters of color and the motivations of White voters. A better understanding of religion and politics must include an understanding of the mechanism that leads theologically conservative people of color to vote Democrat, as opposed to Republican. Alternatively, the possibility that Conservative religious beliefs can lead to greater political socialization towards a liberal party also poses a challenge as to the understanding of how religion interacts with politics beyond White voters. A predominant narrative

exists in the American Conservative space that a more devout and fundamentalist Christian is meant to identify strongly with the Christian Republican party.[1] However, this narrative ignores voters of color who do not weigh their religious beliefs in the same way. As such, a better understanding of the mechanism by which voters of color weigh their religious beliefs when choosing a party offers a counterpoint to predominant Conservative narratives about religiosity being a salient Conservative issue.

This paper seeks to find and understand this mechanism through quantitative methods. Using multiple datasets, I hope to better understand the motivations behind theologically conservative PoC voting Democrat by comparing salient issues between White and PoC voters. We also create broad regressions which demonstrate the difference in magnitude and significance of religiosity as a predictor for party affiliation. This paper argues that religious communities of color generally do not follow the norms of White religious communities in voting behavior. This paper will include a literature review, explanation of methods, regression tables, findings, and conclusions.

Black Churches and Black Democrats

In the 2022 elections, Black voters heavily favored Democrats, winning an 88-point margin over Republicans.[2] Even though Black voters are ideologically diverse, when in the ballot box, Black voters overwhelmingly choose Democratic candidates. Walton, Smith, and Wallace in their textbook *American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom* describe how Black people originally came to identify with the Democratic party. "...[FDR] was able to win Black support in 1936 and thereafter because he embraced their material-based interests in jobs, housing, and social security. By 1945, a majority of Blacks were voting Democratic in national elections…"[3] The New Deal coalition which originally brought Black voters to the Democratic party waned in 1948 with the formation of the Dixiecrat party and finally collapsed in 1964 as Southern Whites began supporting the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater because of his opposition of the Civil Rights Act.[4] They attribute Black support for the Democratic party in the current era to the idea that "individual Black voters hold a group-based perception of the parties. In other words, racial identification determines Democratic partisanship."[5] To summarize, if the Democratic party is more responsive to Black interests, and if the wider group of the Black community aligns itself with the Democratic party, then voting Democrat becomes a

[1] Gillespie, Brandon, and Aubrie Spady. "Faith Voters Will 'Decide This Election,' according to Prominent GOP Members." Fox News. Fox News, June 24, 2024. https://www.foxnews.com/politics/prominent-gop-members-faith-voters-election-trump-conference.
This represents one example from the mainstream media, illustrating a wider phenomenon in mainstream Conservative belief.

[2] Pew Research Center, July, 2023b, "Republican Gains in 2022 Midterms Driven Mostly by Turnout Advantage" 20

[3] Walton, Hanes, Robert C Smith, and Sherri L Wallace. American Politics and the African American Quest for Universal Freedom. New York, Ny: Routledge, 2021. at 191

[4] Ibid. at 192

[5] Ibid. at 193

matter of whether or not an individual voter identifies themselves with being "Black" or identifies their perception of the parties as aligned with the group.

White and Laird argue in their book *Steadfast Democrats* that Black voters are affected by a "racialized social constraint", which argues that "rather than weighing how what happens to the group affects them as individuals, [B]lacks are instead weighing the relative costs and benefits of siding with their individual interests or beliefs versus conforming to racial group expectations of them."[6] They also describe how Black homophily through Black institutions, like Black churches, enforces the pre-existing norms of Black Democratic identification.[7]

As such, the racialized social constraint model relies heavily on "social interconnectedness", with the understanding that Black people's social ties and identification as a coherent community, as well as the benefits and costs to those social ties and that community identity based on voting behavior, are the basis of such decision making for Black voters.[8] The costs of defecting to the Republican side are reinforced at the individual level by negative social sanctioning, such as being called an "'Uncle Tom' and 'sellout'"[9], and positive social sanction such as praise, popularity, and even material gain.[10] Because the racialized social constraint is built off of social connections, it is unsurprising to see that, according to their analysis of a 2012 Pew survey, 73.9% of Black people were contacted by friends and family to support Barack Obama in the 2012 election, whereas only 44.9% of White *Democrats* were contacted by their social network to vote for Barack Obama. "These results suggest that the members of the average black person's social network are sending clear and consistent signals about how they expect their friends and family members to behave in electoral politics."[11] Thus, Black voters have an expectation from friends and family that they are supposed to vote Democrat, and, according to White and Laird's 2014 survey, Black voters are more likely to believe that their friends and family would have given them a "hard time" for supporting a Republican.[12]

One of the institutions of Black political socialization in favor of the Democratic Party is the Black church, as Black people who attend a church that is over 80% Black are 20% more likely to identify as a Democrat, according to their analysis of a Houston area survey taken in 2003 and 2010.[13] They also find an interactional effect when controlling for ideology, where Black people who attend a greater than 80% Black congregation are likely to vote Democrat regardless of ideology, with no drop in Democratic party identification as a respondent becomes more conservative.[14] However, a more conventional effect is seen amongst Black people who attend non-

[6] White, Ismail K., and Chryl N. Laird. "Black Political Decision Making." In Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior, 46-47. Princeton University Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvp7d4m7.5.
[7] Ibid. at 42
[8] Ibid. at 47
[9] Ibid. at 47
[10] Ibid. at 42
[11] Ibid. at 79
[12] Ibid. at 81
[13] Ibid. at 178-179
[14] Ibid. at 180

Black churches, where a Black person is less likely to identify as a Democrat as they become more conservative.[15]

Though the quantitative evidence shows some interesting effects for the interaction of religion and Black political culture, a more qualitative source can better determine more subjective motivations behind individual voters. *Bibles, Barbershops, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought* written by Melissa Victoria Harris-Lacewell contains interviews from the Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church which document how political socialization in the Black church happens at an individual level.[16] Reverend Carl W. Kenney II, who was at the time the pastor of OGMBC, espoused progressive views on the church's relationship with gay and lesbian congregants and his writings often included political issues like the firing of a local principal or the dissolution of a local housing committee.[17] His views on politics trickle down over time to the congregants of OGMBC, though the socialization is not immediate. "Two distinct camps are clear from the interviews with the congregation…The three individuals who identified racism as a continuing problem for Blacks have been members for more than a year…The members who locate African American troubles in the family structure have been attending Orange Grove for less than a year."[18] Thus, the political socialization in the Black church towards racism being the root of Black America's hardship is built over time. Bridgett and Keith, two long-time members of the congregation both identify economics as the biggest political problem for Black America, whereas more recent members are worried about the loss of family structure.[19] An interesting instance of this difference in opinion is Louise, a member who has been attending for one month, who says, "I think that the family is our biggest problem. We are disjointed. We have forgotten old-fashioned values."[20] As a person attends Black church for longer, they are socialized to be more cognizant of racism as an institutionalized American problem, especially in a congregation where political messaging from the pulpit is more frequent.

From the literature, there are several reasons why a theologically conservative Black voter would choose to align themselves with the Democratic party. My summary of the previous sources is that Black churches underpin the necessity of political action on racism and inequality, which leads members to consider economic problems caused by structural racism to be more important than family values. Thus, they align more closely with the Democratic party's views on government intervention in racial economic inequality. There is also an understanding that community pressures, including social repercussions, to identify as a Democrat from a person's social network is significantly higher amongst Black social networks, as Black people are likely to belong to at least one Black institution with high homophily. Though historically, Black voters have been a bulwark of support for the Democratic

[15] Ibid. at 180

[16] Harris-Lacewell, Melissa Victoria. Barbershops, Bibles, and BET. 2004. Reprint, Princeton University Press, 2010. at 35

[17] Ibid. at 35, 53-54

[18] Ibid. at 49

[19] Ibid. at 50

[20] Ibid. at 50

party, the larger population of Latinos and their more mixed voting patterns form a different understanding of how a racial-religious community chooses their party identification.

