

**Paper for the 2006 Bakhtin and the Biblical Imagination Section.**

Devouring Dialogue: Salome and Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas.

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I. Introduction. – II. Dialogue, Characterization and Historical Location. – III. Salome and Jesus in Dialogue. – IV. Women and Meals in Antiquity. – V. Salome and Jesus at the Meal. –VI. Conclusion.

I. INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, ‘Two will rest on a couch ; one will die, one will live.’

Salome said, ‘Who are you, man? You have climbed onto my couch and eaten from my table as if you are from someone.’

Jesus said to her, ‘I am the one who comes from what is whole. I was given from the things of my father.’

< . . > ‘I am your disciple.’

< . . > ‘Therefore I say, if one is whole one will be filled with light, but if one is divided one will be filled with darkness.’ (Gos. Thom. 61)

The image of Jesus and Salome at a meal interrupts a stream of Jesus’ sayings concerning life and death in the Gospel of Thomas. Logion 61 in Thomas features a conversation in which Salome responds to Jesus’ words with a statement that Jesus has eaten at her table. This dialogue is striking not only for its content, but also for the manner in which Salome confronts Jesus within the exchange. In this conversation, Salome seems to use her own connection with Jesus in the context of a meal as part of an argument that fundamentally questions Jesus’ pronouncement that, “Two will rest on a couch; one will die, one will live.” Moreover, unlike any of Jesus’ other followers in the *Gospel of Thomas*, Salome here names herself as disciple.

The theory of Mikail Bakhtin lends fascinating insights to the effort to decipher this passage. Much of Bakhtin’s work centers on dialogic discourse, and the potential of the polyphonic novel. In this case, Bakhtin’s work guides the discovery of distinct viewpoints or voices within logion 61, which in turn implies the existence of these viewpoints within the Thomas community. Furthermore, Bakhtin explores the role of the meal itself as the location in literature for dialogue, embodiment and the breaking of

boundaries. Bakhtin's understanding of the meal may help one to hear differing voices in logion 61 directly relating to themes of materiality in life and death, as well the role of women as followers of Jesus.

## II. DIALOGUE, CHARACTERIZATION AND HISTORICAL LOCATION

"The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics" includes three aspects of Bakhtin's thought useful for exploring Jesus and Salome's conversation in the Gospel of Thomas. First, Bakhtin's contrast of the polyphonic novel with monologism opens up the possibility of hearing different viewpoints speaking in Thomas. Next, Bakhtin's theory of characterization through discourse argues that it makes a difference *who* is speaking in a dialogue, an important element if one wants to understand the implications of Salome's presence in this passage. Finally, Bakhtin's assertion that discourse is historically located means that this dialogue may be seen as part of a larger social and historical world where the issues in this conversation were in play.

In Bakhtin's terms, scholars have tended to read the Gospel of Thomas according to a monologic model. In the "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics," Bakhtin suggests that with monologism "a thought is either affirmed or repudiated,"<sup>i</sup> with the result that the ideas that are confirmed form a unity of consciousness transcending individual consciousness. By contrast, those thoughts that are not affirmed must either be attacked and discredited, or they can be incorporated as ideas that no longer signify. Interpreting Thomas "monologically," scholars have privileged Jesus' voice as pointing to such a unified context that may be understood to represent the point of view of an ideologically single toned community.<sup>ii</sup> In the case of logion 61, this monologic reading leads a

scholar like Antti Marjanen to read the dialogue between Salome and Jesus as indicating that Salome does not “quite understand enough”<sup>iii</sup> as she has yet “to reach the highest level of discipleship.”<sup>iv</sup>

Viewing logion 61 through the lens of Bakhtin’s theory concerning the polyphonic novel offers another possibility. This theory encourages us to recognize in Jesus and Salome’s dialogue not one voice, but two “idea-images” actualized in these characters. Such a move is made possible by Bakhtin’s claim that the author of the polyphonic novel no longer provides the source of a unity of consciousness, but becomes one among many voices that intersect within the text. Within the polyphonic novel, Bakhtin argues that the author writes in “points of view, consciousnesses, voices.”<sup>v</sup> The characterization goal of the author is to “formulate each thought in such a way that a whole person was expressed and begins to speak in it.”<sup>vi</sup> This means that for the author to achieve true dialogism, he or she must give voice to fully actualized characters as “idea-images” who interact on an equal basis with the other idea-images in the text.<sup>vii</sup> Moreover, this whole person appears, and is shaped through the dialogue itself.

