FAITH IN
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S PREACHING:
A CONTEXTUAL READING

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JONATHAN R. R. TALLON

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Abstract

This study aims to establish the semantic range of πίστις (‘faith’) in fourth century Christian discourse using the preaching of John Chrysostom as a source base.

Against previous scholarship which sees πίστις as primarily a cognitive or propositional term referring to belief, this study uses a close examination of Chrysostom’s preaching to argue that the relational nature of the term was central to its significance for fourth century preaching as Christians considered their own faith and biblical texts.

Chrysostom uses the reciprocal, relational character of πίστις to emphasise loyalty, trust and obedience to God through metaphors based upon the military, economic and household contexts of late antiquity. This study further shows that Chrysostom in turn uses these aspects of πίστις to seek to influence the everyday life of his congregation, whether to support existing behaviour (such as obedience to the emperor, or husbands, or the bishop) or to seek to transform behaviour (such as encouraging the rich to give to the poor, or masters to treat slaves better). This contextual understanding of πίστις therefore sheds light on how the relationship with God both informed and was informed by the everyday human relationships of the congregation.

The study overall demonstrates the necessity of understanding Chrysostom’s view of πίστις as belonging within a reciprocal relationship, enabling a new view of Chrysostom’s preaching, faith and late antiquity to emerge.
Declaration

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Acknowledgments

This study had its origins many years ago, when my love for the patristic period was first kindled by the enthusiasm and knowledge of George Bebawi. It was also George who first suggested that I look at justification by faith in Chrysostom and Luther; the suggestion remains unfulfilled, but I have at least explored faith in Chrysostom. My thanks go to George for starting me down this path.

My studies took a new turn through Kate Cooper. Kate helped me to integrate the theological concepts within Chrysostom’s homilies with the social context in which he lived and preached. This study is far better than it would or could ever have been without her help (needless to say, she is not responsible for the fact that it could still be far better than it is). Kate also deserves credit for her constant encouragement throughout the whole process. Alongside Kate, Peter Oakes has provided encouragement and help, complementing Kate in ensuring that I was provided with a wealth of constructive aid and criticism. Kate and Peter supervised this study; my thanks are due to both of them. Additionally, I would like to thank Roberta Mazza (particularly in working with papyri and other inscriptions).

Kate also introduced me to the Centre for Late Antiquities group in the University of Manchester. The informal meetings combined with multi-disciplinary inputs have always been stimulating, and have grown my understanding of the late antique period more than I could ever have realised. My thanks go to all the colleagues who took part. Similarly I would like to thank those who took part in the workshops Kate organised as part of the ‘Constantine’s Dream’ project.

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1. Introduction

Der Ungehorsame kann nicht glauben, nur der Gehorsame glaubt
[The disobedient cannot believe; only the obedient believe].

For nothing is so faithless [ἀπιστον] as wealth, as I have often said, and never stop saying, for it is a senseless runaway slave, a house-slave with no loyalty [οἰκέτης πίστιν οὐκ ἔχων]...

We are in late fourth century Antioch. A rising star, John (later to be nicknamed ‘Chrysostom’), is preaching to a terrified congregation, fearful of the wrath of an emperor a recent riot has dishonoured. He delivers the above warning against those who trust in wealth rather than God, using the metaphor of a runaway slave. Finance and the household combine as Chrysostom seeks to change his congregation’s attitudes and behaviour. But the words used to describe wealth include plays on the word πίστις, commonly translated as ‘faith’ or ‘belief’. What does ‘faith’ have to do with money, or a slave?

In our own contexts, we are used to a wide variety of expressions of faithfulness or fidelity. Priests in the Church of England swear an oath promising ‘to be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors,

1 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Nachfolge (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1937), chapter 2.
2 John Chrysostom, Ad Populum Antiochenum De Statuis 2 (PG 49:39). I return to this passage in a later chapter.
3 This was the first sermon Chrysostom preached after the riot of the statues in AD386.
according to law’ when they are ordained.⁴ Oaths of allegiance are common: members of parliament; those enlisting in the army or air force; judges; those becoming British citizens: all swear some form of allegiance. Behind the oath lies a promise of loyalty and obedience, expressed in the word ‘faithful’. Couples sometimes also make a vow to be faithful – this time in the marriage service: ‘will you... ...forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?’ In this context, the idea of exclusive commitment is to the fore – fidelity.

At ordination, priests also affirm their belief ‘in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds...’.⁵ ‘The faith’ is used as shorthand for the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, even for Christianity itself. The affirmation is that the priest has ‘belief’ in this faith – that he or she holds it to be true.

In late 2008, the phrase ‘credit crunch’ entered the public sphere. Bad debts spread throughout the financial system; borrowing money became much harder. Financial institutions lost trust in each other to pay debts back.

Faithfulness, allegiance, fidelity, faith, belief, trust: each has its own meaning. Yet the same Greek word can lie behind all of them: ἡ πίστις.⁷ The word is usually translated ‘faith’. Yet ‘faith’, once a religious context is given, is sometimes in contemporary debate reduced to a mere cognitive belief. For example, if an online newspaper editor wishes to ensure hundreds of comments on an article, it seems all they have to do is to commission a religious piece. The actual subject matter appears immaterial. Within a few comments, the arguments degenerate into a verbal battle between would-be Dawkins acolytes, comparing God to a fairy or a

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⁷ For example, see the entries in LSJ and BDAG.
spaghetti monster, and ultra conservative Christians, prepared to back seven day
creationism against any evidence.8

In modern debates, then, faith is used by both its defenders and its critics to mean a
propositional, cognitive belief. To have ‘faith’ means to believe that God exists, that
the world was created in seven days, that there are fairies at the bottom of the
garden. When this happens, ‘faith’ has implicitly been defined as a cognitive belief.

For ancient writers, ‘faith’ – πίστις – the social dimension of the word could be at
least as important. Meanings such as faithfulness, loyalty and trust only make sense
within a relationship, whether explicit or implied. Usually, this relationship would
be reciprocal (though unequal). To understand what late antiquity means by πίστις
requires an appreciation of this relational, social dimension. ‘Faith’ can therefore be
approached in two general ways: either as propositional and cognitive; or as
relational and reciprocal.

In this study, I argue that the relational and reciprocal nature of πίστις has been
neglected when studying the preaching of late antique figures such as John
Chrysostom. Implicitly at least, a propositional model of ‘faith’ has been adopted
when Christian writers use the term. The study shows, in contrast, how important
the relational dynamic of πίστις is, both in instructing congregations about their
relationship with God, but also in attempting to strengthen or transform how the
congregations go about their everyday relationships with each other. This in turn
means that a solely propositional understanding of πίστις should only be
understood when there is clear contextual evidence. Where no such evidence exists,
the relational aspects of πίστις should be considered.

8 This has been my experience based on a variety of comment pieces in the Guardian
newspaper online. One example amongst many: Giles Fraser wrote an article on the
National Security Agency, noting problems in having faith in an all-seeing human
institution. Comments included: ‘American Christians have to meet the criteria of
being a Christian, ie, have “blind faith” in the existence of their God’. A number of
comments make the point that faith is irrational, and Dawkins’ name appears within
the first page of comments. Giles Fraser, “In the NSA we trust: the trouble with faith
commentisfree/belief/2013/jun/17/in-the-nsa-we-trust.
The implicit or explicit limitation of ‘faith’ to a propositional model can be seen across a range of studies. For example, I came across a website aimed at introducing the Roman world to students, explaining the close Latin equivalent to πίστις, fides.\(^9\) The website suggested that ‘faith’ wasn’t the best translation, and that fides was unrelated to the way that Christian Latin writers might use it. Instead, it argued that the word governed reciprocal, often unequal relationships, such as father and son, or master and slave. Within these relationships, the author claimed, fides stood for the virtue of reliability and trust. I agree with the author that fides does stand for these virtues. However, I am arguing that the religious, Christian use of fides and πίστις also drew heavily on their meaning in everyday relationships within the Roman ancient world.

A similar bias can perhaps be seen in some modern translations of the Bible. The related verb πίστευω, like πίστις, can cover a range of meanings. However, in the New International Version, it is translated as ‘to believe’ or the equivalent in over 85% of occurrences.\(^{10}\) Possible alternatives, such as ‘to trust’, were much more seldom used.

The word πίστις is important: the apostle Paul uses this word and others from the same root repeatedly in his letters that make up about half the New Testament.\(^{11}\) It is a key term both for Paul and for the history of Christianity. The reformation (although it had many causes) was partly about proclaiming that Christians are justified by faith. In modern times, the new perspective on Paul can be characterised partly about whether Paul is contrasting faith and human effort or faithfulness to Christ over that of the Torah. More recent debates over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Paul’s letters hinge around the term πίστις. Every interpreter of Paul chooses (consciously or subconsciously) an understanding of πίστις when seeking to explain him or preach on him. This highlights the importance of clarity


\(^{10}\) 209 out of 241 occurrences. NIV, 1978 edition.

in understanding how ancient preachers and writers did interpret πίστις within Paul’s letters.

To reiterate, if πίστις is usually translated or thought of as ‘faith’ or ‘belief’, then the connotations in the late antique world of faithfulness, allegiance, fidelity, trust and obedience can be lost. These concepts all imply some sort of relationship. This opens up a new dimension when seeking to understand ancient preachers and writers. If a preacher is using πίστις to talk about the relationship between a Christian and God, rather than belief about God, then it becomes imperative to know how πίστις was used in everyday relationships. This in turn can lead to exploration of how preaching both used the everyday relationships to teach about relationships with God, and in turn how the relationships with the divine could be used to seek to change or reinforce existing patterns of everyday relationships.