Pragmatic Latinos and Evangelical Dissenters

According to Gallup polling[21], 22% of the population of the United States identifies as Catholic, and unlike the broad category of "Protestant" which can include anything from Disciples of Christ to King James Baptists, there is only one Catholic church. The administration of the Catholic church is very strongly against many of the traditionally liberal issues that define American Christian opposition to the Democratic Party. As Timothy Matovina notes in his book: *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church,* "Some Catholic leaders have defined "nonnegotiable" moral issues such as abortion, stem cell research, and same-sex marriage as the determinative criteria for Catholic voters."[22] However, the direct beliefs of the Catholic Church span both sides of the political spectrum, such as being pro-immigration reform and anti-death penalty.[23]

The Latino Catholic view on the two-party ideological divide is necessarily mixed because of support for certain policies from both parties, as well as opposition to policies from both parties. In the Convocation '95, more than 500 Latino Catholic leaders set forth their priority issues which include: "abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, drugs, the arms trade, poverty, women's and workers' rights, discrimination against immigrants, health care, education, domestic violence, the dignity of the family, and respect for the elderly."[24] This mix of traditionally Conservative views, like opposition to abortion, and traditionally Liberal views, like prevention of discrimination against immigrants, puts the ideology of Latino Catholic opinion makers outside of the traditional two-sided system. "As one undocumented Catholic mother put it, 'They say our children in the womb are "innocent life," but the day the children are born they call them "illegals" who have no rights and should 'go home' [to their mothers' country of origin].'"[25] In this mixed environment, individual Catholic Latino voters must decide which issues they consider most important and which issues they can compromise on. In this environment, it seems that Latino Catholics tend to vote for substantive concerns, like immigration and drugs, over 'culture war' issues, like same-sex marriage, as demonstrated by the Democrats carrying a 21-point margin amongst Latinos generally in the 2022 election.[26] Matovina notes that "The Democratic preference among Latino Catholics has a noteworthy impact on the overall profile of Catholic voters."[27] Although Democratic

[21] Gallup Inc. "Religion." Gallup.com, 2023. https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx.
[22] Matovina, Timothy. *Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church*, 213. Princeton University Press, 2012. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rpx2.11.
[23] Ibid. at 212
[24] Ibid. at 212
[25] Ibid. at 212
[26] Pew Research Center, "Republican Gains in 2022", 20.
[27] Matovina, "Latino Catholicism", 213.

party affiliation has stayed relatively stable since 2019[28], the Democratic party has lost a significant amount of its Latino vote since 2018, when they carried a 47 point margin.[29] Latino support of both Democrats and Republicans is very "lukewarm",[30] as opposed to the strong and homogeneous support of Democrats in Black communities. As such, "like other Catholics, many Latinos give more decisive weight to issues they believe affect them and their families most immediately…"[31] If the Latino Catholic vote is not completely committed to the Democratic Party because of its lack of strong identification with culture war issues, then, as Matovina observes, the Democrats "cannot take Latino Catholic voters for granted' because Latinos Catholic are willing to vote for either party.[32] Abortion places relatively low as the seventh most important issue for Latino Catholics, whereas the most important issue is the economy.[33]

As the Latino Catholic space has been a place where people can be socialized into various simultaneously Conservative and Liberal issues, and as Latino Catholic voters are more likely to vote based on their own personal and family interests rather church dogma, an understanding of why Latino Catholic voters continue to identify as Democrats is not necessarily tied to their church or their community, but rather the idea that the Democratic Party better "represents the interests" of Latinos and "works hard to earn Latino's votes"[34] As Gibson and Hare note in their article on Latino Christians' political behavior, "relative to their secular counterparts, committed Catholic Latinos are more ideologically conservative, though no more Republican."[35]

However, it would be an oversight to say that all Latinos are Catholic.Catholicism has been declining amongst Latino populations—in 2018, the Latino Catholic population dropped below 50% for the first time, with the proportion of Latinos identifying as Catholic in 2022 being 43%. In its place, there has been a significant rise in Latino religiously unaffiliated people, (sometimes referred to as *Nones*).[36] Also, to contrast Latino Catholics' ambivalence and lack of salience on culture war issues, Latino Evangelicals, who make up the second largest religious group among Latinos,[37] are far more likely to fall in line with culture war Conservatism—"...Evangelical Latinos are 24% more likely than secular Latinos, and 6% more likely than committed Catholic Latinos, to identify themselves as ideological conservatives, and are 12% more likely than committed Catholic Latinos and 18% more likely than secular Latinos to be Republicans."[38]

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[28] Pew Research Center, September, 2022, "Most Latinos Say Democrats Care About Them and Work Hard for Their Vote, Far Fewer Say So of GOP" 10

[29] Pew Research Center, "Republican Gains in 2022", 24

[30] Pew Research Center, "Most Latinos Say Democrats", 29, 31.

[31] Matovina, "Latino Catholicism", 213.

[32] Ibid. at 214

[33] Pew Research Center, "Most Latinos Say Democrats", 29, 53.

[34] Pew Research Center, "Most Latinos Say Democrats", 7.

[35] Gibson, Troy and Christopher Hare. "Do Latino Christians and Seculars Fit the Culture War Profile? Latino Religiosity and Political Behavior." Politics and Religion 5, no. 1 (2012): 68.

[36] Pew Research Center, April 2023, "Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but Is Still the Largest Faith", 6.

[37] Ibid. at 6

[38] Gibson and Hare, "Do Latino Christians and", 67-68.

In an article published in *Politics and Religion*, Christopher L. Weaver explores quantitative evidence of the socialization of Latino immigrants in Evangelical churches. He says, "[P]ost-migration evangelical converts are significantly more likely to identify as partisan than they are to identify as independents…The effect is not driven by affiliation with a particular party. This suggests that, as hypothesized, adaptive conversion increases the general likelihood of partisanship in both directions."[39] He essentially argues that the process of conversion to Evangelicalism from Catholicism among Latino immigrants allows for other changes in identity, including partisanism.[40] However, this research does not speak to the specific ways in which these people are socialized into party identification, but rather only proves a link between party identification and change in religion.

Asian Americans and Religious Politics beyond Christianity

Asian Americans are unique as a voting class for several reasons. Asian Americans are the most left-leaning group with regards to the two identified culture war issues: they tack 9 points ahead of all other racial groups with 70% support of same-sex marriage[41], and 16 points ahead of White voters on legalization of abortion.[42] As a racial group, 62% of Asian Americans identify with the Democratic Party[43], similar to the 64% of Latino Democrats.[44] However, unlike Latinos and Black people, their views on same-sex marriage are to the left of Whites, and unlike Latinos, their views on abortion are also to the left of Whites, meaning that Asian Americans make up the only racial group whose views on culture war issues align with the Democratic Party to a greater extent than Whites. Thus, Asian voters' party identification seems to align more closely with White theologically liberal Democrats than Black and Latino theologically conservative democrats. However, there is a disunity in the uniqueness of some nationalities' party affiliation. 68% of Indian Americans identify with the Democratic Party, whereas 56% of Chinese Americans identify as Democrats, and only 42% of Vietnamese Americans identify as Democrats. On the religion side of things, Asian Americans are also uniquely religiously diverse, with only 34% of Asian Americans identifying as Christian[45], compared to 75% of Black people.[46] Also, there is a sharp difference between

[39] Weaver, Christopher L. "Political and Spiritual Migration: The Adaptive Formation of Religious and Partisan Attachments among Latino Immigrants in the United States." Politics and Religion 8, no. 3 (2015): 488–513. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000152. At 502-503

[40] Ibid. at 505

[41] Gabrie Borelli. "About Six-In-Ten Americans Say Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage Is Good for Society." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, November 15, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/11/15/about-six-in-ten-americans-say-legalization-of-same-sex-marriage-is-good-for-society/.

