

# Assessing Tertullian on the Status of Women in the Third Century Church

Prof. Angelo Nicolaides  
University of South Africa  
[nicola@unisa.ac.za](mailto:nicola@unisa.ac.za)

## Abstract

The religious status of women in Judaeo-Christianity has always been an important question and various of the early Church Fathers, amongst others, Tertullian, have tended to discriminate against the female sex as is evident to us through Biblical exegesis and careful analysis of historical related data. Since its inception, the religious role of women in Churches has been a hotly contested issue. Seeking to arrive at consensus on what exactly the role of women should be in the church, countless church synods and councils, as well as noted theologians, have been, and still remain at odds on this contentious issue. Whether in mainstream Orthodoxy, the Roman Catholic or any of the other Christian denominations, the issue is still a proverbial 'hot potato'. Review articles, such as this one, generally summarize the current state of knowledge of a topic. They create an understanding of the topic for the reader by discussing findings presented from reading a wide range of literature on the topic. The article was systematically designed to address very straightforward questions as posed, namely, what role should a woman play in a Church? The goal was thus, to critically evaluate and explore the ideas of Tertullian on the role of women in the early Christian church outside of ordination, in a systematic and comprehensive way by examining a cross-section of relevant literature.

**Keywords:** Women, Church, Third Century, faith, Montanism, Church Fathers

## Introduction

The basic methodological approach selected for this study was the content analysis of full text original articles, primary sources and secondary sources such as articles, websites and other publications provisionally identified as relevant to the theme. The researcher examined and synthesized selected research contributions published by the central character and other authors, and this allowed the researcher to make conclusions concerning the exercise of some type of Church ministry by women as sanctioned by the protagonist. There has clearly been a long history of what is considered to be "authoritative" tradition which forbids women access to the ordained ministry in various denominations such as *inter alia*, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism.

A careful analysis of any text, however, should always be conducted by keeping its own literary and social context in mind. What becomes abundantly clear is the fact that what various Church Fathers have stated concerning the role of women in both official and unofficial church work and their roles therein, is far from unanimous. In many instances, it is obvious to certain contemporary analysts that the reasons put forward centuries ago for the prohibition of greater church involvement by the fairer sex are untenable. One always needs to keep in mind the theological perspective and the historical context in which utterances were made on a range of important issues such as the range of ecclesiastical functions permissible to women.

While a number of Christian communities of the first four centuries permitted comprehensive leadership roles for women, which often including the ordained ministry as in the appointment of

deaconesses, such examples were far from the norm. Indeed where women were involved in ecclesiastic roles, this was merely symptomatic of their ability to adapt to difficult circumstances. For the most part, such brave women operating in patriarchal societies were considered to be “heretical” by traditional believers in especially Orthodoxy. Authors such as Suzanne Wemple, state that “Christianity became a liberating force in the lives of women.” (Wempel,1981: 191). How realistic is this given the fact that they are still largely undermined and play insignificant roles in ministry, generally speaking. While Paul promoted the notion of spiritual equality amongst men and women in his Epistle to the Galatians in which he states: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3.28), how far have women come in being viewed as equal partners with men when it comes to spiritual matters? The ancient Greeks had a highly misogynistic assertive approach concerning women in society and this certainly infiltrated the Roman societal mentality (Hallett, 1999: 27-31). We should not forget that it was Sophocles (407 BCE – 405 BCE) one of the great playwrights of the golden age, who said: “Silence is a woman’s glory” (Chadwick,1967: 53). His sentiments reverberated far and wide.

Throughout history many scholars have deliberated on Tertullian’s views on women, to various degrees. He has recurrently been regarded as a misogynist of note. His utterances in one of his many treatises *De Cultu Feminarum (On the Apparel of Women)*, is described by F. Forrester Church, as “alone responsible for perhaps as much popular notoriety as Tertullian has ever been afforded” (Forrester Church, 1975: 83). Many assert that he is an example of a variety of ascetics that promoted intense moral rigour. What is clear on reading Tertullian is that he would not tolerate in any shape or form the fairer sex preaching or teaching discussing anything connected with ecclesiastic matters. He would however tolerate woman performing the roles of exorcist and to an extent healers.

### **Tertullian (Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianis) – (155 CE -245 CE)**

Tertullian has been called “the father of Latin Christianity” (Ekonomou, 2007: 22). He is very often ranked alongside Saint Augustine as one of the great theologians of the early Christian church. He was a Roman warrior from North Africa and lived in Carthage. He is considered by many to be highly uncompromising and very forceful in his manner. His father was a Roman centurion. He studied to be a lawyer and practiced law in Rome off to which he returned to Carthage in about 195 CE where he converted to Christianity and was ordained as a priest. Tertullian was widely read in the Holy Scriptures and especially the classical Greek authors. He wrote 31 works which were highly practical and which were based on the relationship of Christians with one another, with pagans, and more especially with how the faithful should conduct themselves in a moral sense. In his work entitled ‘The Beauty of Patience’ which was a discourse on James 1:4, Tertullian advised that in this world people carry the very souls and bodies which are exposed to injury from all men, but no matter what injury one may suffer, people should remain patient. We should not worry about things that are transient or trifling.

He states:

*“if any shall try to provoke thee by open violence, the admonition of the Lord is at hand: “to him and that smiteth thee on the face” saith He “turn the other cheek also.” Let his wickedness be wearied out by thy Patience. Be the blow what it may, bound up with pain and insult, he will suffer a heavier one from the Lord (The Beauty of Patience -a discourse on James i 4).*

Tertullian also says that God is an abundant and sufficient depository of Patience. If you place a wrong in His hands, He is an avenger; if you suffer a loss, He is the restorer; if you are in pain, He is the physician; if you die, He is the resurrection. Despite his huge insights as a theologian he was very strongly opposed to the notion of women exercising any type of official ecclesiastical function. His opposition to woman participating in church ministries is well documented in his discourse *On Prescription Against Heretics*. He was vehemently opposed to women teaching or discussing and for that matter performing exorcisms as well.