This study focuses on one significant figure from late antiquity, John Chrysostom (349–407), and the interaction between his preaching, πίστις, and certain key relationships of the late antique context. Chrysostom has left voluminous quantities of homilies, treatises and letters. These literary remains are a treasure trove for ancient historians. Studies on Chrysostom have been used to illuminate a range of issues including: social and religious identity; the role of the bishop; the role of letters; crisis management; patterns of ancient church-going; preaching strategies and style; ancient rhetoric; attitudes towards poverty; attitudes towards gender; attitudes towards the Jews and more. His pastoral concern and vivid use of

12 ‘Chrysostom’ – ‘golden-mouth’ – was a nickname given to John a century after his death in honour of his preaching. A less literal translation might be ‘silver-tongued’. I use Chrysostom throughout the study to refer to him.

illustrations shine a light into many corners of the ancient world otherwise seen only dimly.

Alongside his central role in historical studies of late antiquity, he also is an excellent example for examining doctrine within this period. He was seen as a sound interpreter of Paul. Additionally, his orthodoxy was never in question; he was used as a reliable authority by others subsequently. I show in subsequent chapters how his understanding and use of πίστις is not idiosyncratic, but stands within a broad and established tradition within early Christianity, with parallels both to earlier and contemporary Christian writers and preachers.

I argue that Chrysostom exploited the use of πίστις as a concept within military, economic and household relationships to encourage his congregations to be faithful and obedient to and trusting of God (and his representatives the bishops), just as he also preached that God in turn was faithful and caring of them. He also used this heavenly relationship in trying both to challenge and to reinforce existing earthly relationships and behaviour, as he sought to transform or strengthen the reciprocal, unequal relationships within the military, economic and household contexts. Paying attention to the metaphorical context of πίστις within Chrysostom’s


14 ‘If the divine Paul had taken up the attic tongue in order to interpret himself, he would not have done it differently from how this renowned man did’. Isidore of Pelusium, Epistulae 1255 (SC 422:252).
preaching illuminates both his preaching strategies and also the changing realities of the military, socio-economic and domestic relationships in the late antique period. Furthermore, as his frequent use of such metaphors indicates a stress on relational rather than propositional meanings, we can see that a propositional meaning ['belief'] can't be inferred without supporting contextual evidence. I shall therefore argue that the everyday understanding of πίστις is crucial to understanding how late antique authors and preachers such as Chrysostom both used and understood πίστις when preaching about the relationship between the Christian and God, and that in turn this could influence the power dynamics within everyday relationships.

Within this introduction, I first expand more on the scope and methodology of this study. I then explain some of the context of Chrysostom’s life and preaching. I then show how this study builds on previous scholarship and brings its own new insights. Finally, I outline each of the subsequent chapters, and how they fit into the overall study.

The scope and methodology of the research

This study seeks to explain the role of faith in John Chrysostom’s preaching through a contextual reading. In particular, it uses the lens of the social metaphors that Chrysostom employs for the Christian’s relationship with God. Chrysostom’s significance has already been outlined. As he was prolific, of necessity this study has given consideration in particular to two areas. The first of these is Chrysostom’s homilies on Paul the apostle’s letter to the Romans. The focus on Romans is deliberate: πίστις is a term which Paul uses at intervals through the letter, and Romans is often seen as the most important or influential letter that Paul wrote. Thus Chrysostom’s interpretation of this letter is a useful way of providing a good indication of his approach in general. The second area is Chrysostom’s teaching to adults preparing for baptism – catechesis. It is here we see Chrysostom trying to convey the basics of what it means to be a Christian, and so his preaching here provides a sound guide to his approach. Throughout the study I use these areas for

15 Chrysostom preached a series of thirty-two homilies on Romans, plus an argumentum.
examples and illustration. However, I have gone beyond these two areas in order to uncover or reinforce his interpretation in these. Thus this study uses a range of Chrysostom’s works, including homilies on other letters of Paul, occasional homilies and more.

The methodology employed by this study is to focus on the metaphors used by Chrysostom as he seeks to explain to his congregations the relationship between the Christian and God, and the implications that follow from this relationship. These metaphors are a key way that Chrysostom seeks to communicate his interpretation. They include relationships that were commonly understood and experienced by a wide range of people. The relationships that I analyse in particular are: soldier and general; borrower and lender; and householder and household (including husband and wife; father and son; master and slave).

This methodology first requires firm foundations. Therefore initially I outline the range of meanings that πίστις could cover. These are general foundations, before considering Chrysostom in particular. Therefore, the next foundations to be laid demonstrate the importance of πίστις within Chrysostom’s work appearing as a regular feature in his preaching. This is done through a statistical review of all his works, showing that πίστις recurs frequently in his works.

I then use a large sample of Chrysostom’s homilies to show that, in preaching on πίστις, the metaphors of the military, economic or household context are present in significant numbers, being the most frequently occurring meanings. The frequency of these particular metaphorical contexts for πίστις dwarfs others. This

16 I am using ‘metaphor’ here in a loose sense to cover any type of illustration used by Chrysostom, whether in fact it is strictly a metaphor, simile or other.
17 Out of a sample of 980 occurrences of πίστις and cognates, 342 related to the military, economic or household contexts, compared to 291 occurrences meaning belief or trust (the next most common). There were also 74 occurrences where πίστις or cognates referred to obedience, allegiance or faithfulness without explicitly referring to the three particular contexts. See Appendix A for more details.
18 Aside from the use of πίστις cognates to mean ‘Christians’ or ‘Christianity’ (140 occurrences), the next most common metaphor was ‘eyes of faith’, with 21 occurrences. See Appendix A for more details.
is therefore the justification for a close focus on these three contexts and the relationships within these contexts of general and soldier; lender and borrower and householder and household.

I also argue that, in considering occurrences of πίστις, the correct approach is to expect and look for semantic richness, to allow an evocation of a context weight in considering the interpretation of a passage.

Having laid these foundations, I can then focus on each relationship in turn. Chrysostom, in a variety of ways, uses each relationship as a metaphor for the Christian’s relationship with God. Within each of these relationships within the existing social and economic context πίστις had a commonly accepted meaning. My methodology is to show how this is also evident in and makes sense of the way Chrysostom implicitly or explicitly understands πίστις in his preaching. I also outline the effect of Chrysostom’s preaching on these everyday relationships, whether seeking to buttress or transform them.

The methodology ensures that the context within which Chrysostom preached is taken seriously, and so provides a solid base for analysing Chrysostom’s understanding of faith in his preaching.

Various objections might be raised to this methodology. Here I consider some of them.

It might be argued that the approach is circular. I choose metaphors where πίστις plays a prominent part, and then claim that Chrysostom preached with this meaning, when in fact the metaphorical approach might be an unusual or insignificant part of Chrysostom’s repertoire.

This is a serious objection. However, I consider it unfounded. First, the detailed analysis in the next chapter demonstrates the ubiquity of these three metaphorical contexts when Chrysostom is preaching on πίστις. This is hard evidence that these contexts need to be considered seriously. The metaphors that I have used play a prominent part in Chrysostom’s teaching. They do not occur only once or twice, but in different homilies on different topics and different scriptures. This suggests that
the metaphors themselves embody structures that Chrysostom can use repeatedly to instruct, encourage and exhort his congregations. As an example, the detailed analysis in the following chapters will show how military, economic and household relationships are used in Chrysostom’s preaching to catechumens, when clarity and effectiveness of a metaphor to illustrate the Christian’s relationship to God would be a priority. Secondly, it would be possible to use a metaphor to illustrate points without reference to πίστις. For example, a military metaphor can work to encourage the Christian to use various types of spiritual armour (as Eph. 6:11-17). Chrysostom goes beyond this; I shall show how πίστις is often a key part of the metaphor, whether it falls within the military, economic or household context. Thirdly, I shall show how Chrysostom is able to use the different metaphors for a similar end (incorporating faithfulness and unquestioning obedience) implying a commonality to Chrysostom’s understanding. Fourthly (and on a personal note) seeing πίστις through these metaphorical lenses makes sense of Chrysostom’s preaching. My interest was first sparked through reading his homilies and being surprised by how much ‘faith’ seemed to mean ‘faithfulness’ on a close reading. That first impression has been confirmed by this detailed study. Thus I consider that the methodology is not circular, but rather builds on an insight to gain a better picture of Chrysostom’s own understanding and use of πίστις.

A second objection might be that I have tried to systematise Chrysostom too much; that I am seeking to impose doctrinal neatness onto the occasional homilies of a preacher through attempting to extract the concept of πίστις. The comments of Mitchell come to mind:

...nor should [Chrysostom’s] interpretations of any text be uncharacteristically systematized, or theological “concepts” extracted from their own literary, historical, liturgical and rhetorical contexts.

This material cannot be studied in a vacuum, and, as it does not lend itself to the kind of systematic expectations some have brought to it, should not be examined primarily through that lens.19

Mitchell in her study makes the point that Chrysostom is quite capable of creating different portraits of Paul; to tie Chrysostom down to one understanding is to do his approach a fundamental disservice.\(^{20}\)

Mitchell makes serious points. However, this does not mean that questions of Chrysostom’s theological ‘concepts’ should be off the table. Chrysostom is not systematic; that does not mean that he is not coherent, and that a picture may be built up of his theology, albeit within his context. My approach to his understanding of πίστις does precisely this. It takes seriously his theology, the rhetorical and pastoral context, and also the more general context of late antiquity. Whether or not Chrysostom intended his homilies to be used for this purpose is not the issue; they can be used for this purpose.