[42] Pew Research Center. "Public Opinion on Abortion." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, May 13, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/fact-sheet/public-opinion-on-abortion/.

[43] Pew Research Center, May 2023, "Diverse Cultures and Shared Experiences Shape Asian American Identities" 43

[44] Pew Research Center, "Most Latinos Say Democrats", 20.

[45] Pew Research Center, October 2023, "Religion Among Asian Americans" 9

[46] Pew Research Center, Feb. 16, 2021, "Faith Among Black Americans" 34

immigrant Asians, of whom 56% identify as Democrats, and U.S.-born Asians, of whom 73% are Democrats.[47]

Asian American religion is defined by large groups of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and other faiths (such as Sikhism), making up 32% of the Asian American population in total.[48] One possible reason why Asian Americans tend to identify with the Democratic party, pointed out by Joseph Yi, is very high educational attainment, which is generally associated with more progressive views.[49]An example of this is the most successful Asian American Democrat, Kamala Harris, whose parents both earned PhDs.[50] Though she identifies as Baptist, her pluralistic religious surroundings, being the child of a Hindu and a Black Baptist married to a Jewish husband, reflect the very diverse religious background of many Asian Americans. In contrast, the most successful Asian American Republican, Nikki Haley, is a dogmatic Conservative Christian. Though she grew up Sikh, her Christian-oriented policies on abortion and transgender rights are tied to her conversion to Conservative Methodism: "My faith in Christ has a profound impact on my daily life and I look to Him for guidance with every decision I make."[51] Asian American Christians being more likely to identifyas Republican is supported by Tanika Raychaudhuri's analysis of 2008 representative survey data: "identifying as Evangelical decreases the likelihood of Democratic vote choice by about 19 percentage points...Identifying as Catholic decreases the likelihood of Democratic vote choice by about 14 percentage points in the main model, but has no significant effect on vote in the full model."[52] She argues that Asian Americans are socialized to vote Democrat based upon local contexts, as immigrants and their families tend to settle in left-leaning cities, and tend not to have existing partisan views before coming to the United States.[53] It should be noted that these cities do not represent blue pockets in conservative areas, unlike Black voters in the South.

In addition to the difference seen between inherently Christian and inherently non-Christian Asian American voters, a significant portion of Asian Americans and Black Americans identify as Muslim. Unlike other non-Christian religions like Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, Islam in America is very diverse, with a mix of Asians (generally people of South and Southeast Asian Descent), Black people, and White people (though Arabs, Turks, and Persians would be considered White)[54]. Of note is that Islamic Doctrine generally disallows elective abortion[55], and the practice of homosexuality, especially amongst men[56]. However, the Republican Party's

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[47] Pew Research Center, May 2023, "Diverse Cultures and Shared" 44.

[48] Pew Research Center, "Religion Among Asian Americans", 9.

[49] Yi, Joseph E. 2022. "Asian-American Religiosity and Politics." Journal of Political Science Education 18 (2): 228–41. doi:10.1080/15512169.2022.2063133. at 5

[50] Ibid. at 5

[51] Ibid. at 4

[52] Raychaudhuri, Tanika. "Socializing Democrats: Examining Asian American Vote Choice with Evidence from a National Survey." Electoral Studies 63, (2020): 5

[53] Ibid. at 2-3

[54] Pew Research Center, July 2017, "U.S. Muslims Concerned" 35

[55] Albar MA. Induced abortion from an islamic perspective: is it criminal or just elective? J Family Community Med. 2001 Sep;8(3):31. PMID: 23008648; PMCID: PMC3439741.

[56] Turner, Colin. Islam: The Basics. Routledge, 2011, 34..

antagonism of American Muslims generally dissuades them from voting in favor of Republicans. “The American Muslim voter is one that experiences high levels of discrimination, one that is met with large suspicion by the Republican party and its candidates, and one who has only received small-scale welcoming signals from the Democratic party.”[57] This study also finds that if a person is in a high *Muslim Environment*, which includes measures of Muslim neighbors and knowledge of Islam,[58] they are both more likely to vote and 39% more likely to vote Democrat.[59] They compare this effect, whereby people more closely connected to the Muslim community are more likely to vote Democrat, to linked fate, though in a religious, rather than racial context.[60] However, the root cause of the support for Democrats is clear: “...the increasing antagonism towards Muslim Americans primarily coming from Republican candidates and elected officials alike is likely to continue to drive an even stronger affinity between U.S. Muslims the Democratic party.”[61]

One last note is that the differences in identity patterns seen before between different nationalities are further supported by differences in voter turnout. Sara Sadhwani’s study on the effect of co-ethnic candidates in ethnic communities (an example of a co-ethnic candidate would be an Indian running in an Indian community or a Korean running in a Korean community etc.) shows three different interactional effects: for Indian and Japanese voters, having a co-ethnic candidate does not affect total voter turnout as a district becomes more proportionally co-ethnic with that candidate[62] at the aggregate level, though having a co-ethnic candidate did cause more voter turnout amongst Indian and Japanese voters alone at the individual level.[6364] She theorizes that this may be caused by Indian and Japanese communities being more wealthy, or that Japanese and Indian communities in California tend to be overwhelmingly English-speaking, either by many Japanese Californian voters being third- or fourth-generation Americnas, or by Indian immigrants being educated H1B skilled visa holders from a country where English is also widely spoken.[65] The opposite effect is seen for Filipinos and Koreans, where there is a higher aggregate turnout for a co-ethnic candidate correlated with a higher co-ethnic population.[66] She attributes this effect to Filipino and Korean communities

[57] Ocampo, Angela X, Karam Dana, and Matt A Barreto. “The American Muslim Voter: Community Belonging and Political Participation.” Social Science Research 72 (2018): 85. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.002.

[58] Ibid. at 90.

[59] Ibid. at 93.

[60] Ibid. at 94

[61] Ibid. at 95

[62] At face value, a positive relationship might exist for an Indian co-ethnic candidate as a district becomes more Indian. One might expect that as a district the Indian population of a district rises, the strength of an Indian co-ethnic candidate’s effect on voter turnout might also rise. However, this effect was not seen for Indian or Japanese communities.

[63] Sadhwani, Sara. "Asian American Mobilization: The Effect of Candidates and Districts on Asian American Voting Behavior." Political Behavior 44, no. 1 (2022): 16-17.

[64] This citation has incorrect page numbers for the original version because the downloaded PDF file from Springer contained no page numbers. The page numbers used here are based upon the PDF page numbers.

[65] Ibid. at 17

[66] Ibid. at 17-18

being poorer and having a greater language barrier.[67] Finally, there is no rise in turnout for Chinese Americans for co-ethnic candidates or non-co-ethnic candidates.[68] Her explanations for why include a large foreign-born population, Chinese communities being more insular than other Asian communities, and differences between first- and second-generation voters, though she herself notes that further research is necessary.[69] Essentially, descriptive representation has different effects on voter turnout in different Asian-American communities, thus showing that the way each individual group engages with descriptive representation is slightly different.