If Bakhtin’s dialogism offers the potential for recognizing Salome and Jesus in logion 61 as fully actualized characters representing distinct viewpoints, this theory also indicates that such idea-images give us insight into the complex historical ideas that surrounded Thomas’ author. Bakhtin suggests that ideas are not only physically “embodied” by the author, but that through these idea-images the author “hears” the dialogical interaction of their own time.<sup>viii</sup> Thus, Bakhtin writes that Dostoevsky “heard both the loud, recognized, reigning voices of the epoch, that is, the reigning dominant ideas (official and unofficial), as well as voices still weak, ideas not yet fully emerged,

latent ideas heard as yet by no one but himself, and ideas that were just beginning to ripen, embryos of future worldviews.”<sup>ix</sup> This type of hearing does not mean that the author simply repeats dialogues known to him, but that he plays upon their potential by creatively reworking them, placing ideas at intersections of dialogical conversation where they might be productive. Bakhtin’s theory here makes room for hearing a variety of voices in a way especially helpful when trying to discern those voices who do not speak as the elite or “winners” of history.

Clearly it is important to note that there are differences between a text like the Gospel of Thomas and the writings of Dostoevsky that keep us from using Bakhtin’s theory without reservation. Bakhtin himself sees the polyphonic novels of Dostoevsky as the culmination in some sense of a process that began in ancient times. However, this actually creates an entry into his theory for those who study early Christianity. While Bakhtin sees the polyphonic novel as fully realized only in the modern period, he locates the roots of this phenomenon with its potential for dialogical event in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, including the genre of the symposium.<sup>x</sup> In this paper, I will argue that some of this potential can be apprehended in the dialogue between Salome and Jesus in logion 61.<sup>xi</sup> Moreover, I suggest that the theory of Bakhtin can help us to see these characters as idea-images who are caught up in the dialogue that the author of the Gospel of Thomas heard in the world around him.

### III. SALOME AND JESUS IN DIALOGUE

The dialogue between Jesus and Salome begins with Jesus’s dramatic statement, “Two will rest on a couch; one will die, one will live.” Thomas shares part of this saying

with Luke 17:34, where out of two on one couch, one will be taken, and one left behind. While Thomas and the Gospel of Luke share a meal context for this saying,<sup>xii</sup> Jesus' words in logion 61 lack the apocalyptic context of the Lukan passage precipitated by the coming of the Son of Man. Instead, the location of this logion in Thomas indicates a focus on life and death that does not involve the apocalypse, but materiality versus spiritual existence.

According to the “catchword” theory of Thomas' organization,<sup>xiii</sup> the immediate environment of logion 61 seems to have been determined by the theme of life and death shared with surrounding logia. The way that these other logia use this theme may help to illuminate the meaning of Jesus' saying in 61. In this case, logion 60 and its complement, logion 56, are especially instructive. Logion 60 records a conversation between Jesus and his disciples about a lamb, which the disciples say will be killed and eaten. Jesus observes that the lamb can only be eaten when it has been killed and become a carcass, and warns the disciples that they must find a place of rest lest they become a carcass to be eaten. Logion 56, in turn, seems to give an indication of what it means “to become a carcass.” Using the same Greek word *ptw=ma* for corpse or carcass, 56 says “Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy.” If logion 60 is read in terms of 56, becoming a corpse seems to indicate becoming one with the world, apparently accepting material existence. This idea fits with an essential devaluing of the physical in Thomas, and uneasy coexistence of the flesh and spirit in sayings like 29, 87, and 112. If we let insights from logia 60 and 56 guide a reading of 61, Jesus' statement

here may well revolve around division between those who die through acceptance of the world, and those who will live in the spirit.

Salome's confrontational reply to Jesus "Who are you, man? You have climbed onto my couch and eaten from my table as if you are from someone,"<sup>xiv</sup> indicates that we are in the presence of another viewpoint or voice, making possible an intersection of ideas. Kathleen Corley suggests that Salome's response "You have climbed onto my couch" demonstrates that Jesus' earlier statement refers to Jesus and Salome eating together on one couch. In these terms, Corley concludes Jesus' words can be read as a criticism of Salome for eating with him in such a compromising situation, putting her "soteriological status" in question.<sup>xv</sup> I propose instead that Salome's reply leaves inconclusive whether Salome and Jesus share a couch, or whether she simply hosts him in her dining room. Regarding the first saying of Jesus in this logion, I have already suggested a less literal reading that expresses a connection between death and materiality attested elsewhere in Thomas. Salome may indeed be responding to the implications of Jesus' statement concerning life and death, and perhaps even taking them personally. However, the important move Salome makes in her reply is to take the conversation from Jesus' metaphorical use of the meal as a setting in which to place division according to death and life, spirit and body, into the concrete sharing of a meal between Jesus and Salome. In order to unpack the potential of this reply, I will first enlist the help of Bakhtin's discussion of meals and the ancient symposium, before turning to our knowledge of women at meals in the ancient period.