There remains the danger, though, that in producing a coherent account of Chrysostom’s theology (or one part of it), essential parts get left behind, leading to a second objection. If you abstract concepts from Chrysostom’s preaching, is it still genuinely his? Blake Leyerle has shown that Chrysostom himself would resist (on pedagogical grounds) any attempt to extract a higher truth from metaphors and stories that he uses. Her analysis of his teaching demonstrates the central role of narrative, as being capable of creating transformation in those who hear and are possessed by the stories of scripture:

For stories, as Nussbaum argues, are the most effective way to rewrite emotion, and thus the beliefs and values undergirding those emotions. No wonder, then, Chrysostom was so exasperated when his congregation protested that scripture reading was just for monks. They were not to pattern themselves after the rich man, who, “when he heard the scriptures, despised them, ridiculed them, and considered them mere stories.” For only stories, Chrysostom believed, could make a person Christian.\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) ‘…no simple or single correspondence between Chrysostom’s image of Paul and his exegesis of his letters can be drawn, because of the multiplicity of portraits Chrysostom paints’. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, 383.

There is a truth here. What Chrysostom affirms about scripture is also true about Chrysostom himself. To reduce the metaphors, similes and images he uses in an attempt to systematise is to lose something of his theology itself. Nevertheless, I believe the cost to be worthwhile. The schema of his theology of faith as presented here gains in clarity and brevity for those wishing to be introduced to his approach, albeit without the full richness that only immersion in the homilies themselves could provide.

A third objection relates to the scope of this study. I shall not examine every social relationship that was or could have been used by Chrysostom metaphorically. Relationships not explored include: host and guest; friends; patron and client; patron and freedmen and women; the Empire and its allies. Whilst all of these would be fruitful to investigate, I have limited the scope of this study to the three contexts of the military, the economic and the household. My justification for this is that the three contexts that I focus upon occur far more frequently in Chrysostom’s works than these other relationships (as shown in the next chapter and in Appendix A). Therefore I keep a sharp focus on the three most significant social relationships and contexts.

This study focuses in particular on how the late antique context of social relationships can illumine the meaning of πίστις in Chrysostom. This should not be thought of as being restrictive, to the exclusion of other possible allusions. It is possible (even likely) that Chrysostom’s preaching on πίστις alludes to or is influenced by other factors. For example, πίστις plays a role in Neoplatonism. Studies exist which explicitly link this to the works of other late antique Christians, such as Gregory of Nyssa. It would make sense that similar links might be found in Chrysostom’s works. However, to do such links justice would require a separate treatment. Therefore, the scope of this study deliberately does not cover such areas.

The three contexts that I do focus upon provide rich examples of Chrysostom’s appropriation of everyday language to exhort, inspire and scold his congregations.

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into changing their behaviour and having an appropriate relationship with both God and neighbour.

**Context**

This research is a contextual study of Chrysostom’s preaching; each chapter considers a different aspect of his context in more detail. However, a general overview enables more specific aspects to be fitted into a larger picture. Therefore I shall briefly outline some of the key features of his life, the sources available to us, his congregations and his preaching.

**Chrysostom’s life**

Chrysostom’s life has received a number of treatments, so this shall be a brief summary, based on the biography by Kelly, and supplemented by others. For those who wish to delve beyond the modern treatments, the earliest ancient accounts of Chrysostom’s life are found in the anonymous funerary speech for John Chrysostom, and Palladius’ *Dialogue on the life of St. John Chrysostom*. Both were written soon after the death of Chrysostom. All modern studies use these and others to reconstruct Chrysostom’s life.

John Chrysostom was born around 349 to a well-off Antiochene family. His father, Secundus, was a high-ranking civil servant in the secretariat of the military commander of the east. He died soon after Chrysostom’s birth. His widowed mother, Anthusa, was Christian and brought her son up accordingly. He also received a good

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25 For arguments for this date (a range between 340 to 354 have all been suggested) see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 296-98.
education, studying under the famed pagan rhetor Libanius. He left school at the age of eighteen, and was probably baptised at around this time by Meletius. Chrysostom was made reader, and served Meletius for the next three years before moving to the mountains to become a monk, first in community and then alone. After six years, ill health forced a return to Antioch. Two years or so later he was ordained as deacon by Meletius, and five years after that (around 386) he was ordained priest by Flavian.

As priest he preached regularly in Antioch, and gained in reputation (particularly through sermons delivered during the Antiochene crisis of 387 caused by the riot of the statues, when imperial statues were overthrown). When Nectarius, bishop of Constantinople, died in 397 Chrysostom was chosen by the emperor Arcadius to succeed him, despite Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, wanting his own candidate. He was probably consecrated as bishop on 15th December 397.26

Chrysostom gained popularity with some during his time as bishop of Constantinople, but also appears to have alienated others. Traditionally, his chief enemy is portrayed as the empress Eudoxia; in reality it appears that a number of influential people were ranged against him.27 The summons of Theophilus to Constantinople acted as the trigger for a sequence of events which saw Chrysostom condemned by a council led by Theophilus in 403; he was then deposed as bishop and went into exile. A calamity in the imperial household (probably the still-birth of a child by Eudoxia) interpreted as God’s anger led to his recall and triumphant return. However, Chrysostom appears to have continued to annoy the influential, and he was again sent into exile to the Caucasus the following year.

In exile, Chrysostom kept up a healthy correspondence, and remained influential. Finally, he was marched to further exile to Pityus. He never reached this destination, dying en route at Cormana on 14th September 407. According to

26 See in particular Barnes and Bevan, Funerary Speech, 164-70.
27 For the suspicion that Eudoxia is being used rhetorically, see Kate Cooper, The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 17-19. Cooper comments: ‘…wherever a woman is mentioned a man’s character is being judged...’ p.19.
Palladius, his last words were ‘glory be to God for all things’. Some thirty years later (438) his relics were returned to Constantinople in triumph. His posthumous stature grew; from exile in his life he became one of the three holy hierarchs of the Orthodox church in his death.

Provenance, date and editions of homilies

Chrysostom’s preaching took place between his ordination as priest in 386 and his exile in 404. The homilies can therefore all be dated within a period of about twenty years, and two main locations: Antioch and Constantinople. The homilies are also often presented as a series around either a single book of scripture (such as Paul's letter to the Romans), or a single event (such as baptismal catechesis). This should make identifying the date and provenance easier: if one homily in a series gives clues, then the whole series can be located and dated. However, Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer have shown serious reasons for doubting previous confidence in assigning Chrysostom’s homilies to Antioch or Constantinople. In particular, homilies that appear as a series may have been preached on separate occasions and separate locations. For example, they argue that some of the homilies on Colossians were preached in Antioch, and others in Constantinople. They draw similar conclusions for the series on Philippians. Mayer has subsequently produced a schema for a systematic approach to assigning provenance to Chrysostom’s homilies, with a more cautious methodology than previous scholars.

The result of Allen and Mayer’s work is that the provenance and date of the vast majority of Chrysostom’s homilies cannot be safely assigned. This applies to both

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28 Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἐνεκέν. Palladius, Dialogus De Vita Ioannis Chrysostomi 11 (p.68).
29 Chrysostom also produced some treatises as a deacon in the years 381–86, and many letters from his last few years in exile.
32 Mayer provides a table for homilies which can be tentatively or more confidently assigned to Constantinople or Antioch. Mayer, Provenance, 469-73.
Chrysostom’s homilies on Romans and his catechetical homilies. Although the older consensus was that they were preached in Antioch, Mayer’s work has thrown that conclusion into doubt.

To sum up, we cannot be sure in most cases where or when a homily was preached. Therefore throughout this study I have not relied on a particular date or provenance for a homily in the arguments that I make.

When it comes to scholarship on Chrysostom’s corpus, critical editions remain a glaring need. Most of his preaching on Paul’s letters still lacks a critical edition. Throughout this work, I have used critical editions where available, but often the best edition has been the nineteenth century Migne’s *Patrologia graeca*. However, the arguments in this study are not based on a single text, where a variant might undermine the whole basis, but on pointing out repeated uses by Chrysostom of certain metaphors and the place of πίστις within those metaphors and his preaching. Therefore the lack of critical editions should not detract from the main conclusions of the study.

**Chrysostom’s congregations**

The general context of Chrysostom’s preaching can be gained from his biography: he preached and ministered in the late fourth and early fifth century in the Greek speaking eastern part of the Roman empire. Besides knowledge of the preacher, it is also useful to consider those listening to him. Who would have been in the congregation? This question has been studied by a number of scholars. Ramsay MacMullen argued that, besides some artisans and a few others, and some women,

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33 ‘The production of modern, scientific editions of the vast corpus of Chrysostom’s writings is still a key priority. This has long been and remains a very vexed area.’ Wendy Mayer, “Progress in the Field of Chrysostom Studies (1984-2004),” in Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente Tra IV e V Secolo, XXXIII Incontro Di Studiosi Dell’antichità Cristiana, Augustinianum 6-8 Maggio 2004, Roma, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum (Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2005), 11.

34 The latest critical editions have been accessed using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* digital database. All quotations have been cited as found in the best edition available, including punctuation. With some nineteenth century editions, this may include punctuation not now found in critical editions, such as exclamation marks.
overall the congregation was ‘a distinctly upper-class audience’. He based his argument on who Chrysostom seemed to be addressing, the style of preaching, and who was considered ‘poor’. His conclusion is that Chrysostom, from an elite background, was mostly speaking to other members of the elite, alongside accompanying slaves.

This basic position has been challenged in part by Mayer, who argues that women would also have been present in significant numbers. However, Mayer and Allen agree with MacMullen that the truly poor would be unlikely to be in church. A considered view of the problem is provided by Mayer and Allen. This in turn has been addressed by Aideen Hartney. Hartney adds a further perspective to the debate by pointing out that if Chrysostom had certain pastoral aims in view (which included targeting influential people within the city) then a bias in who is addressed in the sermons would be expected. She further points out that Chrysostom’s style, although classic, would be widely accessible and so should not be used as a pointer towards the audience composition. Hartney is also aware of the entertainment value of preaching at the time, which might also have led to a wide demographic attending someone who had gained a reputation as a rhetorical master.