One common thread running through all of this literature is that People of Color's religious identification with the Democratic party is linked more so with practical concerns than with abstract ones. This is best illustrated in the literature on Black Americans and Asian Americans. It seems that the political conscience of religious communities of color are more likely to favor the Democratic party, and this group conscience, separated from White church identity, takes on a different relationship between religion and politics. Essentially, I theorize that the narrative of conservative religious views leading to conservative voting outcomes ignores the unique racial identities of religious communities of color, which shift the paradigm from individualistic to communal thinking. Individual examples of Republicanism in PoC communities, like in White and Laird's research[70] and Yi's research[71] are marked by disconnection with these racial-religious communities, as White and Laird find that Black people who do not attend Black church are less likely to identify as a Democrat, and Yi's case study of conservatism in Nikki Haley provides an example of this disconnect at the individual level. Therefore the hypotheses: For people of color, as a person becomes more connected with a religious community of color, they are less likely to consider abortion and same-sex marriage as a salient voting issues (instead opting for community-wide concerns like housing or healthcare). Also, as a person of color becomes less connected to a religious community of color, theological conservatism, typified by opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage, is reasserts itself as a salient voting issue.

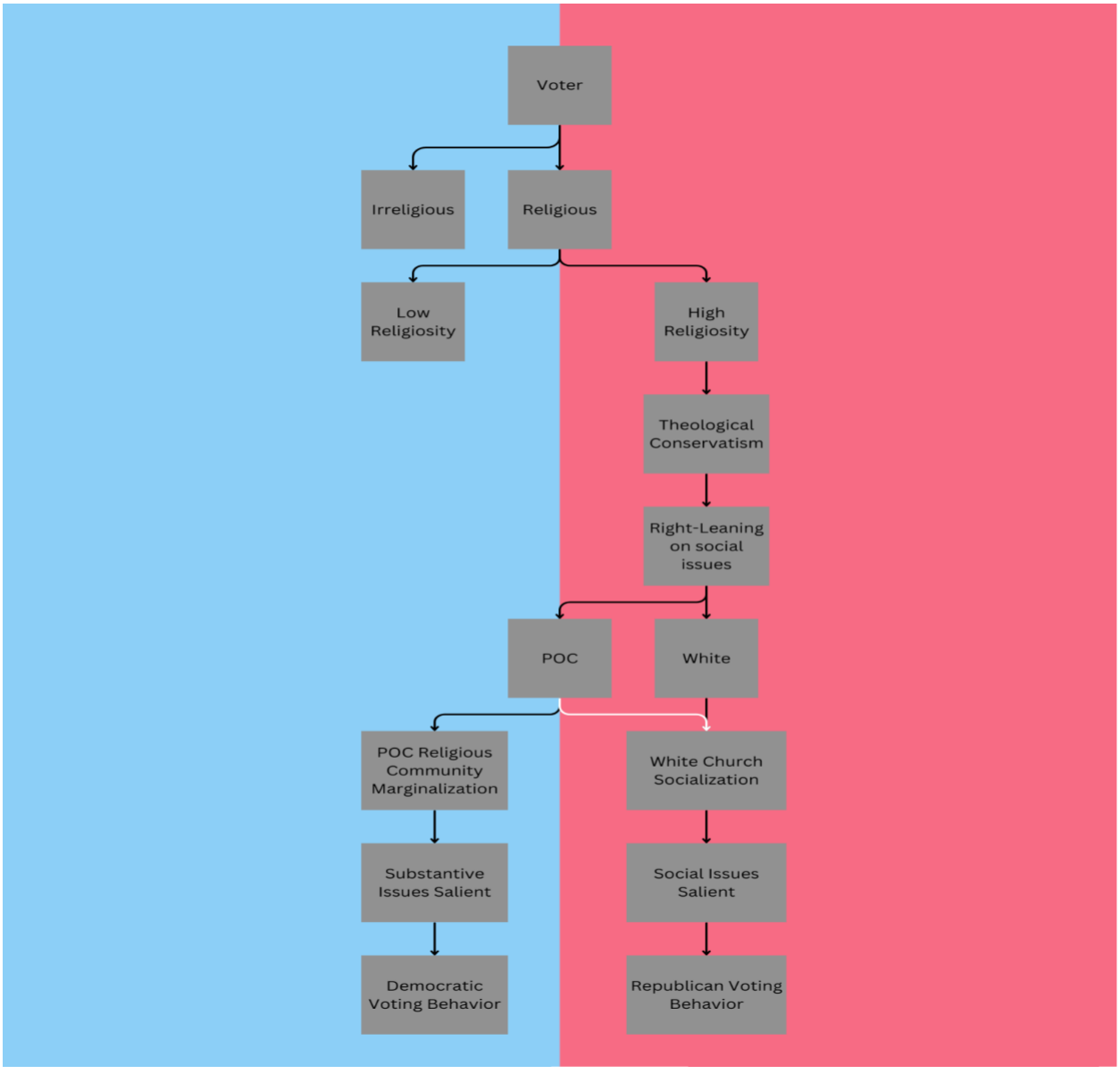
Theoretical Framework

The basic idea I have is this: the development of religious communities in America is deeply tied to and remains tied to race. Black churches and White churches developed separately because of segregation, Hispanic churches can remain largely separate by language, and Asian religious spaces can remain largely separate because of minority religions. Though some of these cleavages endure

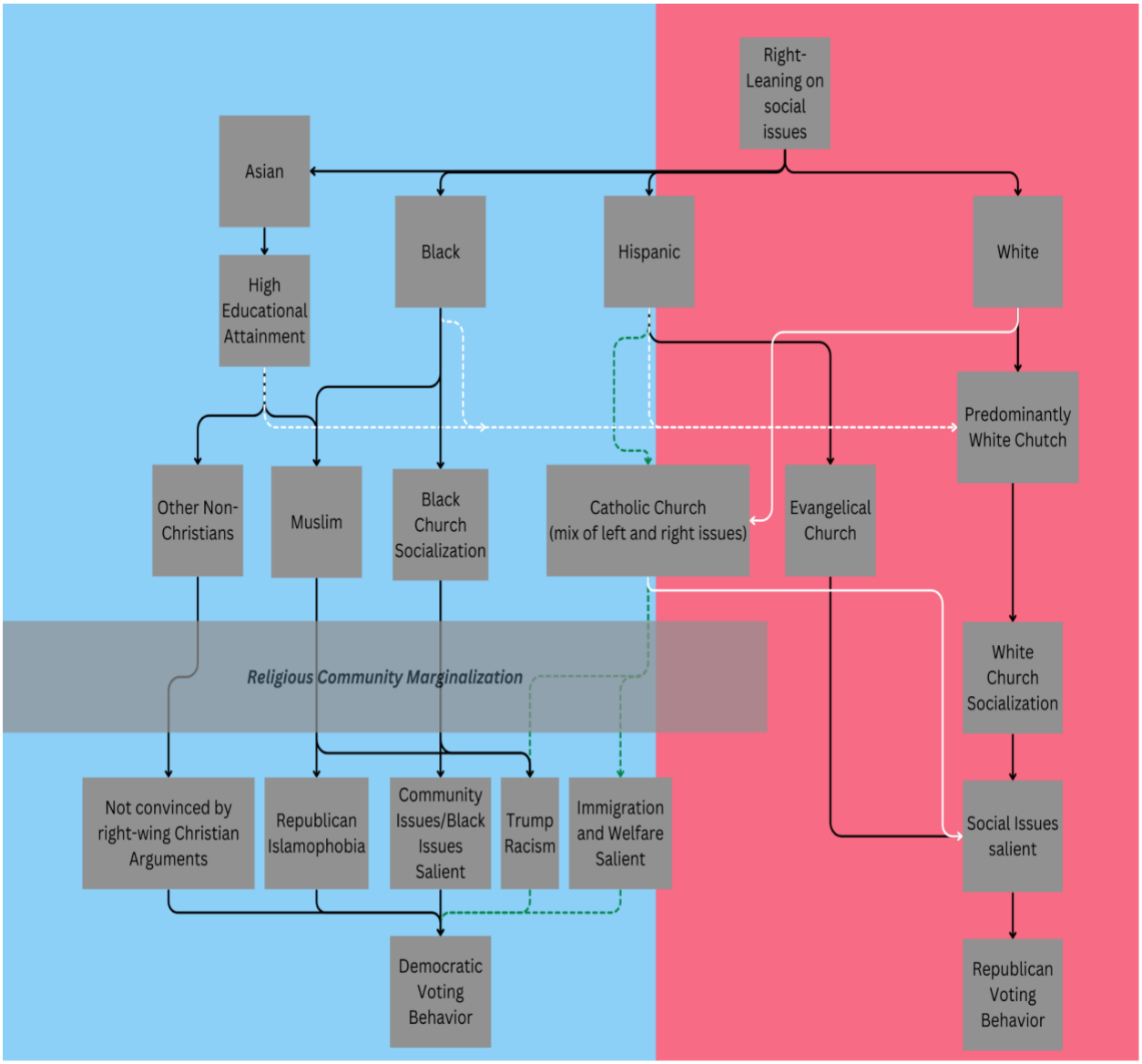
[67] Ibid. at 18.
[68] Ibid. at 18
[69] Ibid. at 18
[70] White, Ismail K., and Chryl N. Laird. "Black Political Decision Making." In Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior, 180. Princeton University Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvp7d4m7.5.
[71] Yi, Joseph E. 2022. "Asian-American Religiosity and Politics." Journal of Political Science Education 18 (2): 228–41. doi:10.1080/15512169.2022.2063133. at 4