Logion 61 does much to evoke the ancient genre of the symposium. As in that genre, this logion features a meal with participants reclining on couches while they

engage in philosophical conversation over ultimate questions. Dennis Smith explains that this genre was so pervasive in the Greco-Roman world that “the reporting of meals tended to assume the literary form of the symposium as a matter of course—that was simply the way one talked about meals in written form”.<sup>xvi</sup> Bakhtin identifies the ancient symposium genre as a banquet dialogue which fosters encounter of diverse ideas.<sup>xvii</sup> Indeed, Bakhtin notes an “ancient tie between the feast and the spoken word” which receives its “clearest and most classic form” in the ancient symposium. The type of open, even carnivalistic, dialogue that Bakhtin locates in the symposium is closely linked with his understanding of the embodying function of the meal itself.

In his book “Rabelais and his World,” Bakhtin states that meals take place at the intersection of man and world, and as such have important symbolic value. He writes:

Eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body. The distinctive character of this body is its unfinished nature, its interaction with the world. These traits are most fully and concretely revealed in the act of eating; the body transgresses here its own limits: it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world’s expense. . . Here man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself.<sup>xviii</sup>

In many ways, this reads as the ultimate description of embodiment and carnality.

However, this description of the meal implies more than blind, carnal existence. In the context of his theory concerning dialogism, Bakhtin’s description of eating here reads much like a dialogue with the world as one side of the conversation, and the body as the other. Taking place at the intersection of two entities, the human body and world, the meal changes both, and it is at this interaction that life exists. In these terms, Bakhtin describes eating as an activity that is “joyful and triumphant,” and engenders a situation in which “the limits between man and the world are erased, to man’s advantage.”<sup>xix</sup>

The meal clearly defines embodiment in a positive light for Bakhtin. However, Bakhtin sees the meal not only as a place for dialogue between body and world, but as a traditional location for “the relation of food and speech, the gay truth.”<sup>xx</sup> In “Rabelais and His World,” Bakhtin does not separate the themes of human conversation from embodiment in the context of the meal. He writes, “The themes of table talk are always ‘sublime,’ filled with ‘profound wisdom,’ but these themes are uncrowned and renewed on the material bodily level.”<sup>xxi</sup> For Bakhtin, this special quality of the meal means a breaking down of boundaries between people. In the case of the ancient symposium genre, Bakhtin states that dialogic banquet discourse creates “the right to a certain license, ease and familiarity, to a certain frankness, to eccentricity, ambivalence”<sup>xxii</sup> that is part of its nature as a carnivalistic genre.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Bakhtin’s thought concerning meals and the symposium dialogue helps to open several intriguing possibilities for interpreting Salome’s response to Jesus in logion 61. If we read Jesus’ first words as a statement concerning death in terms of materiality, Salome’s reply acts as a serious contradiction. In Bakhtin’s terms, Jesus and Salome’s participation in a meal makes a claim for their embodiment in conversation with the very world that Jesus seems to be denying. This may also act as a claim for their relationship as partners in dialogue, an essential element of the symposium genre. This means further that if Salome is taking Jesus’ words on a personal level and seeing herself as the one to die, the use of a shared meal context may give Salome a way to question the division between the two of them that Jesus’ statement implies. Moreover, Salome here claims that not only have Jesus and Salome eaten together, but that responsibility for this activity lies with Jesus who has climbed onto her couch and eaten from her table. In this light,

Jesus' actions in initiating a situation where he and Salome eat together create a situation of materiality and embodiment that would contradict his own words. Finally, Salome's mention of her couch and her table may be read as a reminder of her status as a patron at this meal, a role that helps to bring the two into a more equal relation.

If Salome's response asserts embodiment, the ramifications of her very presence at a meal with Jesus are magnified. If we agree with Bakhtin that it matters who speaks in a dialogue, we must take into account what it might mean for Salome as a woman disciple to be a voice within a symposium context. Towards that end it is necessary to briefly explore women's participation in meals of the late republic and early empire.