More recently still, Jaclyn Maxwell has provided an overview of a range of people who do crop up in Chrysostom’s sermons, indicating their presence in congregations. She points out, amongst other arguments, that only country people are described as rare visitors by Chrysostom. Other groups, whether slaves, women, workers, artisans (and even pickpockets), are by implication more frequently present. Maxwell further argues that large, mixed groups were common in late

35 MacMullen, “The Preacher’s Audience (AD 350-400),” 510.
38 Hartney, John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City, 44-45.
39 Hartney, John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City, 45-50.
40 Maxwell, Christianization and Communication, 65-87.
antiquity in other settings such as at festivals and courts where people also gathered to hear fine rhetoric.

Thus, despite MacMullen’s arguments, there are grounds for considering Chrysostom’s congregations to be far more diverse than merely the elite males and their slaves plus a few others. The data does not allow us to go much further than this (for example in providing numbers or proportions). But we can conclude that potentially representatives from a wide cross-section of the population were members of his congregation.

This in turn is important for considering the effect of Chrysostom’s preaching. Here, I note the scepticism sounded by Amirav that the importance of the congregation has been ‘blown out of all proportion’. She also argues that sermon content was ‘primarily and dominantly determined first by the prescribed biblical text, and second by conventional teachings as they were adopted by the exegete’.\(^{41}\) I appreciate her caution but fear that she errs on the opposing side; of not giving enough attention to the preacher’s audience. Even factors such as architecture (which Amirav appears to treat dismissively) can play a hidden but significant part in how sermons can be delivered;\(^{42}\) much more so the social background of the audience.\(^{43}\)

Chrysostom’s preaching certainly appears to be accessible. The metaphors that he uses would be readily comprehensible not just to the elite, but to hearers from a

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\(^{42}\) As the provenance of so many homilies is uncertain, we are unsure in what setting they were preached. In Antioch there were four main churches in which Chrysostom could have preached; in Constantinople a larger number. Each could differ in size and style (for instance, the Great Church in Antioch was octagonal; the Great Church in Constantinople was rectangular). We cannot therefore say much about architecture and a particular sermon. See Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, 17-25.

range of circumstances and backgrounds. The three primary contexts considered in this study – military, economic and household – would all be familiar generally, as shown in more detail within individual chapters.

Having considered the composition of the congregations listening to Chrysostom, we now turn to the context in which they heard him: through the homily.

Chrysostom was not composing academic theological treatises in his preaching; he was attempting to change his congregation and bring them closer to God. The homily was his opportunity to explain scripture, to forestall objections, to exhort, to encourage, to admonish as he thought necessary. We need to bear these pastoral aims in mind whenever we come to Chrysostom’s homilies. Chrysostom, trained by Libanius, uses every rhetorical tool at his disposal to achieve his goals. This was recognised by Robert Wilken in his seminal study first published in 1983 on Chrysostom’s sermon series attacking the Jews. Wilken showed how Chrysostom was using the known rhetorical speech type of psogos, or invective, in his sermons designed to deter Christians from being attracted to Jewish rites or practices. However, his comments on Chrysostom apply more generally:

The rhetor was less interested in the veracity of his language, whether it conformed to some objective standard of truth, than he was in the effect his words would have on his hearers.

This is a cautionary reminder that it is dangerous to take Chrysostom’s comments in just one sermon as representative either of his theology or a true portrayal of the contemporary social situation. However, it also reinforces the approach taken in

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44 Though having stenographers record homilies, and when time permitted polishing them, implies Chrysostom had a wider audience in mind. See the discussion in Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 92-94.

45 For an overview of the historical debate about Chrysostom’s use of his rhetorical training, see Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, 22-28.

46 Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*.


this study. Chrysostom deploys metaphors and similes because he knows that they are effective weapons in the rhetor’s armoury. If a metaphor is repeatedly used, it is because of its use in piercing through the potential apathy or misunderstanding of the hearers. Therefore this study is justified in focusing on the context for the relational metaphors (with πίστις at the heart of each relationship) which Chrysostom uses in preaching on the Christian’s relationship with God: these metaphors would be primary carriers of meaning for the hearers.

This has been a brief summary of Chrysostom’s general context. Next I give a brief outline of some of the significant scholarship on Chrysostom, and where the present study fits into this picture.

**Existing scholarship**

In considering previous scholarship on Chrysostom, I first give a brief résumé of some of the more recent major treatments of Chrysostom (some of which have already been noted), and then focus on those studies that impinge more directly on the question of the meaning of ‘faith’ in his preaching.

In the past couple of decades, there have been a number of different studies of Chrysostom, each valuable in building a picture of both the preacher and his theology. Chrysostom’s life has received attention in particular from J. N. D. Kelly’s biography, and also from Brändle’s. These are now supplemented by the introductory notes and appendices accompanying Timothy Barnes and George Bevan’s translation of the funerary speech for Chrysostom.

Moving beyond a basic biography, attention has also focused on Chrysostom’s preaching, considering when, where, how and to whom he preached. Leading the vanguard in this field are Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, who have provided

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50 *Funerary Speech*. 
thoughtful responses to these questions.\textsuperscript{51} They have additionally considered the pastoral context that Chrysostom faced, and the networks upon which he may have relied both in Antioch and beyond.\textsuperscript{52} Allen and Mayer have also reignited the issue of where particular sermons were preached, as already noted earlier, and whether they were in fact preached in series as presented to us.\textsuperscript{53} These studies are critical in seeking to establish firm foundations for knowing Chrysostom’s exact context.

Others have focused on Chrysostom’s use of rhetoric. Already mentioned is Robert Wilkens, who examines Chrysostom’s sermons against Judaising Christians. Blake Leyerle looks at how Chrysostom preached against ascetic males and females living together; Margaret Mitchell studies Chrysostom’s verbal portraits of Paul. I have already discussed how Hagit Amirav examines the exegetical background to Chrysostom’s rhetoric.\textsuperscript{54} Closely related to these studies is that of Jaclyn Maxwell, who takes a broader look at communication in general in Chrysostom’s sermons.\textsuperscript{55}

There have also been studies focusing on the effects of Chrysostom’s preaching (again, closely linked to studying his rhetoric). Aideen Hartney follows a thematic approach to his preaching, looking in particular at gender and wealth as Chrysostom sought change in his congregations.\textsuperscript{56} Meanwhile, Isabella Sandwell has

\textsuperscript{51} In particular see Mayer and Allen, \textit{John Chrysostom}.


\textsuperscript{55} Maxwell, \textit{Christianization and Communication}.

\textsuperscript{56} Hartney, \textit{John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City}.
compared how Chrysostom and Libanius both sought to create and maintain religious identities within fourth century Antioch.\textsuperscript{57}

The last few years have also seen some studies examining Chrysostom’s Christology, and views of salvation. These have been welcome additions, but have not specifically addressed the issue of faith.\textsuperscript{58}

Chrysostom was part of an empire that still encompassed both the east and the west. As a bishop, he had to deal with the emperor himself, as well as the imperial court. Such a role has political as well as spiritual dimensions. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz has considered how Chrysostom fared compared with a near contemporary who was in a similar situation: Ambrose. His study examines parallels between the two clerics, and considers why Ambrose prospered whilst Chrysostom was exiled and killed.\textsuperscript{59}

All of these have advanced to some degree our knowledge and understanding of Chrysostom and his context. However, these studies have not examined the particular problem defined above: how did Chrysostom understand ‘faith’ in his preaching? I now consider some more specialised studies that do touch on this aspect of Chrysostom.

It will become apparent that the studies fall into two camps. On one side are those that assume that ‘faith’ is something distinct from ‘works’, and therefore from obedience and faithfulness. In this they are perhaps inheritors of the protestant tradition of the last five centuries. I shall be arguing that such an approach is entirely misguided, and results in, at best, a limited picture of what Chrysostom was doing in his preaching. ‘Faith’ loses any relational, reciprocal resonances that I argue are key to a proper understanding.

\textsuperscript{57} Sandwell, \textit{Religious Identity in Late Antiquity}.


On the other side are a couple of studies that do not make the same assumptions, but these fail to situate Chrysostom within the particularities of his late antique context.

One study that considers the role of ‘faith’ in Chrysostom is that of Anthony Kenny, who looks at the issue of whether Chrysostom was a semi-Pelagian. Kenny begins by noting Chrysostom’s comments on 2 Cor. 4:13, where Paul talks of the ‘spirit of faith’ (ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως...). Chrysostom explains this by arguing that:

...the beginning of belief comes from our good will, and from our obedience to the call; but after the foundation of faith has been laid, then we need the help of the spirit, if faith is to remain in us unshakeable and unassailable. For neither God, nor the grace of the spirit precedes our own resolution.

Kenny first examines Chrysostom’s approach to living a virtuous life. Kenny argues that, for Chrysostom, both God and human play a part: God’s grace is necessary, helping and cooperating with the human will:

We will, choose; we display diligence or keenness; and God does the rest.

Kenny notes also that God’s motive in allowing human involvement is for our own benefit (like a king involving his son in a war for a share in the honour). Within this mutual cooperation, humans must show the initiative.

In analysing this approach, Kenny restricts it to someone who has already been justified by ‘his faith and by grace’. This leads him to the second part of his study, examining Chrysostom’s doctrine of faith. It is worth noting that by this manoeuvre, Kenny is implying that faith is of interest only at the initial point of conversion; this in itself limits the possible understandings of faith within his study.