because of history, others endure because of present conditions, demographics, and communities. Therefore, there are many people of color who belong to what I call *homogeneous racial-religious communities*.

I create a theory of *racial-religious community marginalization* that affects the ways that POC of different groups arrive at Democratic voting behavior. Essentially, each minority-led racial-religious community experiences community marginalization of some type, such as structural racism, economic inequality, or prejudice. Each of these issues causes the racial-religious community to vote based on a community conscience that socializes its individual members through the struggles that each racial-religious community experiences as a whole. I make a couple of maps to illustrate the thought process I have behind this theory, though I do not test any branch of this theory, so these maps should be seen as purely illustrative and speculative, summarizing my ideas.



This basic overview illustrates a couple of suppositions of this theory: first, that POC who go to White churches tend to follow the same patterns of issue salience as White voters; and second, identification with Democratic voting behavior happens through socialization after initial political ideology. Thus, the steps after racial-religious community marginalization replace earlier steps on the conservative side, like theological conservatism. Even though a voter may be right-leaning on social issues, the experience of going to a POC church and being marginalized as a religious community causes people to end up identifying as Democrat. This basic model of how theologically conservative POC end up voting for liberal candidates puts church socialization after religiosity, which causes the changes in voter behavior. A closer look at the model leads to a race-specific mapping that looks like this:



This closer look clarifies more differences between racial groups and similarities in voting behavior. First, it illustrates the differences between White and Hispanic voters that go through the same Catholic church. The mix of left-wing (support for immigrants and welfare) and right-wing (same-sex marriage and abortion) positions that the church condones leaves it to each voter to decide which issues they consider most salient. In this case, a person whose community undergoes marginalization at the hands of the Republican party, by immigration or racism in the Trump era, is more likely to consider Democrat issues important than a person who is not marginalized. One thing to note is that many Catholic churches have partially separate English- and Spanish-speaking congregations with different priests for each language. It also zooms in on specific issues that cause Democratic voting behavior, like hatred of Muslims in the Republican party, which is one way through which an individual community is marginalized.

H1: For people of color, race and homophily form an interaction effect that is correlated with more Democratic party identification.

H2: For people of color, race and homophily form an interaction effect that is correlated with less salience in social issues.

Methods

In order to test my hypothesis (though not the wider theory as a whole), I employ two types of regressions: OLS and logistic. Regressions are essentially statistical models that find the effect that a number of independent variables and control variables have on a dependent variable. In my case, I employ three dependent variables: first, party identification; second, salience of opposition to abortion; and third, salience of opposition to Same-Sex Marriage.

For the data, I use the Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey, which is a survey that studies the public opinion of people of color and is oversampled for Black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents. The CMPS 2020 survey is the main dataset used, as its oversample of the three POC groups being studied makes it the best dataset for regressions involving race as a predictor variable. One section of the CMPS involves having a respondent pick their three top issues from a list of 22. This list of salient issues gives an opportunity to compare issues that predict White and POC groups' party identification.

The first model I create is a linear OLS model that predicts party identification as a dependent variable and includes independent variable interaction terms for church homophily and race. An interaction term is essentially when two variables interact to create a different effect for different levels of each variable. For example, my hypothesis posits that when a person is both a POC and goes to a church with high homophily, this forms a unique significant effect distinct from a person's race or church composition alone. The interaction terms are created by multiplying race and church homophily. The first model also contains controls for income, education, gender, age, religious importance, existing salience on same-sex marriage and abortion, and race and church homophily alone. These controls are meant to explain

for confounders and distinguish the existence, significance, and size of the effect of the interaction terms. The dependent variable, party identification, is a Likert scale, coded as -3 (strong Republican) to +3 (strong Democrat).

The second and third models are non-linear logistic regressions. The logistic model is chosen for the salience dependent variables because they are binary, and therefore logistic regression is more valid. The abortion variable on the other hand, was built out of a question where people could choose 3 out of 22 options as their *most important issues,* with "limiting abortion" being an option. Other options include "decrease government spending", "criminal justice and police reform" and "stopping the left-wing agenda".[72] These two variables form the basis for my social issue salience models. The same-sex marriage question was originally asked as "Please indicate if the following should be a [_____] priority: opposing same-sex marriage," and had four possible responses: very low priority, low priority, high priority, and very high priority.[73] I chose to code this as a binary scale because low priority versus high priority created a clear cut point that predicted, plainly, whether a person saw the issue as salient or not. The logistic models contain the same controls as the OLS model, with the existing salience controls removed, because those are the very same dependent variables in the logistic models.

Church homophily is also built out of the CMPS data and is coded with three levels: High: >70% homophily, mixed, 70%-30%, and low, <30%.

Results

The following is the regression table for the first model, with control variables excluded from the table for simplicity.