### **On Women in Ecclesiastic Roles**

In the early Christian churches, women were relegated to duties in lower positions than men. There is evidence which suggests that women in certain communities were permitted to serve as presbyters and some even served at the rank of bishop. While women were not able to offer service as teachers of the faith, they were valued as assistants to their husbands and their fathers. Many served as virgins, instructors, apostles, prophets, deaconesses or as widows. However during the second century, the roles of women came increasingly under the spotlight and their roles began to diminish. This was primarily due to the machinations of dominant theologians who disseminated the idea that since the female species was sinful and inferior to that of men, it should be subordinated to them. Tertullian was one such theologian who uttered vitriolic attacks against females. It was his misogynistic orotundity that 'upset the applecart' concerning the role of women. He stigmatized women as the quintessence of evil and blamed them for the fall of the angels (Bitel, 2002). Tertullian was not without his detractors which included Clement of Alexandria who endorsed marriage for the clergy while also promoting the vigorous involvement of women in the early church (Wemple, 1981).

In the African city of Carthage in which Tertullian lived and spent much of his life, widows were evidently an official order (*ordo*) in the Church (Exhortation to Chastity 13.4). They also enjoyed roles in church tribunals serving alongside bishops, presbyters and deacons. In the pre-Constantine church era, women played extensive roles in church matters. They possessed an array of authority to command. They exercised all of the traditionally recognized offices of widow and deaconess, and also exerted a considerable amount of influence as prophets, apostles, martyrs, teachers, presbyters, and some even served as bishops. It is highly likely that many women served as bishops. For example, women led house churches and included individuals such as Priscilla, Lydia, Nympha, Tavia and the widow of a certain Epitropus. Other than in house churches, some women were also appointed as bishops in a more customary sense and they supervised metropolitan church communities. These may have been either Montanist in orientation or even more conventional Christian communities (Eisen, 2000: 209). Interestingly in early third century Rome especially widows, were officially labelled as persons to be honored by the church in some service role, but they were not to be ordained.

Evidently, widows too, held positions of honour and service in many instances in the early Church. However it is predominantly in the late second century Carthaginian Church of Tertullian that we find solid evidence that they were considered to be actual members of the fully-fledged clergy.

Tertullian at some point complained heatedly of a virgin who was admitted to the order of widows at only the age of nineteen. Since widows were supported by the gifts of the congregation, they were expected to pray for their benefactors as well as for all other members of the church. Their duties and qualifications were developed from the instructions as per 1 Timothy 5. A widow came to be looked upon as "the altar of God," because of her ministry of

intercession and because of the gifts that she had received. She should thus never reveal the name of her donor, or other widows might demand an equal gift from the same donor. They might even opt to curse the one who withheld such benefits. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* (230 CE) insisted that neither “the bishop nor a presbyter, nor a deacon, nor a widow should utter a curse,” because widows “had been appointed to bless”.

Tertullian says that women who “usurped the power to teach” will also seek authority to bestow baptism. He quotes Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 to make his point but the evident inconsistency between 1 Corinthians 14 and Chapter 11 is ignored. It is obvious that he rejects out of hand, the participation of women in teaching and especially in the administration of sacraments and views these notions as highly inappropriate for the church in Carthage and beyond.

### **On beauty, temptation and veils**

Any woman and especially those in lesser church roles, needed to demonstrate their self-respect by observing perfect chastity the temple of the Holy Spirit and the purity of the bride of Christ (*Cult.*, II, 1, 1). It was required that they should don veils to hide themselves from men and reserve themselves as brides of Christ their heavenly husband (*Or.*, XXII, 9).

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul tells us what is expected of women concerning wearing veils and Tertullian was clearly of a similar mindset as to what he proposed in this regard:

Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.” (vs. 2)...and then, “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.” But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man (vs. 4-7).

We need to unpack 1 Corinthians 11 as Leary & Donohue, (2016) have done if we are to fully grasp Tertullian’s view:

The Greek word for a cloth veil is “*kalumma*” which is a noun. The verb that means to cover with a *kalumma* is “*katakalypto*” (prefix here is *kata*, the word for “down,” as in something that hangs down). *Kata* also appears in the word “*katastole*” (*kata* = down, *stole* = shawl, dress, or covering), the same word Paul uses in 1 Timothy 2:9, “*women should dress in modest apparel*” (*katastole*). In 1 Corinthians 11 the verb form *katakalypto* is used throughout; either “*katakalypto*” which means covered with a cloth veil (NRSV uses the word “veiled”) or “*akatakalyptos*” (unveiled). There is no question as to meaning when you see the same words used in 2 Corinthians 3:14 in references to Moses *katalupto*-ing himself with a *kalumma*, a literal cloth veil, to hide the radiance of his face. It wasn’t hair, it wasn’t submission, it was a cloth veil. When we compare the New Testament usage to the Greek Septuagint Old Testament usage, we see *kalumma* or *katalupto* used 18 times, always in reference to a literal cloth veil (Tamar covers her head with a veil in mourning, etc). (Leary & Donohue, 2016).

We can see then that all throughout 1 Corinthians 11 Paul is saying that a man ought not “*katakalupto*” himself (with a *kalumma*), and if he does so he dishonors Christ. Women ought to “*katakalupto*” herself. A woman who refuses to *katakalupto* herself with a *kalumma* should have her hair shaved! Some form of *katalupto* or *kalumma* is used consistently in this section until the end of the passage when Paul uses a different word, saying that the hair is also given to women as a type of “covering” (*parabellion*). Whether a woman has her long hair (*parabelion*) covering or not, she is still command to further “*katakalupto*” herself with a *kalumma* (veil herself with a cloth veil just like Moses did in 2 Corinthians 3). There is something to be said about the head-covering hiding a woman’s glory. Long hair is her glory, but only to be shared with her husband. That is the context in 2 Corinthians 3, after all, where the covering hides the glory! (Leary & Donohue, 2016).

People needed to see at the outset, that a woman was not worldly and materialistic, but rather pure in body and spirit. It was necessary for a woman to offload all earthly “baggage” which might keep her from reaching the desired heavenly Kingdom. The entire demeanour of a member of the fairer sex should demonstrate a resolute desire for purity (Cult, II, 13, 3), and yet Tertullian abhorred the notion of women expressing themselves in any shape or form in official church ‘business’. In the treatise, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, he makes this very clear and he bases his belief on the text, “It is not permitted for a woman to speak in church” on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: “Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted them to speak, but let them submit, even as the Law says. If they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church”. He clearly also refers to 1 Timothy (2: 11-12): “Let women learn in silence in all subjection; for I do not permit a woman to teach nor to have authority over a man, but to be in silence”. He further states: “It is not permitted for a woman to speak in church, nor to teach, baptize, offer [eucharist], nor to take upon herself any male function, least of all the priestly office”.