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Additionally, nowhere does Kenny seek to define faith – he takes its understanding for granted.

In considering faith, Kenny considers six texts that bear on Chrysostom’s understanding of the relationship between faith and grace.\textsuperscript{64} Again, he finds that the texts maintain the same pattern as found previously: God’s help is necessary, but so too is human cooperation. However, he also notes that in these texts Chrysostom addresses the relationship between God’s call and obedience. His conclusions are that, for Chrysostom, God’s call is prior, what he describes as a ‘general vocation’ that he parallels with ‘an efficacious vocation to faith’.\textsuperscript{65} The human response to this call should be obedience. There is also a particular call for some, such as apostles. In this case, the call comes after the initial human response.

This leads Kenny to question Chrysostom’s approach to predestination. Here, Kenny argues that Chrysostom equates it only to divine foreknowledge:

\begin{quote}
Predestination seems indeed to be reduced to mere prescience.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

Kenny is mainly concerned to determine whether Chrysostom could be described as semi-Pelagian; his conclusion is that this would be mistaken, though he does draw many parallels between Chrysostom and the Massilienses.\textsuperscript{67}

Kenny’s analysis of faith is notable because he switches at points between faith (\(\pi\ιστ\’ις\)) and obedience without comment. The human response to God’s call is defined by obedience as much as by ‘faith’. In this, he is reflecting the source material, as this extract shows:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{64} The texts are: John Chrysostom, \textit{Hom. 2 Cor. 4:13 5} (\textit{PG} 51:276); John Chrysostom, \textit{Expositiones in Psalmos 115.2} (\textit{PG} 55:322); John Chrysostom, \textit{Homiliae in Joannem 3} (\textit{PG} 59:254); John Chrysostom, \textit{Homiliae in epistulam \(i\) ad Corinthios 1} (\textit{PG} 61:13); John Chrysostom, \textit{Homiliae in epistulam \(ad\) Ephesios 2} (\textit{PG} 62:12). Two of his citations are from the Corinthian homily (note that the article incorrectly gives the Corinthian citations as \textit{PG} 81:13). Kenny, “Was Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?”: 23-24.
\textsuperscript{65} Kenny, “Was Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?”: 26.
\textsuperscript{66} Kenny, “Was Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?”: 27.
\textsuperscript{67} The Massilienses is another term for those who followed the approach of John Cassian. Cassian was ordained deacon at Constantinople while Chrysostom was bishop, and was sent to Rome to garner support for Chrysostom on his exile.
\end{quote}
The beginning of belief (τὸ παρὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν πιστεῦσαι) comes from our good will (προαίρεσις) and from our obedience to the call (τὸ ὑπακούσι κλήθεντος); but after the foundation of faith has been laid (μετὰ τὸ καταβληθῆναι τὴν πίστιν) then we need the help (βοήθεια) of the Spirit if faith is to remain in us unshakeable and unassailable.\(^\text{68}\)

Chrysostom’s homily shows an intimate connection between faith and obedience, one which is not just concerned with an initial response to God but assumes and includes an on-going relationship. Kenny is concerned about trying to differentiate between grace, faith and good works. But if obedience can act as a synonym for faith (and obedience will of course include good works), then it becomes clear that Chrysostom is working from wholly different assumptions, which the article doesn’t address. Kenny appears to assume that faith means belief or trust; for Chrysostom it appears to mean much more. Chrysostom’s understanding of faith is key, but not explored in this article. I would argue that we need to see ‘faith’ as mutual and on-going within a relationship to understand Chrysostom in passages such as these.

Chrysostom’s view of faith has also received attention from Maurice Wiles.\(^\text{69}\) Wiles, like Kenny, seeks to explore the relationship between grace and free will, and faith and works. His analysis is similar to Kenny’s: Chrysostom (like others in the Eastern tradition) argues for a cooperation between divine grace and human response. Humanity’s free will is vigorously defended, and passages which may appear to show that human fate is fully in God’s power are interpreted to allow some element of human action and response.\(^\text{70}\) However, like Kenny, Wiles appears to limit the concept of faith to the initial human response:

Just as with Origen’s conception of faith, there is an essential initial element however small which lies within man’s power; this, though inadequate in itself to achieve its goal, will be effectively reinforced by the grace of God. It is true that Chrysostom is here speaking not of the initial act of faith but of the continuing path of Christian living...\(^\text{71}\)

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\(^\text{70}\) See in particular Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 94-97.

Wiles then considers the relationship between faith and works in Chrysostom. Here, he argues that Chrysostom saw faith positively as being more appropriate to divine mysteries than reason. However, Wiles also claims that Chrysostom basically misunderstood Paul, and promulgated an intellectualist understanding of faith:

if Chrysostom stands nearer to Paul in the positive nature of his attitude towards the idea of faith, his understanding of its real nature seems further removed from that of the apostle. The sense of personal union with Christ is largely absent. An intellectualist analysis in terms of the acceptance of basic dogma takes its place. This is implicit in the very phrase – πίστις τῶν δογμάτων – which he uses to distinguish it from other uses of the word. It is therefore natural that by way of compensation he should lay even greater stress on the need of works to supplement the basis of faith.72

As an example of the separation of faith from works, Wiles notes the distinction which Chrysostom appears to make in interpreting Eph. 1:4. Wiles claims that for Chrysostom, ‘the Christian must be both “holy” (ἁγιὸς), which implies having faith, and “without blemish” (ἄμωμος), which implies living a blameless life’.73 Chrysostom does explain the two adjectives in this way, but he hardly seems to be making the type of distinction that Wiles claims. Chrysostom continues by collapsing them both into a holiness which God can gaze on, and then referring to them both as good works (τὰ κατορθώματα).74 This suggests at the least that Chrysostom saw the two as far more closely linked than Wiles allows.

I believe that Wiles is wrong in suggesting that faith for Chrysostom is primarily intellectual belief. Throughout this study, I show links between faith and the military, the economy and the household that demonstrate almost the reverse: that for Chrysostom faith is about continuing faithfulness, trust, loyalty and obedience. This includes, but is by no means limited to, intellectual obedience. I further believe

72 Wiles, The Divine Apostle, 123-24. The phrase πίστις τῶν δογμάτων is only found twice in Chrysostom; in neither case with the sense Wiles places upon it. John Chrysostom, Stat. 19 (PG 49:189); John Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Cor. 43 (PG 61:368). Wiles cites, in addition to the Ephesians reference, John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam ad Colosssenses 6 (PG 62:340). Chrysostom separates the two in John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam ad Romanos 26 (PG 60:640).
73 Wiles, The Divine Apostle, 124.
that Wiles is also mistaken in his assertion that there is, in Chrysostom, no sense of personal union with Christ. To demonstrate this would be require a separate study, but see for instance the recent work by Naidu.\textsuperscript{75}

A more recent commentator on Chrysostom is Metropolitan Demetrios Trakatellis, who looks at Chrysostom's preaching on Romans from the perspective of transformation.\textsuperscript{76} He therefore comes to Chrysostom with a different perspective from Wiles. Additionally, as part of the Orthodox tradition, he is much more sympathetic to Chrysostom's interpretation of Paul than Wiles, who assumes a modern protestant (pre 'new perspective') interpretation as being correct.\textsuperscript{77}

Trakatellis considers Chrysostom's anthropology. He sees the dynamic status of every human as being a prime concern of Chrysostom. Humans can be transformed through God's grace, first through the principle of synergy. The divine grace is paired with free will (which embraces the volitional, emotional and intellectual). Chrysostom especially emphasises free will when the passage might indicate that it is entirely God's doing.

Secondly, faith is important. This is the only human contribution, but it leads to nobility of the soul, and is greater than labouring. However, faith includes a divine dimension: the essence of faith is the declaration that the transformation is the exclusive work of the grace of God.

Thirdly, love is vital, and transforming. Trakatellis here mainly focuses on Chrysostom's emphasis on the Christian's love for Christ, which should be consuming, vehement and passionate. Love is both the cause and effect of human transformation.

Fourthly, the transformation comes through Christ, and the indwelling Spirit, who transforms souls to make them youthful and in their prime.

\textsuperscript{75} Naidu, \textit{Transformed in Christ}.

\textsuperscript{76} Demetrios Trakatellis, \textit{Being Transformed: Chrysostom's Exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans} (Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1992).

\textsuperscript{77} Thus Trakatellis can say describe Chrysostom's interpretation as 'a brilliantly insightful exegesis of the Pauline text, chapter after chapter, verse by verse.' Trakatellis, \textit{Being Transformed}, 2.
Trakatellis’ account is certainly true to major themes in Chrysostom’s homilies. However, there is no interaction with any modern scholarship (other than one reference to Quasten); and there is no criticism of Chrysostom. Additionally, there is no attempt to give any context to either Romans, or to Chrysostom’s interpretation, or to Trakatellis’ own interest.

On the specific themes, Trakatellis is reliable but (inevitably, given the article length) limited. For example, his account of ‘faith’ makes no attempt to define what faith might mean for Chrysostom. There is no interest in what righteousness or justification might mean. There is no interaction with alternative views (for example on free will, there is no mention of Augustine or Pelagius or Cassian).

Overall, this is a useful, though limited contribution in highlighting the transformation theme that is a central part of Chrysostom’s theology, with the attending themes of free will, faith, love and the Spirit. However, it again assumes rather than explores Chrysostom’s understanding of faith.

Another perspective is provided by Panayiotis Papageorgiou. His stated purpose is to ‘gather together the various theological elements found in the Homilies on Romans’. In particular he focuses on anthropology, soteriology and askesis. Throughout there is a strong emphasis on theology, with limited reference to the historical or social context.