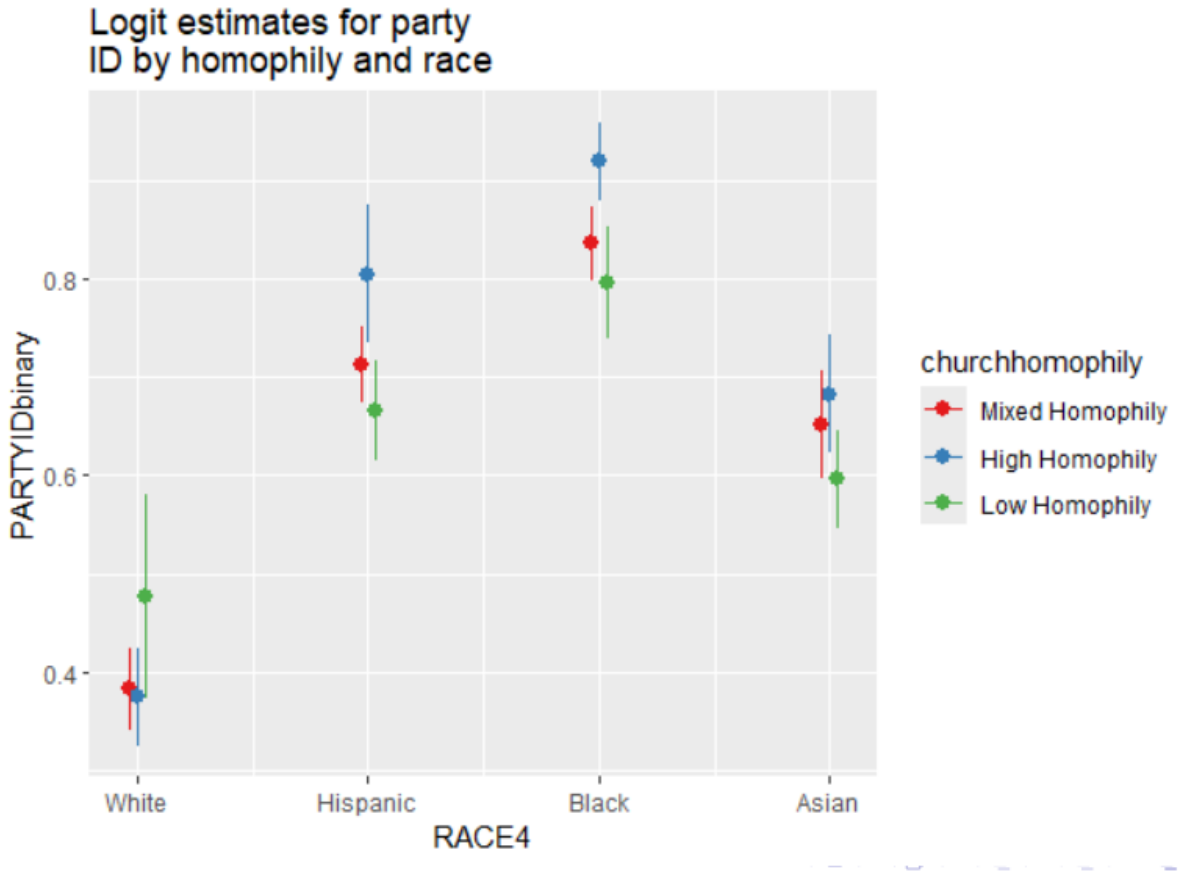
	Likert Party ID
Constant	0.820***
	(0.145)
Hispanic	1.224***
	(0.106)
Black	1.855***
	(0.107)
Asian	0.991***
High Homophily Hispanic	0.425**
	(0.199)
Low Homophily Hispanic	−0.579**
	(0.262)
High Homophily Black	0.623***
	(0.161)
Low Homophily Black	−0.584**
	(0.267)
High Homophily Asian	0.120
	(0.197)
Low Homophily Asian	−0.610**
	(0.271)
N	4605
R-squared	0.268
Adj. R-squared	0.265
Residual Std. Error	1.831 (df = 4584)
F Statistic	83.854*** (df = 20; 4584)

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

[72] Ibid. at 34-40

[73] Frasure, Lorrie, Wong, Janelle, Vargas, Edward, and Barreto, Matt. Collaborative Multi-racial Post-election Survey (CMPS), United States, 2020: ICPSR Codebook for Restricted-Use Data., 128

As can be seen from the regression, race remains significant when controlling for gender, income, educational attainment, and crucially, opposition to same-sex marriage and abortion. The significance of these two variables and the significance of race suggest that it is not religiously conservative views alone that determines party identification for a POC respondent. Also, we find that high homophily in religious space has a positive (Democrat leaning) effect for Hispanics and Blacks, and low homophily has a negative (Republican leaning) effect for Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians. Therefore, the positive interaction effect is confirmed for Blacks and Hispanics, but a *negative* interaction effect is also found to exist, wherein Black, Hispanic, and Asian people who go to churches with low numbers of their own race are *less* likely to identify as Democrats. This is a remarkable finding, though not originally hypothesized. The following is a graph showing the relationship. Points represent the predicted position of a person on the Likert scale.



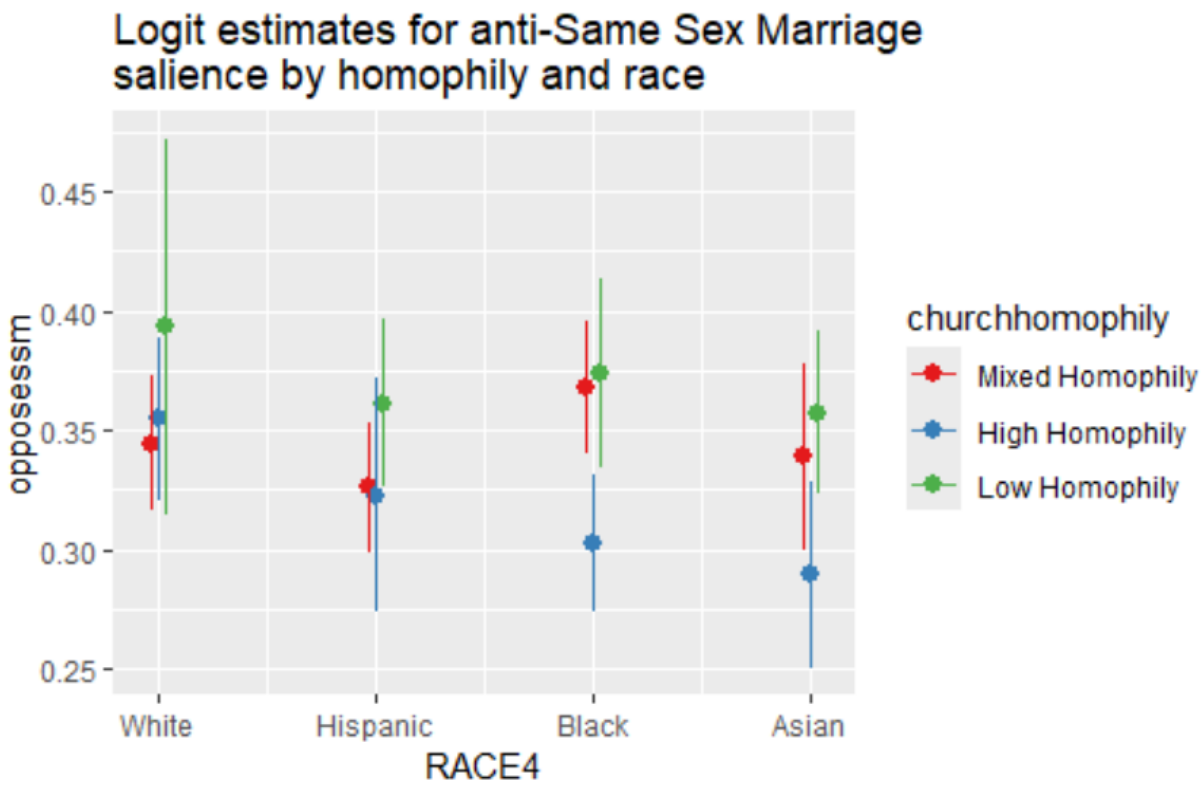
This graph shows the same effect graphically: Black and Hispanic people in churches with high homophily have a more Democratic identification than those in churches with low homophily.

The following logistic regressions show more mixed effects than the OLS regression.

	Limit Abortion	Oppose Same-Sex Marriage
	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	0.072***	0.437***
	(0.010)	(0.023)
Hispanic	−0.031***	−0.018
	(0.008)	(0.018)
Black	−0.052***	0.024
	(0.008)	(0.019)
Asian	−0.041***	−0.006
	(0.010)	(0.023)
High Homophily Hispanic	−0.019	−0.014
	(0.015)	(0.035)
Low Homophily Hispanic	0.067***	−0.014
	(0.020)	(0.047)
High Homophily Black	−0.033***	−0.076***
	(0.012)	(0.028)
Low Homophily Black	0.057***	−0.043
	(0.020)	(0.048)
High Homophily Asian	−0.033**	−0.060*
	(0.014)	(0.034)
Low Homophily Asian	0.071***	−0.030
	(0.021)	(0.049)
N	9353	9353
Log Likelihood	2129.089	−5906.535
AIC	−4220.178	11851.070

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Two interesting observations can be taken from the logistic regression. First, Black and Asian people in high homophily churches are significantly less likely to consider abortion as one of their top three issues. However, a larger effect is found among low homophily Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, where low homophily leads to someone being more likely to consider abortion a salient issue. The third model, same-sex marriage, shows that Black people in high homophily churches are significantly less likely to consider same-sex marriage to be a salient issue, with low homophily Black respondents having an insignificant effect in the same direction. The following is a graph of probabilities for model two, where the point is the probability that a given person marked “high priority” or “very high priority” for opposition to same-sex marriage.