#### IV. WOMEN AND MEALS IN ANTIQUITY

By the time of the late republic, Roman meals had come to resemble the Greek meal with reclining at the table, and division of the meal into *deipnon* and *symposium*. In the Roman case, the first two courses, like the Greek *deipnon*, constituted the main part of the meal. Meanwhile, the last course, the *menae secundae*, constituted the *convivium*, a Roman equivalent to the *symposium* with drinking, entertainment and conversation.<sup>xxiv</sup> Roman women's participation in these meals shifted somewhat in the late republic, a shift that seems to have begun in Greek custom in the Hellenistic age.<sup>xxv</sup> Before this period it appears that respectable women's participation in public meals was fairly limited. This did not mean that women did not take part in meals with men at all, but that literature presents women at public meals most often as *heterae* and flute girls.<sup>xxvi</sup> Dennis Smith's inspection of various sources has shown that the custom of respectable woman not eating in public at all, and only sitting rather than reclining when they did eat

with their husbands in private, had changed by the first century to include both reclining and some public dining.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Work on women and meals in antiquity by those such as Joan Burton and Kathleen Corley proposes that increased participation of women in public meals signaled changes in the socio-economic structure that allowed women more equitable roles in the late republic.<sup>xxviii</sup> However, it appears that among the upper classes only matrons had some freedom to attend public meals in the company of their husbands, and even then it is very difficult to know how widespread this practice was.<sup>xxix</sup> Moreover, the participation of these women seems to have extended to the symposium or convivium part of the meal only rarely.<sup>xxx</sup> Finally, Corley suggests that women who attended public meals nearly always ran the risk of being seen as immoral. In Greco-Roman literature, public meals continued to be closely associated with prostitutes and slave women well into the second century, with the result that it would be easy to label any woman attending a public meal in these terms.<sup>xxxi</sup> However, while a woman might be labeled as immoral for appearing in a public meal context at all, the attendance of the symposium part of the meal could be especially hazardous for a woman's reputation. Eating, drinking, and conversing with men in the symposium context was consistently seen as the behavior of prostitutes or courtesans throughout this period.<sup>xxxii</sup>

## V. SALOME AND JESUS AT THE MEAL

In light of this discussion of women and meals in the late republic and early empire, we can see that Salome's presence at a meal with Jesus may run against several social conventions, and could easily be labeled as scandalous. Salome may well be either

unmarried, or a married woman without her husband at a meal, in either case behavior not in line with the social norms. Moreover, she converses with Jesus boldly about intellectual topics after they have shared food and potentially a couch, an environment that suggests nothing so much as the symposium portion of the meal. It is just this type of behavior that Corley suggests led to charges of acting like a prostitute. As I have pointed out, Jesus and Salome's initial exchange leave ambiguous whether they share a couch or whether she acts as host to Jesus. While these two options might each entail different power relation between Jesus and Salome, in either case Salome's presence in a symposium context where she eats and converses with Jesus could easily lead to an accusation of her being a prostitute or immoral. However, her next response to Jesus in their dialogue asserts that she is neither.

When Jesus says, "I am the one who comes from what is whole. I was given from the things of my father," Salome responds simply, "I am your disciple."<sup>xxxiii</sup> In this reply, Salome asserts not only her right to share in conversation in a certain role, but also perhaps her claim that as a disciple she too shares in "the things of the father." Presenting herself as a disciple, Salome negates possible counter claims that she is immoral by taking part in a public meal, but even more, she asserts her rightful place as a dialogue partner at the symposium table. Through this statement, Salome has not only defined but also acted out the relationship between herself and Jesus. If we follow through with the earlier argument in this paper concerning the embodying nature of the meal, and Salome's own emphasis on the fact that she and Jesus have shared a meal, it seems very possible that we may hear resonances from her earlier comment in this claim that she is a disciple. In this case, Salome would neither be "made male" (logion 114),

nor in a situation where “male will not be male, nor the female be female” (logion 22). Instead, Salome’s assertion to her right to share both meal and conversation with Jesus, may indicate a claim that she has a right to do these things as someone who is at the same time both woman and disciple. According to Bakhtin’s theory, the meal context in this case may be seen as responsible partly for claims to embodiment, but also for the creation of a certain environment that allows both unusual openness in conversation, as well as reversals of hierarchy.