Papageorgiou does analyse Chrysostom’s understanding of faith. He notes that it is part of the human cooperation with the divine, along with love. He argues that Chrysostom has three elements to faith: ‘trust in God, hope and obedience to God’. He furthermore defines Chrysostom’s understanding of faith as being a ‘dynamic relationship of man with the divine’.

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80 Papageorgiou, “Selected Themes”, 93.
Papageorgiou also notes Wiles’ analysis of Chrysostom’s faith as being intellectualist, and disagrees with it.\textsuperscript{81} One aspect involves intellectual faculties, but this is just part of what faith means to Chrysostom.

In exploring the three elements of faith (which are simultaneously the fruit of faith), Papageorgiou also notes how obedience may seem to be different from trust and hope, but in fact is closely related, also guaranteeing freedom of will:

\begin{quote}
Hence, choosing to obey God is not only proof of the $\text{ἀὐτοεξούσιον}$ (for man is not forced to submission), but is also an indication of man’s faith and trust in Him. Conversely, one can also say that faith requires obedience, hence, \textit{a man of faith will be obedient to God by definition} [emphasis in original].\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

I believe that Papageorgiou is correct in closely linking obedience and trust with faith. However, the evidence he produces is limited to theological assertions from the text of Chrysostom. His approach pays no attention to Chrysostom’s context, and how $\text{πίστις}$ functioned within that context. This study will therefore support his conclusions, but goes beyond them, showing how intrinsic the notions of fidelity, entrusting and obedience were to $\text{πίστις}$ within the late antique context.

The issue of the relationship between faith and works in Chrysostom has been revisited by Rudolf Brändle.\textsuperscript{83} He explains how the Lutheran and Reformed tradition have divided over their opinion of Chrysostom, due in part to his synergistic approach to grace and free will. Brändle’s approach is then similar to that of Kenny’s (though without appearing to be aware of his article). God’s grace, for Chrysostom, can never overpower human free will (though it comes before the human response, and Chrysostom can say that all is from grace). The problem of predestination is resolved through limiting it to foreknowledge. Brändle argues that it is pointless to try to systematise Chrysostom in a modern, binary fashion:

\begin{quote}
Our western thinking has to choose in either-or categories. Someone like John Chrysostom – and the same goes for the other major Greek
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{81} Papageorgiou, “Selected Themes”, 97 n.307.
\textsuperscript{82} Papageorgiou, “Selected Themes”, 104.
\textsuperscript{83} Brändle, “Zur Verhältnisbestimmung Von Glaube Und Werken,” 121-36.
Instead, he argues that Chrysostom’s theology has certain features, which are only partly revealed by any one statement. Additionally he notes the pastoral aim of Chrysostom’s preaching, pointing out that statements were designed to elicit particular responses from a congregation, partly to move them to acts of mercy, but also as a witness for non-Christians within the city. Additionally Brändle cites the importance for Chrysostom of Matt. 25:31-46 (the parable of the sheep and goats) as a resolution between salvation and works. Chrysostom emphasises the continued work of God in human salvation through the Son’s continued readiness to suffer, to hunger, to thirst, in the persons of the beggars that the Christian may encounter. This allows Christ to win merciful friends to salvation, rather than mindless slaves. God allows human participation in their own salvation for their own benefit. In this way salvation can be said to be completely of God, and also to involve a human contribution.

Brändle’s contribution is useful, because it is sympathetic to Chrysostom’s pastoral aims, and takes his preaching context seriously. The article mainly focuses on the relationship between grace and free will, covering this ground well and building on Kenny. However, it touches little on faith, or what this might mean for Chrysostom. Again, an understanding appears to be assumed, which misses the relational nature of πίστις.

In summary, Chrysostom has achieved a fair amount of scholarly attention in a wide range of areas. However, there have been relatively few that looked specifically at his understanding of πίστις. Those studies that do attend to this feature of his theology have often assumed an understanding which is more cognitive and propositional rather than relational. The remaining studies have not sought to put his understanding into the social and economic context of his time, leading to a less integrated approach (or misleading, in the case of Wiles). In short, this brief review demonstrates a gap in Chrysostom studies; a treatment of his understanding of faith

drawn from his context that takes the relational dimension of πίστις seriously. This study seeks to fill that gap.

**Outline of the study**

This first chapter has set out the existing scholarship on the interpretation of πίστις, and proposes that in Chrysostom’s preaching it frequently needs to be appreciated as belonging within a reciprocal, mutual relationship, as it did in the everyday contexts of the military, the economic and the household. This dimension has been missed in previous scholarship, and this study seeks to address that gap. This chapter has also given the general context of Chrysostom’s life, works and preaching.

The study focuses on the three central relationships used as a metaphor by Chrysostom for the relationship between the Christian and God. After an initial chapter laying the foundations for the methodology, I examine each relationship in a separate chapter.

Chapter two sets out some of the groundwork for the subsequent chapters by reviewing the semantic field of πίστις in late antiquity, and also arguing for close parallels with the semantic field of fides. I then demonstrate the importance of πίστις within Chrysostom’s preaching, and how frequently he uses πίστις in a way which evokes the military, economic and household contexts. I also show that Chrysostom shared this approach with other late antique figures. I also argue that Chrysostom should be interpreted in a semantically rich manner – that full weight should be given to the metaphorical contexts evoked through the context of the text, rather than attempting to tie πίστις down to one single, tightly defined meaning.

Chapter three argues that Chrysostom in his preaching uses the metaphor of a soldier’s relationship with a general or emperor to emphasise that the πίστις (‘faith’) of a Christian means loyalty and unquestioning obedience to God. In turn, Chrysostom also uses this to seek to reinforce a similar attitude towards the church and the bishop. I demonstrate this first through showing the extent of military knowledge and experience in Antioch and Constantinople, and Chrysostom’s own
links to the military. I then show the reciprocal, relational character of πίστις within a military context using speeches, stories, homilies, oaths and artefacts. I then go on to demonstrate Chrysostom’s use of πίστις using the military context.

Chapter four argues that Chrysostom uses the metaphor of the relationship between borrower and lender, where πίστις represented the good faith of a contract, showing that you could entrust something valuable to someone else, or in turn be entrusted with something valuable. I argue that Chrysostom uses this metaphor inventively, sometimes casting God as borrower and sometimes as lender, as pastoral need dictates. In particular, I argue that Chrysostom uses the financial relationships implied by πίστις within this economic context to encourage the rich to give to the poor.

Chapter five returns to the themes of loyalty and obedience. I argue that πίστις lies at the heart of the cluster of different relationships within the household (husband and wife; father and son; master and slave), and that Chrysostom uses this in his preaching.

Within the marital context, πίστις takes on the quality of fidelity. Given the dominant ideology surrounding marriage at the time, I show how there are also implications of trust and obedience; all of these qualities are then emphasised in Chrysostom’s own preaching on πίστις when using this metaphor.

Within the father-son context, I show how the son was meant to show the father complete obedience, despite strains in the relationship in the fourth century. I then account for why this relationship is comparatively little used as a metaphor for πίστις by Chrysostom, owing to concerns about how people might think of the relationship between God the Father and Son.

Within the master-slave context, I argue that Chrysostom uses this relational setting of πίστις to emphasise loyalty and obedience to God. I also show the implications for Chrysostom’s own attitudes towards slaves and slavery, and how preaching on πίστις in this way might have been heard by slaves and masters as seeking to affect their own behaviour.
Chapter six is the conclusion; within it I summarise the findings of the research: that the relational context of πίστις, with its implications of loyalty, trust and obedience, is an essential component in understanding Chrysostom’s preaching. I also outline some of the important implications and new avenues for Chrysostom studies; for late antique studies; for Pauline studies, and for contemporary society and churches.

Through these chapters, therefore, I unfold Chrysostom’s understanding of faith in his preaching through reading him contextually. Doing so enables us to see Chrysostom’s understanding of faith in a new light; it also enables us to see the late antique world in a new light.
2. Laying the Foundations

In a few words it is often possible to discover a multitude of ideas.\(^{86}\)

Introduction

The quotation introducing this chapter comes from a homily of Chrysostom on Genesis, where he starts by encouraging his congregation to search the scriptures, to study them closely, to go into them deeply. He offers the suggestion that the scriptures offer rich rewards. What Chrysostom applies to scripture, I would like to apply to Chrysostom. His homilies offer the potential to be read in a way that seeks to appreciate the richness within them, to note allusions, echoes and metaphors, and to take these seriously. In particular, I concentrate on the multitude of ideas thrown up through Chrysostom’s use of πίστις. But to appreciate the richness, some groundwork needs to be done. This chapter lays some foundations that later chapters build on.

There are some key questions that need to be considered. What was the range of meaning that πίστις could cover within late antiquity? Was it a broad concept, spanning both the Greek East and Latin West of the empire? Is πίστις important to Chrysostom in any case? If so, are particular metaphors used or evoked more often than others? And is Chrysostom unusual in this, or is it a feature that he shares with others in late antiquity and the Christian tradition? Is it legitimate to take a

semantically rich approach to meaning, or should we seek to define and separate out an individual technical meaning for πίστις whenever it should occur? To show how each will be considered in turn, I shall now outline the structure of this chapter.

I give first an overview of πίστις, indicating the range of meanings that it could encompass, and the contexts for those meanings. I also briefly outline other vocabulary closely linked to πίστις, which this study also considers and uses as evidence for Chrysostom’s approach. I also show similarities between the meanings of πίστις and its Latin equivalent, fides. This enables evidence to be considered across the empire of the late fourth century.87

I then consider the place of πίστις within Chrysostom’s preaching. I do this by first showing that πίστις (and related words) is frequently present throughout the entire corpus of his preaching. Secondly, I provide evidence for the close link between πίστις and cognates (such as πιστεύω). Thirdly, I show that three metaphorical contexts stand out as being used as a significant, recurring feature within Chrysostom’s preaching that uses πίστις. These three contexts are the military, the economic and the household.