This graph shows one important finding: that Black respondents in churches with high homophily are significantly less likely to consider opposition to same-sex marriage a priority as compared to those with low homophily or even mixed homophily. A similar effect is seen for Hispanic and Asian respondents, but the effects are not statistically significant.

Discussion

To start, I do not believe that the statistical tests that I have used are enough to establish *causality*. Although I believe the theory broadly is causal, the hypotheses I test are not, and therefore, no causal effect can be taken from this analysis. However, the correlations are remarkable.

Though not explicitly hypothesized, both directions of homophily, in this case, high and low, seem to have a great impact on party identification. Consistent with political socialization literature in Black churches[74], party identification can be passed on through the church, and church composition is part of the story of politics in churches. The finding from this paper that mirrors those of previous literature is that *both* people of color being in a church with mostly people of their own race is correlated with more Democratic identification, and people of color being in a church with mostly people of other races is correlated with more Republican identification. As I elaborate in my theory, I believe that the cases in which people of color go to

[74] White, Ismail K., and Chryl N. Laird. "Black Political Decision Making." In Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior, 180. Princeton University Press, 2020.

churches largely populated with their own race are taken from coherent communities that experience distinct problems that they attempt to solve through politics.

Similarly, the *racialized social constraint* model[75] applied to Black political socialization (or something similar to it), I believe, can be seen as applying to other groups, narrowly, in terms of religious spaces, though in perhaps a less heavy-handed manner. The quantitative finding is important because although it does not prove a causal relationship exists between church homophily and party identification, *something is definitely there*. There is some reason why people of color in churches with high homophily have higher Democratic identification than those with low homophily. I reject the null hypothesis for hypothesis 1.

The issue model, however, provides less conclusive evidence. Black voters in churches with high homophily are less likely to consider both abortion and gay marriage to be a salient voting issue. However, these effects are less evident or non-existent in Asians and Hispanics. Therefore, I broadly fail to reject the null hypothesis for hypothesis 2. By the logit point estimates, it seems that an effect may exist, and that the sample size was too small, but it also could be that an effect doesn't exist and there is too much error for church homophily to be a good predictor for issue salience in those two domains.

Finally, one thing that I did not hypothesize was the stark effect of low homophily for people of color. People of color who go to low homophily churches (not necessarily predominantly White ones) are significantly more likely to consider abortion to be salient, and are significantly likely to identify as Republican. This effect is comparable to or larger thanthe effect for high homophily in most cases. This is an unexpected finding that was noted in my theory but not explicitly tested for. However, because the directionality of the interaction terms was tested against the reference of mixed homophily, these findings are just as valid as those for high homophily.

Conclusion

I build a theory of *racial-religious community marginalization* that posits that because racial-religious communities are marginalized as a community, they have an effect of causing community members to both identify more strongly with Democrats, as the preferred party for solving racial marginalization, and to consider social issues to be less salient than substantive ones. This idea is tested in a non-causal manner by using the CMPS dataset to measure the interaction effect of church homophily and race on party identification, salience of opposition to abortion, and salience of opposition to same-sex marriage. The quantitative analyses find that there is a strong correlation between the high homophily and race interaction term and higher party identification for Blacks and Hispanics. They also find that there is a strong correlation between high homophily and lower salience for opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage for Black respondents. There is also a surprise effect of low homophily interacting with race, as people of color with low homophily

[75] White, Ismail K., and Chryl N. Laird. "Black Political Decision Making." In Steadfast Democrats: How Social Forces Shape Black Political Behavior, 47. Princeton University Press, 2020.

of all three groups are more likely to lean Republican and are more likely to consider opposition to abortion a salient issue.

A lot more work should be done in religion and politics for minorities. Future research can further measure, quantitatively and qualitatively, the mechanisms that cause these effects for high and low homophily. The most important conclusion from this study is that church racial composition matters for religion and politics.

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Silence is Religious:
When Conversation Meets the Unspeakable Force

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“"Fools" said I, "You do not know / Silence like a cancer grows / Hear my words that I might teach you / Take my arms that I might reach you" / But my words, like silent raindrops fell / And echoed in the wells of silence”

– Sound of Silence (Simon & Garfunkel, 1964, Lines 22-28

Abstract

According to data from multiple Pew Research polls along with reports from newspapers in addition to some academic literature, it seems that those individuals who do not talk about religion in polite company, are not simply secular in nature. Instead, the data has suggested that a number of religious individuals do not look to discuss religion outside of their immediate personal network. This paper utilizing research conducted on this silencing phenomenon in combination with conducted research on conversation and conversation avoidance seeks to understand what factors may influence individuals of religious background not to discuss religion as a conversational topic. This exploration could help researchers to further understand the nature of conversation related to other institutional context.

Introduction

The activity commonly labelled conversation by masses is relatively young, with the Oxford English Dictionary noting that the word “conversation” as a type of action or activity did not even originate until the 1830s. Opposed to the nature of argumentation detailed by De Montaigne (2004) in his essay “On Conversation,” the activity of conversation more recently has been defined by Schroder (2021) as “an attempted exchange of mental content, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and opinions, between two or more people” (p. 552). Though one common narrative that seems to arise every family gathering, “make sure not to discuss politics, sex, or religion,” hints at conversation’s manic image. These taboo topics have a tendency to enflame familiar relations thus leading to their disintegration, this is especially the case of religion.

Common narratives of etiquette are abound in memorable sayings such as the aforementioned “make sure not to discuss politics, sex, or religion” or even the common “mind your p’s and your q’s” appear throughout the cultural landscape. These narratives form a significant part of an individuals’ socialization (see Harro, 2000) in terms of polite behavior - moreover, such narratives are reinforced or contradicted by social institutions, meaning that there is nuanced understanding in how the results of such etiquette should be produced and reproduced in context. And, it is through conversation that these acts of

etiquette are first transmitted targeting the individual's language, tailoring it to meet conception between one's own image and other's image of ideal societal behavior. One such interesting trend related to etiquette as a number of surveys done by the Pew Research Center such as this one done in 2016 has shown:

> About half of U.S. adults tell us they seldom (33%) or never (16%) talk about religion with people outside their family. And roughly four-in-ten say they seldom (26%) or never (13%) discuss religion even with members of their immediate family. (Cooperman, 2016, Para. 2)

The Pew Research Center's data – though articles from The Atlantic and The New York Times and Religious News Service have also noted the same phenomenon – opens an interesting question which can be phrased as the following: Although traditionally a narrative of etiquette related to family gatherings, religious refrain in conversation has seemingly manifested in larger networks outside of the individual's family.

Conversations and Strangers

Although in common conception the idea of the stranger is one that is defined more in line with intercultural realizations vocalized through terms such as alien or foreigner or immigrant; the idea of the stranger vocalized by psychologists is more implicitly banal (e.g., Sandstrom & Boothby, 2021; Sandstrom et al., 2022). Individuals encounter strangers on a daily basis in everyday society, especially in the capacity of big cities (Milgram, 1970). The stranger colloquially is often granted a negative connotation by individuals, a sentiment which is perpetuated through socialization programs like "stranger-danger" which aims to paint the idea of the stranger in an ominous and dangerous light. Given the nature of the stranger it is not necessarily surprising that conversations are not common between such individuals (Sandstrom & Boothby, 2021; Sandstrom et al., 2022; Schroeder et al., 2022). In fact, research has found that individuals actively avoid attempts to avoid such conversations with such individuals – Goffman (1963) referred to the awareness but intentional avoidance of interaction with strangers as civil inattention – this avoidance is based upon the advent of potential psychological reaction that may come from participating in such an interaction (Sandstrom & Boothby, 2021) on this note individuals may not participate as Milgram (1970) noted that such interactions can drain one's psychical energy.