Logion 61 ends not with Salome’s voice, but with last words from Jesus that again focus on unity. Corley reads Jesus’ final two statements as an assertion that one must return to the “primordial unity” of the first Adam who was neither male nor female.<sup>xxxiv</sup> This is a move that she makes, primarily in line with scholarship that has been done on interpretation of logion 114 according to the model of the male androgyne seen in Philo (On the Creation, 134-145) and others.<sup>xxxv</sup> Moreover, Corley suggests that in stating she is Jesus’ disciple, Salome in fact claims for herself the unity of the male androgyne that Jesus describes. This means, by extension, that Salome is also claiming she is male.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In response to Corley’s arguments, I would note that logion 22 seems to suggest that unity for Jesus does not need to be either male or female, but instead transcends these categories.<sup>xxxvii</sup> If we do adopt the translation of the Coptic verb “sheesh” as “undivided”<sup>xxxviii</sup> or as “whole”<sup>xxxix</sup> in line with theology elsewhere in Thomas, we are nevertheless left with the possibility that we need to read Jesus’ last two statements in terms of the unity put forth by logion 22, again pointing to a devaluing of male and female physical distinctiveness in favor of a spiritual unity.<sup>xl</sup> In these terms, Salome’s response might be read as per Corley’s suggestion as an affirmation of Jesus’

statement, and by extension his definition of unity according to logion 22. However, I would argue that the very ambiguity of Salome's response leaves room for the possibility that Salome claims a discipleship that does not erase gender. Salome does not either affirm, or deny the specifics of Jesus' statements concerning unity. Instead, Salome's response can be seen as a redefinition of the nature of the discourse by naming her place in the relationship between herself and Jesus, a relationship created through dialogue, and in this logion, the context of the meal.

Jesus' last statement reinforces his earlier claim to unity and echoes other logia throughout the Gospel of Thomas that link unity with life, light and entrance to the kingdom of God.<sup>xli</sup> I would argue that trying to bring this last statement into harmony with Salome's own final words risks masking the multi-toned quality of this passage. Bakhtin explains that in a dialogical text the characters are themselves unfinalized, extending beyond the text to show dialogues that are ongoing.<sup>xlii</sup> Jesus' last words in this passage do not make for easy resolution with Salome's claims of discipleship. Instead, it may be argued that his contrast of a positive unity with the darkness of division reiterates his negative focus on materiality in the opening statement. As unity means abandoning the materiality of gender in logion 22, it also means finding life that is the opposite of the worldly "corpse" elsewhere in Thomas.<sup>xliii</sup> The nature of this reply and its very inability to neatly resolve Salome's preceding words leaves the passage open to the possibility that this is not the end of the dialogue. Instead, we are left waiting for Salome's next remark—words that go beyond the text we have.

## VI. CONCLUSION

By drawing upon the theory of Bakhtin, this paper has entertained the possibility that we might see in logion 61, if not a polyphonic novel, then at least the possibility of different viewpoints represented in the passage. In the case of Jesus' initial words, I have suggested that they represent a certain devaluation of the physical world in favor of spiritual existence. By contrast, Salome's appeal to the meal which she and Jesus have shared may question Jesus' statement by pointing out that, in Bakhtin's terms, Jesus and Salome have engaged in an activity that affirms materiality and the body on an elemental level. I would also venture that this passage offers the very interesting possibility that Salome speaks not only as a voice in favor of a certain materiality that may be unified with the spiritual, but that her voice as a woman is embodied through this very argument. If the meal context also implies the production of a certain freedom of dialogue and truth, Salome appears to be laying claim to a role in this dialogue. Moreover, we can perhaps read Salome's last assertion as a demand not only to take part in the dialogue, but also to define her own role at the banquet, not as prostitute, but as a woman disciple with the power to help shape the discourse.

Finally, according to Bakhtin's theory, we can contemplate the possibility that the divergent voices in this passage may represent different opinions within the Thomas community. If Thomas "hears" in this passage dialogues going on in his community, then we may be able to argue for some range of thought among this group over issues of materiality and the role of women. While Jesus' first statement in this passage could represent part of the community that finds a more dominant voice in Thomas with its

devaluation of the material world, Salome may also speak for that part of the group that argues for a more positive relationship with the material. Finally, if Salome's words do work to "embody" her even as she asserts her status as a disciple, we could argue for a very striking contrast to the requirement for Mary to become male in logion 114.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson, vol. 8, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 80.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>iii</sup> Antti Marjanen, "Women Disciples in the Gospel of Thomas," in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*, ed. Risto Uro (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 92.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>v</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 93.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid.*, 107ff.