In the *Didascalia Apostolorum* we read instructions for women: “Thou therefore that art a Christian, do not imitate such women; but if thou wouldst be a faithful woman, please thy husband only. And when thou walkest in the street, cover thy head with thy robe, that by reason of thy veil thy great beauty may be hidden. And adorn not thy natural face; but walk with downcast looks, being veiled” (Chapter III). We should remember that the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, also appeared at this time and served the purpose of elevating the status of bishops. It simultaneously reduced the likelihood of women achieving greater status. For example, widows were to do only what was requested of them by bishop and deacons and needed to obtain permission to accept donations and fast, pray over, or lay hands on anyone who was ill or in need of prayer. Widows were forbidden to engage in baptisms or any other ministry. They were to be silent and remain at home. Yet at the same time, the *Didascalia* recognized the office of deaconess. Such women could assist male clergy in conducting female baptisms, instructing the newly-baptized women, and they could also visit Christian women who were ill (Cardman, 1999: 308-314).

## Montanist links

Tertullian started as an apologist for Christian Catholic Orthodoxy, but it is evident that he increasingly established himself as a vociferous misogynist who was opposed to marriage and sexuality in general. His attitude gradually led him to break away from the Catholic Church and he joined the puritan Montanist sect created by Montanus who lived in Phrygia in Asia Minor. The Montanists encouraged prophesying, and were in favour of an arduous form of abstemiousness. They demanded strict moral behavior along ascetic lines. Tertullian began to

criticize Orthodox Christians and reproached them for what he considered to be moral laxity (Von Campenhausen, 1960: 134). Following the Montanist line of thinking, Tertullian believed that all Christians should be comfortable with persecution and thus emulate the martyrs. Tertullian's involvement in the Montanist movement accounts to an extent for his fear of sexuality as is evident in his works and his belief that women were equal in the body of Christ. The Montanists were eventually declared to be heretics for their controversial ideas. However, in Tertullian's opinion, the Montanists were too lax on many issues especially the role of women (Eusebius). Montanus professed that the Holy Spirit was providing new revelations to the church, and he named himself and two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, as important prophets, which the church considered anathema. Tertullian eventually left the Montanists and created his own even more rigorous group the 'Tertullianists'. Montanism was also rapidly rejected by the church as being heretical based primarily upon their practice of intentional martyrdom (Klawiter, 1980: 251-254). Montanism was ultimately condemned by the bishop of Rome and lost its lustre (de Labriolle, 1913).

During the fourth century the church became closely attached to the Roman Empire and it was at this juncture that clergy developed renewed stature and religious authority became highly centralized. In this male oriented world it was easy for misogynistic tendencies to further manifest themselves. This is not to say that women were regarded as second-class adherents of the faith. However what Tertullian began continued into the third, fourth, and later centuries. The traditions he set were of course, necessarily influenced by a range of cultural and historic eventualities. As the notion of the inferiority of women's reasoning aptitude increased, and they were increasingly blamed for the fall of humankind, the church refused to accept women in ministry and they were never appointed as presbyters or priests (The Panarion, 79: 4). Interestingly it was via Montanism, that women were able to exercise leadership roles far more than was previously the case. Chadwick explains, "The prominence of women in Montanism revived the relatively high participation of women in the life of the early Church" (Chadwick, 1967: 53). Where there was clear hostility towards women from Tertullian, this could be by and large attributed to the Montanist influence on his modus of thought. He always asserted that his primary concern was the coming of the Lord at the Judgement day and the world to come (Carnelley, 1989: 34).

### **Warnings about Women**

Tertullian wrote the epic work *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* (*On the Prescription of the Heretics*) which was a forty-four-chapter thesis in the year 200 CE. This treatise's title speaks of a common practice that existed in the Roman legal system. It is also known as *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, *Incipit De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, and *Incipit Liber Eiusdem De Praescriptionibus Haereticorum*. *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* was a very significant and formal and systematic written discourse that rebutted heresy. In this work Tertullian maintains that the church has the sole authority to pronounce what is considered to be, and what is indeed not, of an Orthodox Christian disposition. In *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* he calls out: "These heretical women, how bold they are! They dare to teach, to dispute, to perform exorcisms, to promise healing, perhaps even to baptize" (Chapter 41.5). Ironically he also says of women: "my blessed ones", "very dear sisters", "partners in service" (Cult., Ux.) which is seemingly contradictory. There is further confusion since during his Catholic phase, in the first of two letters to his wife, he wrote a striking passage about the importance of marriage and married love.

When Tertullian states in his treatise, *On the Apparel of Women*(*De Cultu Feminarum*) that: “*You are the Devil’s gateway; you are the unsealer of that tree; you are the first foresaker of the divine law; you are the one who persuaded him whom the Devil was not brave enough to approach; you so lightly crushed the image of God, the man Adam*” he expresses profound anti-feminine feelings.

Tertullian "the devil's gateway" reasoning was based on the story of The Fall in Genesis:

“Do you not realize that Eve is you? The curse God pronounced on your sex weighs still on the world. Guilty, you must bear its hardships. You are the devil's gateway, you desecrated that fatal tree, you first betrayed the law of God, you who softened up with your cajoling words the man against whom the devil could not prevail by force. The image of God, the man Adam, you broke him, it was child's play to you. You deserved death, and it was the son of God who had to die!”

From the passages quoted above, as well as from many more, one can thus comfortably conclude that Tertullian was indeed a misogynist, the extent of the misogyny and its context are however important considerations. To be fair, in *On the Apparel of Women* he includes men in his attack against vanity and says they should not dye their hair, or be too concerned with their beard, or even shave their body hair etc. He is thus more critical of women, but not only critical of women. It is common practice in various quarters to assume that females were devoid of the image of God because their order in Creation was subject to Adam, a man who was created in the ‘image of God’.