Having established both the importance of πίστις and the significance of the military, economic and household metaphors, I show how parallels to this approach can be found in other Christian writers and preachers of late antiquity (in particular focusing on Cyril of Jerusalem). This demonstrates that Chrysostom’s approach is not atypical, but stands rather as an exemplar of how πίστις was both understood and used in preaching.

In considering Chrysostom’s use of πίστις, I shall frequently argue that more than one meaning is being evoked, or that he is slipping from one meaning to another. This is based upon an argument that this approach was the norm in the ancient world. A semantically rich approach to meaning was favoured rather than one which depended upon precision and compartmentalisation of meaning.

87 This is particularly useful for military contexts, where the official language of the army was Latin.
Additionally, current critical approaches to texts also encourage the interpreter to consider a ‘thick’, richly textured description – one that considers a broad range of factors that might influence meaning. I shall outline one such critical approach, showing how my argument is congruent with this methodology, and that not taking such an approach would lead to a limited interpretation.

These arguments lay a firm foundation, which I build on in subsequent chapters through more detailed arguments concerning πίστις within different metaphorical social contexts in Chrysostom’s preaching.

Πίστις – the range of meanings

In considering the meanings for πίστις, we can begin with the range given by standard lexica. Liddell Scott Jones (LSJ) gives six main areas: trust in others (including trustworthiness, and credit); faith (including that which gives confidence, so pledges, guarantees and proofs); that which is entrusted; political protection; the Pythagorean name for ten; and personified as a goddess.88 Lampe adds the meaning of the ‘sum of what is believed; system of orthodox belief’ which includes the creed.89 Bauer et al cover the same ground.90 It is worth briefly considering these meanings.

Within the philosophical tradition, πίστις can denote a proof. This use has a long history. Plato uses it in this way in Phaedo, where Cebes demands proof from Socrates of the immortality of the soul.91 This tradition is continued in Aristotle, who discusses the various proofs deriving from rhetoric.92 We can see πίστις being

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88 LSJ.
89 Lampe, 1087.
90 BDAG, 818-20.
91 Plato, Phaedo 70B.
92 See in particular Aristotle, Rhetorica 1. Aristotle considers the persuasive powers of pathos, ethos and logos. A more specific definition of πίστις here is still under debate, in particular whether the more formal type of proof put forward in 1.1 is compatible with 1.2. However, the broad point of πίστις as a type of proof remains. See Brad McAdon, “Two Irreconcilable Conceptions of Rhetorical Proofs in Aristotle's Rhetoric,” Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric 22, no. 4 (2004): 307-25. Lienhard finds six separate meanings of πίστις, but all of these fall under the general
used in a similar way close to the time of Chrysostom in an oration of Libanius, who asks the rhetorical question, ‘So what is the proof of the charge [τίς οὖν ἡ πίστις τῆς αἰτιας]?’ The notion of proof here is not limited to that which follows from strict logic. A better way of considering it would be that πίστις is a means of persuasion.

Closely linked to the idea of proof is that of providing a means of assurance, so a pledge or evidence. This can be seen in the first century writings of Philo and Josephus: an analysis by Hay found that πίστις took the meaning of pledge or evidence on nearly 60% of occurrences in Philo, and 40% in Josephus. An example given by Hay makes the point neatly. Philo has a governor who has mistreated Jews declare that:

King of gods and men... ...so after all you do not disregard the Jewish nation... ...I am a clear proof [σαφὴς δ᾿ ἐγὼ πίστις] of this, for all the deeds I madly committed against the Jews I have myself suffered.

This meaning of pledge or evidence is also related to the close links between πίστις and finance. Papyri from late antiquity use πίστις as a technical term for guaranteeing a contract, or the good faith of a contract. The term thus can have strong financial overtones. I demonstrate and develop this further in the chapter on the economic context.

The same link to assurance goes beyond the financial, and also refers to the personal trustworthiness of someone. It can cover loyalty, at an individual or national level. Individually, πίστις is the loyalty (and obedience) that slaves should show masters, sons should show fathers, that soldiers and citizens should show the emperor. Again, each of these is developed in later chapters, but an example from Plutarch’s life of Galba shows this usage. A tribune gives a speech urging his fellow soldiers to remain faithful to Galba. The results are successful:


93 Libanius, Orationes 30.16. See also Libanius, Orationes 33.5.


These things having been said, all of the soldiers sided with the tribune [τῶ χιλιάρχῳ προσέθεντο πάντες οἱ στρατιώται] and went amongst the others urging them to remain loyal to the emperor [καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους προσιόντες ἐμμένειν παρεκάλουν τῇ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα πίστει].

The faithfulness is usually reciprocal: masters should show faithfulness to their slaves; fathers to their sons; and emperors to their loyal soldiers and subjects. This applies also to the divine; gods are faithful to their followers. An example of this can be seen in Paul’s letter to the Romans:

What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness [ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν] nullify the faithfulness of God [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ]?" 

Within the household, πίστις is also the quality of faithfulness expected in a marriage between husband and wife. This too is developed in a later chapter.

The same idea of faithfulness and loyalty also lies behind national agreements offering political protection, with the concept of the ‘faith of Rome’. A reference to this can be seen in the Res Gestae of Augustus, the achievements of Augustus inscribed in Latin and Greek on temples throughout the empire following his death:

Kings claimed political asylum with me as suppliants... ...And while I was princeps, many other peoples experienced the good faith of the Roman people [Ῥωμαίων πίστεως], who before had no exchange of ambassadors and friendship with the Roman people..." 

In the Roman pantheon, the virtue of faith and faithfulness is personified in the goddess Πίστις, or Fides." The emphasis on loyalty is shown through the Temple to Fides in Rome being where veteran soldiers received their official discharge from

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96 Plutarch, Galba 14.3.
97 Romans 3:3.
99 See for example how Plutarch translates Fides as Πίστις in his account of the building of the temple to Fides under Numa. Plutarch, Numa 16.
the time of Claudius,"¹⁰⁰ as well as being a place where oaths or treaties were ratified or preserved, showing the importance of faithfulness.¹⁰¹

In the Pythagorean system of mathematics, the number ten could also be assigned the name πίστις. The (sometimes complicated) reasoning about the special qualities of the number ten included its ability to secure trust to comprehend properly. The Pythagorean use does not seem to have been widespread, but is again indicative of the link to trustworthiness and reliability.¹⁰²

Thus far the meanings have overlapped considerably: trustworthiness; reliability; proof; guarantee; loyalty are all closely linked. Additionally, πίστις can stand for cognitive belief. Again, this aspect can be seen in philosophical works, such as Plato using πίστις to represent one of four ways of dividing up types of knowledge. The four categories are: illusion or conjecture (εἰκασία); belief or confidence (πίστις); reasoning (διάνοια); and full understanding (νόησις).¹⁰³ Here, πίστις functions more closely to the meaning of cognitive belief – believing that something is true. The link to the meaning of proof is also sometimes evident in ancient philosophy – πίστις as a proof leads in turn to πίστις as belief.¹⁰⁴

Besides cognitive belief, πίστις can also mean trust or belief in a person or god. This common meaning can again be found in the New Testament, such as, in Mark’s

¹⁰² Iamblichus, Theologoumena Arithmeticae 80-81. Note that the entry in LSJ gives an incorrect reference here.
¹⁰³ This comes from Plato’s analogy of the divided line. Plato, Respublica 509-511.
¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Grimaldi, who argues that Aristotle uses πίστις to mean: the material that induces belief; a proof or demonstration; and the state of mind of belief. William M. A. Grimaldi, “A Note on the Pisteis in Aristotle’s Rhetoric, 1354-1356,” The American Journal of Philology 78, no. 2 (1957): 188-92. While others have argued about specific points in Grimaldi’s approach, the multiple meanings of πίστις as including belief remain accepted.
account of the stilling of the storm, Jesus asking his disciples if they still had no faith.\textsuperscript{105}

Alongside more common meanings, within Christianity πίστις could be used to mean the main beliefs (for example, as laid out in a creed or teaching), or Christianity itself.\textsuperscript{106}

Within some strands of late Neoplatonism, πίστις could also represent a virtue that unites everyone (including gods) to the Good, as the fifth century philosopher Proclus argues:

\begin{quote}
What then unites us to [the Good] \(Τί \text{ οὖν ήμᾶς ἑνώσει πρὸς αὐτός;}\)?

...It is, so to say, the faith of the gods, which inexpressibly unites to the Good all the classes of the gods, the daemons, and the blessed souls \(\text{Ὡς μὲν τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, τῶν θεῶν πίστις ἔστιν ἡ πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀρρήτως ἑνίζουσα τὰ τῶν θεῶν γένη σύμπαντα καὶ δαίμονων καὶ ψυχῶν τὰς εὐδαιμόνας}\).\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

Proclus continues by arguing this from the credibility of the Good and the virtue of faithfulness. There are clear parallels with Christian approaches, and the rise in importance of πίστις within Neoplatonism indicates wide acceptance of such an approach within the culture.\textsuperscript{108}

To summarise: πίστις had a range of meanings centred around trust, faithfulness, belief and loyalty. It was used in a wide range of contexts, from philosophy to banking to belief to marriage and slavery.