<sup>xi</sup> The Gospel of Thomas exhibits only a limited amount of the type of direct dialogue between characters that I have drawn out of Bakhtin's discussion of Dostoevsky and the polyphonic novel. The other logia with named disciples, especially 13 and 114, seem to demonstrate the type of interaction that might make them eligible for this type of analysis. One might also investigate the *Gospel of Thomas* for the type of dialogue that Bakhtin describes within a single character's utterance, in this case the words of Jesus. For a discussion by Bakhtin on this subject see: *Ibid.*, 184-86.

<sup>xii</sup> For an argument for the Luke passage in a meal context, see: Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1993), 108. For logion 61, see: Kathleen E. Corley, "Salome and Jesus at Table in the Gospel of Thomas," *Semeia* 86 (1999): 87.

<sup>xiii</sup> Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1990), 81.

<sup>xiv</sup> Part of Salome's reply concerning the meal causes difficulty in this passage in terms of translation.

Following Salome's question, "Who are you man?" various scholars have noted the textual problem and possible corruption of the phrase "hos ebol hen oyo". This has variously been translated as "as if you were someone special," or "as if you are from someone" (Corley, 1999: 89). Corley argues on the basis of Bentley Layton's work that this passage may have in fact mistranslated the Greek "ws zenos." This reading might provide a further explanation for a setting in which Jesus would eat from Salome's table and recline on her couch, while she offers him the hospitality of her home. However, I question this reading as viable in light of the parallel construction in Jesus' reply, "I am the one who comes *from* what is undivided": "ebol hem petsheesh."

<sup>xv</sup> Corley, "Salome and Jesus," 88-89.

<sup>xvi</sup> Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 48.

<sup>xvii</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 120.

<sup>xviii</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 281.

<sup>xix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>xxii</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 120.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Although this paper does not explicitly explore Bakhtin's theory of carnival, it is helpful to note that much of this theory revolves around suspension or reversals of hierarchical structures. *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 27.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Joan Burton's work on women's commensality has shown that in the classical and Hellenistic periods serious exceptions can be found to this pattern, especially as the Hellenistic period witnessed growing

“economic power and visibility of Hellenistic Greek women.” Joan Burton, "Women's Commensality in the Ancient Greek World," *Greece and Rome* 45 (1998): 149.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 43.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals*, xv. Burton, "Women's Commensality in the Ancient Greek World," 149.

<sup>xxix</sup> Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals*, 30.

<sup>xxx</sup> Ibid..

<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> At this point in the Coptic text, the name of the one who speaks is missing. However the feminine of the possessive article “your” (tek) leaves little doubt that Salome is the one speaking.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Corley, "Salome and Jesus," 91.

<sup>xxxv</sup> For several discussions of the meaning of logion 114 see: A. D. De Conick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 18-21.; M. Meyer, "Making Mary Male: The Categories Of "Male" And "Female" In the Gospel of Thomas," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985).; Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of Androgyne: Some Uses of the Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *History of Religions* 13 (1974).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Corley, "Salome and Jesus," 91-92.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Antti Marjanen makes the argument that logion 114 and logion 22 present very different ideas with different implications for women in the Thomas community, and that 114 may actually be a later addition to the gospel. See: Marjanen, "Women Disciples in the Gospel of Thomas," 101-03.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Bentley Layton, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex Ii, 2-7* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 75.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Marvin Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 47.

<sup>xl</sup> Marjanen suggests that Jesus' last two responses are extremely difficult to translate confidently. The verb sheesh is translated by Layton and Marvin as whole or undivided in part because it makes sense as the contrast for division in the last saying. (Also the text may have been emended in Jesus' last statement from “sheesh” to “sheesh,” increasing the difficulty of understanding the passage). However, Marjanen also points out that this is the only example she knows of the verb “sheesh” being used as whole or undivided in Coptic literature. According to W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 606, this verb means to be equal, level or straight. This may leave open the possibility that Salome statement that she is a disciple may in fact be a claim for a share in equality here. In light of my earlier argument concerning materiality this seems an interesting possibility. See Marjanen's discussion of the Coptic in this passage: Marjanen, "Women Disciples in the Gospel of Thomas," n. 6.

<sup>xli</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 4, 22, 72 and 77.

<sup>xlii</sup> Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 86. Carol A. Newsom, "Bakhtin, the Bible and Dialogic Truth," *Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 294-95.

<sup>xliiii</sup> *Gos. Thom* 4, 56, and 80.