Tertullian argues in this work that: “*and the women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures – maybe even to baptize*” (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 41, 5 (CCL 1 of, 221, 12-15). Tertullian also tended to wax satirical when presenting the observances and teachings of heretical Christian groups so as to mock them. The role of women in ecclesiastical matters was one such practice that he maligned. However the literary evidence suggests that due to a variety of factors such as the loose structure of the Apostolic Church, many women were empowered to carry out an extensive variety of ecclesiastic roles. The roles thus held by some women were often identical to those enjoyed by men. Tertullian also seeks in part, to demonstrate that there is an equal status between the sexes. He maintains that the human soul does not have a gender (*De anima*, XXXVI). He further explains that male hearts are not in any sense superior to female hearts since heart and body are created simultaneously at the time of conception. One could argue that Adam precedes Eve but one should not forget that Adam’s being was energized by a soul. Thus both his soul and body were employed to create Eve.

If a woman is beautiful to behold, she should to try to lessen her natural beauty so as to avoid being an occasion of sin (*Cult.*, II, 2, 5; 3, 3). One should realize, he argues, that men are not accountable for their own lust. When a woman is the cause of lust, then she shares in the guilt:

“For that other, as soon as he has felt concupiscence after your beauty, and has mentally already committed (the deed) which his concupiscence pointed to, perishes; and you have been made the sword which destroys him: so that, albeit you be free from the (actual) crime, you are not free from the odium (attaching to it)” (*On the Apparel of Women*, II.II).

He was to a large extent a blatant misogynist and essentially only had good words for mothers, the widowed and advanced in age who "formed by the experiment of all the feelings [can] easily give to the others the support of their advice and their consolations, having passed through all the states which can put a woman to the test " (*Virg. Vel.* IX, 3). Lamirande (1987) asserts that Tertullian was indeed a misogynist of note. The latter considered women to be a public hazard and a nuisance and was highly critical of them for the most part. He consequently warns men to tread very cautiously when dealing with the fairer sex. Perhaps Adam could have benefitted from such advice. Tertullian suggests that women should be submissive to men given that Eve was created after Adam and then was bold enough to sin before him. This is why in 3:16 the woman is punished by the pain of childbearing (see 1 Timothy 2:15) and she is from then on to fall under the authority of man (*Virg. Vel.* 9.1). This assessment apropos the ministry for women is flawed since one should also consider what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 and also in 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Tertullian accepts in his way of thinking that all women are by nature sexual temptresses and suggests that by applying a veiling over their heads they will be better able to manage the predicament of temptation.

From Tertullian's perspective then, all women were sensual, vain and conceited. Essentially most of them were also viewed as being frivolous, amazingly unintelligent to say the least, and exceptionally wily. His stance can however not be reconciled with his analysis of the Virgin Mary. She was certainly not a lesser creature. If we state that Eve caused mankind to fall by trusting the serpent, it is the gender of Mary who retrieves it by trusting the Archangel Gabriel (*Carn.*, XVII, 5) and who ultimately helped to redeem humanity by bearing the Saviour. She is thus the new Eve. The marriage of people, male and female (*Magnum Sacramentum*) symbolizes the joining together of God and the Church (*Cast.*, V, 3). Although Tertullian is in a sense quite defensible in his approach as to how woman ought to behave in church, the same attitude of behavior needed to be applied equally to males. It is interesting to note his treatment of women is different to that of men since Tertullian normally concludes that there is indeed equality of the sexes in the Church. He does this by commonly also making the man a guilty party of the original sin (*De Cultu* p. 37, n. 3).

### **On Virginité and Celibacy**

Tertullian composed *De Virginibus Velandis* as a rejoinder to a controversy in his Carthaginian Christian group over whether virgins should be veiled or not (Dunn, 2004: 136). On reading *De Exhortatione Castitatis* (*On Exhortation to Chastity*), one finds that there were formal *ordines* of male and female virgins in Carthage (*De Exhortatione Castitatis*, 13.4). Tertullian endorses celibacy and virginité as the norm to which Christians should adhere. He holds continence in the highest consideration: "Accordingly, 'the best thing for a man is not to touch a woman'; and accordingly the virgin's is the principal sanctity, because it is free from affinity with fornication" (*De Exhortatione Castitatis*, 9). Tertullian states that he has written the treatise so as to show that "it is proper that our virgins be veiled from when they reach puberty" (*Virg. Vel.* IV, 1). Dunn suggests that there was a particular group of young women in the Carthaginian parish who were officially dedicated virgins (Dunn, 2004: 140).

In *De Virginibus Velandis* (XVII, 1) he projects women as vain creatures who would appease the need for them to wear a veil, by placing small cloths on the top of the bundles of hair on their heads, so that they could be better noticed as objects of beauty during church services (Diercks, 1956). In *De Pallio* (IV, 2) we find the appropriately female activities of Achilles masquerading as a woman consisting of "deploying her dress, to construct the edifice of her hair, to prepare the skin, to consult her mirror, to embellish her neck, to effeminatize even her ear by boring it",

and really nothing else of value. Women just had to be kept in subordinate roles as they were dangerous creatures. Through martyrdom, women would be able surpass the hypothetical limitations of their sex in their quest to identify with Christ in his suffering (Corrington Streete,1999: 351).

Viewed Christo-centrally, the existence of a dedicated virgin was considered to be an advantage in the community. This was due to her being a observable symbol of purity, modesty, and especially sexual continence. In *De Exhortatione Castitatis*, Tertullian writes, "renounce we things carnal, that we may at length bear fruits spiritual" (*Exhort. cast.*, 10.1 – ANF) and elsewhere he asserts: "...desirous as we are ourselves, too, to be taken out of this most wicked world . . . ?" (*Ad uxorem* I.5.1). Tertullian's arguments in *De Virginibus Velandis* are proposed to pertain to the never-married women who were part of the church in Carthage, irrespective of whether or not they were officially dedicated as virgins or purely still unmarried. As *De Virginibus Velandis* draws to its end, Tertullian states: "For you are promised in marriage to Christ to whom you have surrendered your flesh, to him you have pledged your maturity". (*Virg. Vel.*,16.4).

Another member of the church in Carthage, Saint Cyprian, discusses the dignity of the virgin state in his book *The Clothing of Virgins* and he says:

"Virgins are the flowering buds of the Church; the Glory and ornament of spiritual grace...a work of praise and honour whole and uncorrupted; the image of God corresponding to the holiness of the Lord; the most illustrious members of Christ's flock... And the more there aboundeth virginity the greater the increase of joy in the mother (church)" (Cyprian, 1868: 189).