The goal of conversations with strangers (if that happens) is lowering uncertainty between parties so that such communication behavior becomes more predictable and potentially more enjoyable for all parties. However, it is this initial step into the conversation that can again provoke the most fear for individuals as they are afraid of a potential misstep and the social harm that could be forwarded from such an encounter (see Sandstrom & Boothby, 2021).

Conversation and Religion

In classical parlance "sex, politics, and religion" are supposed to be avoided in polite company. This is especially true with religion which coexists with ideas politics and

sex when individuals are in discussion. The philosopher Richard Rorty (1994) notes that in this context religion can be thought of as a conversational ender as argument is futile as when combined with politics one's conversation ends to the beginning of another's argument. Other than Rorty's argument and some counters (Rosenbaum, 2009; Stout, 2005) research on the relation between conversation and religion seem at this time to be virtually non-existent; though, Lehtinen (2009) conducted a rare conversational analysis study regarding conversations during bible study.

Conversation as defined again by Schroder (2021) as "an attempted exchange of mental content, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and opinions, between two or more people" (p. 552) is a main way religion is transmitted or shared between parties from different experiences. However, culturally individuals avoid referring to such phenomenon in polite company to avoid harming or inflaming another – which again causes a doubling down of conversational cessation as Rorty (1994) argued. Though classically associated with first order politeness (i.e., etiquette), research on terms of religion has traditionally avoided considering discussing politeness in this first order politeness as well as in this more specific formulation of second order politeness (Makuchowska, 2023) - so there is not a specific acknowledgment in the literature linking between religion, conversation, and politeness as currently understood.

Extra-Personal Networks

In everyday life the relations that individuals are a part of formulate their personal network. Individuals in close relational proximity to each other constitute an individual's close network, which compose the individual's immediate availability when communicating. Networks primarily are composed of individuals who are known or related by the individual in question – strangers are located on the outside of the individual's network, unknown to the individual in question. In terms of networks, when talking religion, Schafer (2018) noted there is no confirmed theory, though she did note that one partial explanation as to why individuals may or may not discus religion concerns their position in the individual's network (or outside of it) – as the famous newspaper etiquette columnist Miss Manners' quipped: "The old rule was that politics, sex and religion should not be discussed in casual conversation among people whose sensitivities and opinions were unknown to one another. The rationale was to avoid offending anyone unintentionally" (Martin et al., 2024, Para. 3).

Outside of the network, the stranger is unexpected and more unpredictable, Schafer (2018) writes for example that "[f]or the faithful, shared understandings and a common religious vernacular should make it easier to broach the touchy topic of religion and spirituality" (p. 398). The close relationship issues through the individuals' network provides a particular environment for sharing info possibly because of its predictable nature.

Factors

Individual and Etiquette

All information is not treated as equal for all individuals, even though more information is useful and could facilitate greater yields (see Hart et al., 2021). Two factors often work to restrict information from becoming public: The individual and the societal processes of etiquette. Hart et al. (2021) results suggest that individuals do not ask for certain types of information, not because they cannot do so, but instead they feel the other individual might be affected. Traditionally etiquette was set up to deal with the hyper sensitivities encountered when interacting with others, to quote Miss Manners again: “The old rule was that politics, sex and religion should not be discussed in casual conversation among people whose sensitivities and opinions were unknown to one another. The rationale was to avoid offending anyone unintentionally” (Martin et al., 2024, Para. 3).

Etiquette works by keeping the public, private, by forbidding discussion of certain topics. Not abiding by such social rules that together construct the institution of etiquette can result in the possible application of social sanctions from another. Additionally, when conversing with another from outside the individuals network, strangers, take on a position of unpredictability with conversator ill-prepared to deal with their action.

Language, Meaning, and Understanding

In discussing religion, one can possess many different understandings of what the term means or can mean which are portrayed over the course of conversation. Schafer (2018) noted that “[f]or the faithful, shared understandings and a common religious vernacular should make it easier to broach the touchy topic of religion and spirituality” (p. 398), in the same vein communication scholar Wilbur Schramm (1973) noted how “consequently meanings of signs will to some extent be different for different people, in different contexts, and even for the same person at different times” (p. 65). From this aspect different individuals will certainly inform the conversation (possibility over the wants of the other) due to each understanding things in a unique manner (or, more intimately than the other) – the relative insight of the authors has the possibility of bring up certain topics over others. Furthermore, the language and meaning used in the construction and portrayal of certain topics may be subject to sanctions which reflect the taboo and illicit nature sustained depending on the parties involved.

The Medium of Language and Privacy

According to Ong (1972), language is built on sound – not writing. As he wrote “Real words cannot be seen” (p. 5). So when discussing religion, individuals, speak of the sounds of religion which has power to shape how we behave and in-turn act. While one may hypothetically be able to taste religion, feel religion, smell religion, and see religion, these do not necessary do much to perpetuate feeling and action, it is hearing that facilitates embodied sentiment and moreover, action and possible reaction. McLuhan (1994) noted that speaking language does not permit the same extension towards privacy that individual’s visual ability does for the written word – making the words spoken more direct and potent, with the possibility of revealing its meaning (implied or true) publicly

outside of vicinity of the conversation towards a stranger (or strangers). These features of orality play into the complicatedness of conversation and the adjacent topic over discussion here religion. They can also provide a rationale for why individuals may choose alternative methods of communication in the current age or why they may not converse at all outside of their immediate network.

Etiquette presents a stop-gap measure for sharing or requesting certain pieces of information over others by again promoting the secrecy of certain information in social situations. The practice of etiquette is often prescribed on a cultural level through common memorable phrases such as “mind your Ps and Qs” and “don’t look a gift horse in the mouth” or “if you do not having anything nice to say don’t say it” or “do unto others as you would have done to you.” Such etiquette behavior facilitates a phenomenon which could be termed the “sanitization of the common” to build up a common atmosphere for those in the conversation as well as the strangers outside, at least speaking from a social-ethic standpoint. As Hart et al. (2021) results suggested askers are more sensitive to how the other individual may respond towards in their case for requesting sensitive information – so it would not be hard to argue that individuals may be similarly sensitive in response towards others linguistic uses that revolves around words conveying sensitive information including conversation. Though etiquette at the same time additionally does not fully shift the material so that the “insider” privacy partial apparent in the discussed topic now becomes fully public; however, it does make it less noticeable and more suitable for all involved by sanitizing the content.

The word as has been described is a public medium as such the uncertainty related to one’s use of the word could theoretically transcend the area or context in which it is centrally current. In discussion with or around strangers the manners in which words act or perform upon the individual(s) can be a mystery or at the very least uncertain – it is this fraught uncertainty can impair effective communication.

Conclusion

This paper looked at possible reasons that individuals with a disposition towards the Christian religion might not interact with strangers. The perspective taken in this paper focused on the effects and reactions of information promotion. Conversely, several reasons were argued to be motivated around the mitigation of that information in various manners including etiquette and refusing speaking.

Although this paper does generalize, the arguments made here may not be realized in every Christian. More testing and study will be needed to generate more data and promote a greater understanding and observability of the nuances surrounding the activity of refusing to interact with strangers. This will be the legacy of this paper, to facilitate the awareness of interpersonal interaction between interreligious groups, as well as provoke the need for more study and observation on this issue.

Nicholas Elliott is located at the University of Southern Mississippi where he is set to graduate with his doctorate in May 2025. He is a communication scholar with a special interest in questions and conversations. Additional interests that have been explored over time are located in topics of religion, anime, and death.

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