Tertullian sought total holiness wants women because he urges them: "You must be perfect as your Father who is in heaven" (*Cult.*, II, 1, 4). Woman should forever remember her responsibility in the error which allowed evil into the world. By demonstrating total obedience to the will of God, woman would be able to compensate for the total chaos brought to the divine plan by her disobedience. In the work *Feast of the Virgins*, St. Methodius of Olympus says that virginity is an extraordinary great work and the sacrament or mystery. Consequently it marriages sacrament and the mystery, then virginity is also a sacrament or mystery of the church. Theologically speaking, chastity and virginity may be allied to one another but they are far from identical. When a vow of chastity is taken, this implies complete abstinence in the future, while those who have had no sexual intercourse pronounce a vow of virginity. Chastity signifies and integrity or fullness of wisdom and it embodies the acquisition of wisdom and control over sexual impulses and is thus a victory over nature so that one constantly 'lives in God' as they strive for *theosis*. Chastity is therefore a totally ascetic feat. Many of the early Church fathers maintained that virginity was a supra natural state and it was understood to mean continuation of living in the realm of divine love. Total physical chastity is not necessarily virginity. One that has not actually performed the sex act is no longer a virgin if the act dwells on his or her mind. Virginity and chastity are the gifts of grace as his marriage.

Greatly influenced by the teachings of Paul, Tertullian and Origen, the requirement of clerical celibacy was instigated and to developed in leaps and bounds during the third century. It was however not very popular until a century later. Tertullian vehemently attacked the institution of marriage, and this especially the case among the clergy. He considered them to be burdens on their husbands who had huge tasks to perform. When widows who did not remarry, would have

worn veils from the time of their marriages and continued to wear them throughout their widowhood. Tertullian is very clear on who constitutes a widow in his perspective: “those women who have had one husband - that is married women - and those who are over sixty . . .” (*Virg. Vel.* 9.3)

In any event, the bottom line is that no matter how hard one tried to show that men and women were alike, the all-encompassing belief that all women were somehow all the same and thus inferior to men remained popular for many centuries. The ancient Greeks placed women in a purely domestic setting and role which was also adopted by the Romans. In fact where there were female cults in Roman society that were for example, devoted to Bacchus or Demeter and Persephone, women played a lesser role than is often suggested. Generally then, women as a collective, were considered to be inferior to men and not at all viewed as unique beings with diverse abilities (Hallett, 1999: 32-34). We also see, through literature from the fourth century confirmation from Epiphanius of Salamis on the unhappiness with women in the church in official roles. He criticizes Christian communities that allowed women to serve as presbyters and bishops (Eisen, 2000: 116-128). Generally speaking, the presbyters in churches were viewed as assistants of the local Bishops. It was via the priests that the Bishops were able to adequately perform their responsibility for ministering to the parishes under their control (Titus 1: 5). The Bishops had to make the ultimate judgment call as to whether or not potential clergy possessed appropriate characters that would enable them to carry out a suitable priestly vocation. This was thus a great responsibility (1 Timothy 5: 22).

Tertullian was the first to call the church 'our mother' and in some of his treatises he describes the church as the repository of true faith and doctrine. Of the numerous ideas which Tertullian emphasized, some were orthodox while others were heretical. In his *On Purity*, he maintained that purity had to involve the total repudiation of lust. On hearing that a certain bishop was disposed to forgiving the severe cardinal sins of adultery and fornication, he was outraged and attacked and condemn those who enthusiastically sought a second marriage and who tended to justify their actions by citing Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:9 that persons who cannot control their lusts ought to be married (Tertullian, 1959: 53-54). Tertullian was unmoved and further argued that Paul's real wish was for all men to totally abstain from marriage supported by the declaration in 1 Corinthians 7:1 which states: “it is good for a man not to marry” (Tertullian, 1959: 100). In another of his treatises, entitled *An Exhortation to Chastity*, he made a similar argument in a letter to his wife (Tertullian, 1956: 12-14; 47-50).

Tertullian in an earlier work supplicates his wife not to marry again after his death, as it is not appropriate for a Christian. However in the treatise *Ad Uxorem*, he instructs her at least to marry a Christian if she does intend to marry again, because pagans should not ever be consorted with.

He clearly favoured the view that it is preferable for one to live in God. This is because God is not interested in a woman's beauty but in her constant prayers. This notion is reinforced by the example he provides to his wife concerning two sisters living in Carthage (*Ux.*, I, 4, 3-4). When a man marries a woman they become one in the body and in soul and praise and serve God as one: "They pray together, are prostrated together, fast together, teaching each other, encouraging each other, supporting each other. They are both in company at church, in company to the divine banquet, in company in the trials, persecutions, the consolations... They sing psalms and anthems and compete as to who can celebrate best their Lord" (*Ux.*, II, 8, 7). Lustful marriages are not in any way deemed to be acceptable according to Tertullian. The church sanctified the sacrament of holy matrimony but also recognized as an appropriate state

her life dedicated and committed to celibacy and thus virginity. In fact Jesus Christ was the prototype for this particular kind of lifestyle. The church condoned unmarried life as a suitable existence for people who were able to live in total devotion and purity and the church thus placed both marriage and celibacy on an equal footing. It also respected those who made a commitment to virginity and also those who decide to get married. During the history of the church there has often been fierce debate against a married life by those who favour a celibate existence. Conversely many of those who were married tended to be very negative against those who opted to be celibate. There is no doubt that a consecrated celibate life is worthy of respect. Indeed the church fathers respected both the married and celibate life.

The earthly nature of the female form was viewed as something which was tempting and which led to lustful thoughts by men. The result was that women were restricted more and more from partaking in ecclesiastic duties.

When a woman is beautiful, it is through no fault of theirs but it still better for them to stay at home:

“As if I were speaking to Gentiles, addressing you with a Gentile precept, and (one which is) common to all, (I would say,) “You are bound to please your husband only. But you will please them in proportion as you take no care to please others. Be ye without carefulness, blessed (sisters): no wife is ‘ugly’ to her own husband. She ‘pleased’ him enough when she was selected (by him as his wife); whether commended by form or by character. Let none of you think that, if she abstains from the care of her person, she will incur the hatred and aversion of husbands. Every husband is the exactor of chastity; but beauty, a believing (husband) does not require, because we are not captivated by the same graces which the Gentiles think (to be) graces ...” (*On the Apparel of Women*, II.IV).

Contact with male clergy was very limited for women and this was exacerbated directly as a result of the writings of Tertullian. He admonished them as “the gateway of the devil,” and ordered them to offer total obeisance to their husbands, as stated earlier. Furthermore he instructed that they spend their time at home spinning wool, and dressing themselves in the “silk of modesty, with the linen of holiness, and with the purple of chastity” (Tertullian, 1992). In Genesis 3:16 it is abundantly clear that Eve’s subjections to Adam was a consequence of the fall and was not due to creation itself. It was not part of what is considered the ‘order of creation’. Tertullian was not in favour of women exorcising and neither was he convinced that performing exorcisms was the sole preserve of the clergy or other ministers appointed to perform this task. He essentially believed that all Christians who had divine grace of should be able to cast out evil spirits (*Apologeticum*, 23: 130). The same logic applied to the act of healing. He argued intensely that women should not make any utterance in any church, neither should they teach, baptize, make the offering, or hold a priestly office in any shape or form (Cardman, 1999: 307). Tertullian on other treatises asserts that both exorcisms and baptisms can be performed by laymen.

### **On Baptism and Teaching**

In his work *De Baptismo (On Baptism)* he notes in dismay that a woman was teaching (*De Baptismo* 1, 3 CCL 1, 277 of the, 13-14). No woman had a right to teach even if she was

teaching correctly. This was somewhat ironic given that as Ann McNamara states women had important roles, "As directors of house churches, where communal meals were organized, charity dispensed, and hospitality given to itinerant preachers, they could put themselves at the center of a new social grouping." (McNamara, 1987: 119). Tertullian understood that many of his contemporaries were basing their actions and ideas on the Acts of Paul and Thecla which gave women authority to teach and baptize.

The treatise *On Baptism* was composed against a woman teacher whom he condemned. This woman was a Gnostic of the murky Cainite sect which rejected the idea of baptism. She was working as a teacher in Carthage close to where Tertullian resided. He attacked her verbally for giving herself a right to teach. We need to point out that in a contrived 2<sup>nd</sup> century manuscript which was an apocryphal book by a presbyter of Asia who was in any event defrocked for writing it, Thecla, rather than Paul occupies the limelight. Paul is supposedly speaking in Iconium when Thecla accepts Christ. She is then condemned to die by fire, but is rescued by a sudden cloudburst which extinguishes the flames pointing to divine providence. In Antioch she is condemned to fight against wild beasts, but is once again delivered from danger at which time she baptizes herself by plunging into a ditch full of water in the amphitheatre (Acts of Paul and Thecla, 34). Thecla then continues with Paul in the ministry and he clearly trusted her devotion and ability (Acts of Paul and Thecla, 41). Tertullian stated that under no circumstances should the work be used to inspire woman to claim the right to baptizes and teach.

Tertullian was horrified by the manuscript and reports that the elder who authored this bogus work should removed from office even though he may have written the work to support Paul. Clearly women could not baptize (*De Baptismo*, XVII) Tertullian comes to the conclusion that Paul who also wrote 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 would never have authorized a woman to teach or baptize and he sought to prohibit this. The act of prohibition in itself however, bears testimony to the possibility and likelihood that baptisms were in fact conducted by women in some places.

### **Women, generally speaking**

Tertullian states that women are ambitious 'cupids' and simply get married so as: "to dominate over the house of others, to appropriate the wealth of others, to extort from others that which she lacks herself, to spend without counting a money of which one does not feel the loss" (*Ux.*, I, 4, 6-7). Tertullian maintained that a great evil was in action when men were led into temptation (*Cult.*, II, 2, 5). It is likely that Tertullian's attitude was based on his own experiences of being 'trapped' by the fairer sex. He questioned how it would be possible to resist the wiles of women who had even tempted angels (*Cult.*, I, 2, 3). In *Ux.* II, 8, 3 he speaks of the vanity (*ambitio, muliebris gloria*) of women. He views them as cold and calculating and even ruthless beings. They are considered to be greedy and desirous of excesses which push them to squash all human emotions. This is evident in *De Cultu* (1, 5) where women do not draw back when faced with miners who are suffering as a result of extracting precious metals with which they may adorn themselves in their lust for material things. The role of women and especially widows was greatly relegated by such writings.

In *Cult.*, I, 5 the woman is viewed as someone so dim-witted that she scorns what is really beneficial and she permits herself to seek solace in glittery objects such as gold. She is so mentally deficient that she is unable to realistically consider the relative value of objects (I, 7, 1; 9, 1; II, 10, 2). She thus hoards objects of virtually no worth which are disregarded by others because they are profuse. Women are capable of destroying men that Satan himself would never dare to attack (I, 1, 2).

A woman is equally adept at adjusting divine laws in such a manner that she is able to present herself to the Creator while making herself fair. She also finds it relatively simple not to be in breach of the words of Holy Scripture: "Nobody can add to his size" by clustering the twists of false hair behind of rather than above her head (II, 7, 2).

## Women and Prophecy

Tertullian's allegiance with Montanism made him think differently about the role of women when it came to prophecy. He insisted that while Paul would not condone woman speaking in church, he implicitly accepted their right to prophecy but they should do so by keeping their heads covered with a veil. Tertullian's high regard for prophecy also kept him from denying women their spiritual gift, and he regularly cited Pauline authority for his stance on the matter (1Corinthians 11:5). Since man and woman were equal in terms of creation, and both were in the church, they should be able to profit equally concerning the gift of prophecy. He was well aware of female prophets as well as visionaries but nonetheless kept the exercise of prophecy by a woman separate from the notion of them speaking for the sake of teaching. He did so with the acceptance of Paul's precepts on the matter of prophecy (Evans, 1972: 561). Tertullian followed the line of the Montanists concerning women and prophecy and often spoke of Prisca and Maximilla (*Cast.*, X, 5; *Res.*, Xi, 2; *Prax.*, I, 5) in a respectful manner which demonstrated his stance. Tertullian also mentions other prophetesses including *inter alia* Theonoe, Myrta, Ammia, Priscilla, Maximilla, and Philomena, as well as prophetic women who are referred in numerous writings. Female prophets, such as deaconesses, were also accountable for the instruction as well as baptism of women (McNamara, 1987: 119). He accepted equally the fact, that often some or other "sister" would receive a revelation from the Lord in the course of Sunday services: "She converses with the angels, sometimes even with the Lord. She sees and hears spiritual things. She reads some things in the souls and gives remedies for those that wish it". Tertullian accepted women receiving ecstatic revelations since this also occurred in the Old Testament (*Joel*, II 28-29). We cannot however say that Tertullian believed that all women who said they had received inspiration from the Holy Spirit should in fact be allowed to say so in church. In his treatise *On the Soul*, he warns that precautions need to be taken.

There is among us a sister who is favoured with sundry gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision during the sacred rites of the Lord's day in the church: she converses with the angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; she understands some men's hearts, and to them who are in need she distributes remedies. Whether it be in the reading of scriptures, or in the chanting of psalms, or in the preaching of Sermons, all in the offering up of prayers-all these religious services offer matter and opportunity to her for seeing visions. One day, while the sister of ours was rapt in the Spirit, we discoursed in some ineffable way about the soul. After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the sacred services, she regularly reports to us whatever things she may have seen in visions (fall all other communications are examined with the utmost scrupulous care, in order that the truth may be probed)...” (*De anima* 9, 4).

Tertullian stresses in *Marc*, V, 8, 11, that the obligation of silence in Church by women does not hinder in any way their prophetic role in the Church: "Saint Paul... forbids to them to speak, just to inform themselves; but he proves in enjoining them to veil themselves to prophesy, that they have the right to prophesy". He also says:

Paul instructs women to be silent in the church, not speaking for the mere sake of learning. In doing so, he goes to the Law for his authority that women should be under obedience. However, when he veils the woman who prophecies, he demonstrates that even they have the right of prophesying. (*Adversus Marcionem*V, VIII)

Irenaeus of Lyons (130 CE-202 CE), and Origen, concurred with the notion that agreed that men and women were equally the beneficiaries of the gift of prophecy. The prominence of the prophecy appears to have been related to resisting persecution, fasting issues and evading the matter of remarriage. Tertullian states in *De Leiuio*, that the Holy Spirit proclaimed no innovation in doctrine, but only offered direction on issues relating to ecclesiastic discipline, which were increasingly becoming a bishop's prerogative (Thomas, 2003: 155-165). In the Holy Scriptures we find numerous instances of women who had charismatic power which was dependent on the action of the Spirit at certain times as determined by God. It was also not uncommon for woman to prophecy in Old Testament times. A prophet was basically a person that was called by God to spread His message to humanity that they should atone and seek redemption for their transgressions. It was through the prophets that God often made known to the people what He wanted them to do. It was the prophet who thus warned people that they will be punished for their transgressions and who encouraged people to live ethical lives, by promising them that God would be gracious to their entreaties. Prophets also disclosed to the people what the future would most likely hold for them.

## Conclusion

While Tertullian referred to women as "the devil's gateway" in his work *On the Apparel of Women* (1, 1-2) it is not uncommon to find many more enthusiastic expressions concerning women (Forrester, 1975: 83-101). Human nature is composed of two consubstantial forms namely the male and female. These are basically identical in their humanity in Tertullian's opinion.

Despite Tertullian's belief that women are often depraved and as narcissistic as he describes, he is fully aware that they are nonetheless God's creatures. The gender differences are to a very large extent the result of a cultural conditioning process that has taken place over many centuries. The early church fathers did not consider gender to be an important theological concept but rather gender was understood by them in apophatic expressions. What makes one human is the fact that one lives by participating in God. Since God has no gender, this is not important from a spiritual perspective. In any event human beings have been created in the image of God. Nonetheless while women were involved in social work they were not recognized as suitable material for the priesthood with the result that the church never appointed them as presbytery or priests (Panarion 79:4). This was however not the case where Montanism influenced the appointment of a number of women as presbyters. Where this happened it was usually based on the *oikonomia* of the church which did not entirely prevent certain women from serving as presbyters.

It appears that Tertullian considered widows to be clergy and that they occupied an important place in the community. They were so important that seats were reserved for them. The special group of widows were commonly referred to as *viduatus*. Who was allowed into this group was to large extent dependent on what a presiding Bishop believed concerning potential applicants. It seems that the widows had to be at least sixty years of age and have been

married only once. In addition they should have raised their children in the correct manner. There were of course Bishops which admitted younger widows as well as a married woman into what was a 'group of widows'. In the *Didascalia* there is no evidence at all, of any widow having any role in liturgical ministry or in fact having been selected to care for those who were ill. We cannot also say that the members of this group were in any sense synonymous with the deaconesses of the church.

What Tertullian has provided us with in the *De Cultu*, is essentially a lesson in ascetic behavior intended for the women of Carthage at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Tertullian is extremely positive towards widows and virgins and writes affectionately to his wife on a number of occasions. But whether we can say with great confidence that he was indeed a misogynist as stated in the earlier part of this article is debatable. He was certainly averse to some of the roles women sought to occupy in the church and his many treatises confirm this aspect of his belief. Tertullian while hyper-critical of women also criticized men. We can nonetheless say with confidence that severe discrimination against the fairer sex is not possible to deny in Church history if one carefully analyses the historical evidence through the ages. Theologically speaking, it seems on the evidence that Tertullian believed that both sexes could equally attain salvation in Christ and be liberated from the curse of death. We must note however, that Tertullian was no "champion for woman's rights as understood today" (Church, 1975: 100). This is perplexing given that he says that women, will be ultimately resurrected at the last day, just as men will be resurrected from the dead (*Cult.* I, 2, 5).

His expositions on several doctrinal and practical issues and matters concerning our Lord, are passionate and theologically enriching. In analyzing the literature it is clear that there are indeed two categories of thought on Tertullian's stance on women. One group of writers definitely sees him as a misogynist while another group maintains that he sought the spiritual equality of the sexes but was constrained by cultural and societal observances and practices in general as well as paganism and Greek and Roman philosophers. There is also no doubt that his involvement in the Montanist movement also had a say in influencing his attitude about the personality and character of women.

When we consider what role women should play in churches today, we cannot afford to found our decisions on past practices that were based on incongruent evidence based on a mindset that prevailed in a very unique and different socio-cultural context. We can also not afford to rely too much on tradition although it is an important substrate upon which to build an edifice for the Lord. The debate on the role of women in the church has not ceased. For those who consider faith to be a critical element of life, the debate produces many tensions on a range of plains including the spiritual, existential and intellectual ones. Women cannot forever be dismissed as having lesser value in ecclesiastic affairs, although there are many aspects against ordination as such, which cannot be refuted if Biblical exegesis is true to itself. A preliminary examination on Tertullian's treatises, however, point to the conclusion that operates in a distinctly African setting, which immediately makes it difficult for us to compare his beliefs with those of other early Church Fathers. Tertullian's conclusions require a more thorough investigation, and greater discourse analysis, which should consider all his texts in far greater detail.

For those wishing to further investigate Tertullian's writings these are edited in Volumes 1–2 of the *Patrologia Latina*, and modern texts exist in the *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum*. There are also English translations by Sidney Thelwall and Philip Holmes in Volumes III and IV of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

## References

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesia*, II,25; III, 31; VI, 20. Penguin Edition.

Thomas, C.M. The scriptures and the New Prophecy: Montanism as exegetical crisis. *Early Christian Voices in Texts, Traditions and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon*, ed. Warren, D.H., Brock, A.G. and Pao, D.W., Boston-Leiden: Brill (2003),155-165.

Acts of Paul and Thecla, Lipsius-Bonnet,( tr. M.R. James) Acts of Paul and Thecla 41, 1, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1953, 281.

*Apologetium*, 23, CCL 1, 130, 1-133, 95).

Bitel, L. M. (2002). *Women in Early Medieval Europe, 400-1100*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carnelley, E. (1989). "Tertullian and Feminism," *Theology* 42 , 31-35.

Cardman, F. (1999). "Women, Ministry, and Church Order in Early Christianity." In *Women and Christian Origins*, edited by Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chadwick, H. (1967). *The Early Church*. London: Penguin Books.

Chrysostom, J. "Homily IX on St Paul's Epistle to Timothy." In *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, edited by Alcuin Blamires. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 58-59.

Corrington Streete, G. (1999). "Women as Sources of Redemption and Knowledge in Early Christian Traditions," in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo , New York: Oxford University Press, 351.

Cyprian (St.) (1868). *De habitu virginum*, iii, 3, *Corpus Ecclesasticorum Latinorum*, Vienna.

*De anima* 9, 4 (CCL 2, 792, 24-793, 38), translated in *Ante Nicene Fathers* , III, 188.

de Labriolle, P. (1913) *Les sources pour l'histoire de Montanisme*, 1913.

Diercks, G.F. (1956). *Tertulliani De Oratione et De Virginibus Velandis Libelli, Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia IV*, Antwerp.

Dunn, G. (2004). *Tertullian* , New York: Routledge, 136.

Eisen, U. E. (2000). *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity: Epigraphical and Literary Studies*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

Ekonomou, A. J. (2007). *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern influences on Rome and the papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590–752*. Lexington Books, USA, 22.

Evans, E. (1972). *Tertullian Adversus Marcionem*, Oxford, 561.

Forrester Church, F. (1975). "Sex and Salvation in Tertullian," *The Harvard Theological Review* 68, no. 2, 83-101.

Gryson, R. (1976). *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, trans. Jean Laporte and Mary Louise Hall, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 17-22.

Hallett, J.P. (1999). "Women's Lives in the Ancient Mediterranean," in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo, New York: Oxford University Press, 27-31.

Holy Bible NRV, 2012.

Klawiter, F. C. (1980). "The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism", *Church History* 49, 251-261.

Lamirande, E. (1987). Tertullian the misogynist? *Science et Esprit*, 5-25.

Leary, W. & Donohue, C. (2016) The Prayer Veil [Accessed 18 January 2016] [http://earlychristianfellowship.org/?page\\_id=3167](http://earlychristianfellowship.org/?page_id=3167)

McNamara, J.A. (1987). "Matres Patriae/Matres Ecclesiae: Women of the Roman Empire," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, 2nd ed., ed. Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, and Susan M. Stuard (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 119.

McNamara, J. A. (1977). "Matres Patriae/Matres Ecclesiae: Women of the Roman Empire" in Bridenthal, R.& Koonz, C. 1977. *Becoming visible: women in European history*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Karris, R. (1973). "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 92, 554-555.

Tertullian. *Exhortation to Chastity* 13.4; *To His Wife* 1.7.4.

Tertullian. On a Single Marriage (De Monogamia) 11.1; On Modesty (De Pudicitia) 13.7.

Tertullian. *On Baptism, XVII*; (1976). The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. III, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 677.

Tertullian. *De Cultu Feminarum, lib. I & II On the Apparel of Women* 1.1-2.

Tertullian. *De Praescription Haereticorum* 41.5, in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (CCL) 1, 221, 12-15, translated in Ante Nicene Fathers, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, Michigan

Tertullian. *De Virginibus Velandis*, 1.1. Trans. G. Dunn, *Tertullian. Le Voile des Vierges (De Virginibus Velandis)*, ed. Eva Schulz-Flügel (Sources Chrétiennes 424).

Tertullian. *De Virginibus Velandis* 9.1; text in CCL 2, 1218-19 and translation in ANF 4, 33.

Tertullian. *The Beauty of Patience* -a discourse on James 1:4

Tertullian. (1992). "The Appearance of Women," in *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. Alcuin Blamires, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 50-58.

Tertullian. (1959). "On Purity," in *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. 28, *Tertullian: Treatises on Penance*, eds. Johannes Quasten and Walter J. Bughardt, trans. William P. Le Saint, Westminster: The Newman Press, 2, 3, 53-54.

Tertullian. (1956). *Ad Uxorem*. "To His Wife" and "An Exhortation to Chastity," lib. I & II, in *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. 13, *Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage*, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, trans. William P. Le Saint, Westminster: The Newman Press, 12-14 and 47-50.

Tertullian. *Exhort. cast.*, 9: "Ideo optimum est homini mulierem non attingere, et ideo uirginis principalis est sanctitas, quia caret stupri affinitate." (See I Corinthians 7: 1).

Tertullian. *Adversus Marcionem* libri I-V. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Tertullian. *De Virginibus Velandis* (On the veiling of virgins), The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, De fide. Books II and III Nag Hammadi and Manichaean studies Volume 2, Frank Williams, Karl Holl, Brill Academic Publishers.

Von Campenhausen, H. (1960). *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, Stanford University Press, 123.

Wemple, S. F. (1981). *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.