I shall also be considering other linked vocabulary with the same πιστ- stem. The verb πιστεύω meant to trust or believe in someone; to believe something; or to entrust someone with something.\textsuperscript{109} The adjective πιστός meant faithful, loyal, trusting or trustworthy (and in noun form meant someone who was faithful).\textsuperscript{110}

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\textsuperscript{105} Mark 4:40.
\textsuperscript{106} For example, Cyril of Jerusalem, \textit{Catecheses ad illuminandos 1-18 5.12}. Also Eusebius, \textit{Historia ecclesiastica 4.23.8}.
\textsuperscript{107} Proclus, \textit{Theologia Platonica 1.25 (PTP 1:110)}.
\textsuperscript{108} For a survey, see Laird, \textit{Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith}, 4-13.
\textsuperscript{109} BDAG, 816-18.
\textsuperscript{110} BDAG, 820-21.
\end{flushright}
Variants also exist: for example, in Matthew’s account of the stilling of the storm, Jesus called his disciples ὀλιγόπιστοι – those of little faith. Negative forms of noun, verb and adjective also exist, for example ἀπιστία, ἀπιστέω and ἄπιστος. The use of this vocabulary also sheds light on how Chrysostom uses πίστις in his preaching.

Πίστις and Fides

Part of my argument is that Chrysostom’s usage of πίστις was usual within his late antique context (as would be expected; preachers generally need to work with meanings familiar to their congregations). Clearly this argument is strengthened if I can demonstrate similar usage throughout the Empire both east and west. This is made possible through a large semantic overlap between πίστις and fides. One example of this has already been given, in the name of the goddess being Πίστις in Greek and Fides in Latin. To demonstrate the link between πίστις and fides, I shall first show how previous scholarship closely links the two, before also considering evidence from late antiquity. In particular, I shall use the example of the Vulgate and also Vetus Latina as Latin translations to show the ubiquity of fides as a close translation for πίστις. I shall then show how other examples from ancient literature also demonstrate the close equivalence of the two.

One particular locus for scholarly debate has revolved around a particular use of πίστις/fides: the ‘faith of Rome’, and what this might imply (this debate is located in the middle Republican period of the Roman empire). In general, to enter into the ‘faith of Rome’ was to appeal to Rome for protection and security against third parties, in return for loyalty. In particular, an incident recounted by Polybius seems to show different Greek understandings from Roman, and hence a difference in concept between πίστις and fides. However, the episode and evidence has been

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111 Matthew 8:26.
112 Polybius, Historiae 20.9.10-12. The incident involves the Aetolian expectation of clemency and protection through entering the πίστις of Rome; the Roman response equated it with servitude and surrender. Polybius expressly says that they were deceived by the word πίστις (τῷ δὲ τῆς πίστεως ὄνοματι πλανηθέντες).
reviewed definitively by Gruen, who demonstrates that the episode in question was, for various reasons, exceptional, and that:

Respect for πίστις/fides was a common heritage for Greeks and Romans, not a source for misunderstanding and a division between the cultures.\(^\text{113}\)

He adduces a variety of examples to show that similar understandings of the concept were shared.\(^\text{114}\) These shared understandings in themselves show that historically the two had similar conceptual fields. Further confirmation of this lies in the passage from the Res Gestae of Augustus already cited: the Latin equivalent of Ῥωμαίων πίστεως in the inscriptions is R. fidel.\(^\text{115}\)

An additional source of evidence is the translation of the Bible into Latin from Greek. Here, the Vulgate provides a source, as a late fourth century translation by Jerome. Whilst Jerome consulted Hebrew texts for the Old Testament, we can be sure that the New Testament is based on the Greek. How was πίστις translated in this corpus?

Πίστις occurs 237 times in the Greek text of the New Testament. In every single case, fides was used as the translation. This includes occasions where πίστις is normally translated as ‘faithfulness’ in English translations (such as Romans 3:3). It also includes Acts 17:31, where English translations use ‘proof’ (NASB; NIV; CEV) or ‘assurance’ (NRSV). Similarly, in 1 Tim. 5:12 fides again provides the translation for πίστις, where English translations suggest the meaning of ‘pledge’ (NASB, NIV, NRSV) or ‘promise’ (CEV). Therefore, whatever the particular semantic aspect of πίστις that is evoked by a passage, fides was used as a suitable translation in late antiquity.

Another point for comparison is through using the Vetus Latina texts – the ancient Latin translations of the Bible. Again, I restricted the comparison to New Testament

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\(^{113}\) Erich S. Gruen, “Greek Πιστις and Roman Fides,” Athenaeum 60 (1982): 68.


\(^{115}\) Res Gestae 32.
books with critical editions to ensure that translation was being done from the Greek.\textsuperscript{116} The same pattern emerges. In all but two cases, πίστις was translated by \textit{fides}. The first of the exceptions concerns 1 Timothy 4:1, where the Western tradition translates τῆς πίστεως as \textit{a veritate}.\textsuperscript{117} The other exception is Revelation 13:10, where a Spanish tradition has \textit{virtus} rather than \textit{fides}.\textsuperscript{118}

The critical editions of all the Vetus Latina are not yet complete, so for example the gospels and Acts are not considered in the above analysis. However, Codex Bezae is a significant old Latin witness which is accessible, covering most of Matthew through to most of Acts.\textsuperscript{119} Again, \textit{fides} is used on every occasion that the Greek text uses πίστις.\textsuperscript{120}

The paucity of exceptions highlights the near unanimity in the old Latin tradition. In practically every case all the Old Latin text traditions agree in using \textit{fides} as a translation for πίστις.

Thus in a variety of different contexts, \textit{fides} was seen as an appropriate equivalent for πίστις.\textsuperscript{121} This range of evidence therefore suggests that the usage of \textit{fides} in late antiquity can provide indications (albeit to be used with caution) for the understanding and use of πίστις.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{116} The New Testament books with critical editions include: Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews; James; 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude; and Revelation. \textit{Epistula ad Ephesios; Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses; Epistulae ad Thessalonicenses, Timotheum, Titum, Philemonem, Hebraeos; Epistulae Catholicae; Apocalypsis Johannis.}

\textsuperscript{117} Text type D. In particular, the variant is from the fourth/fifth century \textit{Codex Claromontanus}. Other text types (I & V) have a \textit{fide}.

\textsuperscript{118} Text type S. In particular, the variant is from the eight century commentary on Revelation by Beatus of Liébana. Other text types (C, I & V) have \textit{fides}.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis}.

\textsuperscript{120} Again, including Acts 17:31.

\textsuperscript{121} This is strengthened by the conclusions of Freyburger in his study on \textit{fides} (albeit looking at an earlier period). Arguing that the meaning of \textit{fides} revolves around trust/confidence (\textit{confiance}) – both in people and object – he also argues that it is largely similar in scope to πίστις. See in particular his conclusion. He does note a difference over whether πίστις encompassed protection in the same way, an issue addressed by Gruen (already cited). Freyburger, \textit{Fides}, 319-20.
\end{flushleft}
Πίστις in Chrysostom – overview

Having outlined the range of meanings of πίστις, it is necessary to consider how important a concept or value it was within Chrysostom’s preaching, its links to related words (such as πιστεύω), and what contexts might reasonably be evoked when πίστις does occur. A fuller explanation of my methodology in handling these issues can be found in Appendix A. Here, I shall give a brief summary.

My own interest in Chrysostom’s understanding of πίστις began through research into how the doctrine of ‘justification by faith’ had been understood historically, and a realisation that late antique understandings differed markedly from Reformation approaches, which tended to separate out ‘faith’ from works. Chrysostom is a significant early church figure, who preached extensively on the Pauline epistles, and who could therefore act as an exemplar of a late antique approach to Paul and justification by faith.

Reading Chrysostom, it became clear that, although ‘faith’ is a recurring feature of his homilies, it frequently does not function as merely propositional, cognitive belief. It is often linked to qualities such as obedience and loyalty, and within a metaphorical context of the military, or the economy, or the household. Statistical analysis of the text bear this out. To consider the importance of πίστις in Chrysostom’s works, I used the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database to do a search of πίστις and related words in all of Chrysostom’s works, enabling me to calculate its frequency. This showed that it was a concept that occurred in the vast majority of his works: 142 out of 155.¹²² The results also showed that a (fairly) typical homily of about 4,000 words could on average expect to have six or seven references. This shows the ubiquity of the concept within Chrysostom. Although there was variation from work to work, the usage of πίστις was not limited to a few series of homilies, and was not infrequent.

This analysis therefore confirmed my own qualitative analysis: πίστις and related words are found both frequently and throughout his work. However, the statistical analysis also enabled other conclusions to be drawn. Two in particular are worth

¹²² I excluded spurious and dubious works from the analysis. The type of work with the lowest rates included letters.
highlighting. First, there is statistical backing for the impression that Chrysostom moves easily between different forms of πιστ~ related words. Thus, for example, when Chrysostom uses πίστις in a work, he is also more likely to use the verb πιστεύω. 123 This provides statistical evidence that the different forms of πιστ~ based words are conceptually close.

Examples where Chrysostom does this explicitly can be found readily. For example, in preaching on Romans 1:5, Chrysostom argues:

...as to the rest, that we should trust [πιστεύσωμεν]. But that we should trust what? ‘Concerning his name'. Not that we should be meddling about his being, but that we should trust [πιστεύσωμεν] in his name. It was this which worked the miracles. Because ‘in the name of Jesus Christ,' it says, ‘rise up and walk’. And this also requires faith [πίστεως]... 124

Here, Chrysostom is moving easily from the verbal form to the noun. The same concept is being addressed throughout. The statistics confirm what we would probably expect: all words using the πιστ~ stem are closely related.

The second conclusion is one that we would expect in advance: where Chrysostom is preaching on scripture, and where the scripture uses πίστις or related words, then Chrysostom uses such language himself more frequently. This makes sense: we would expect Chrysostom to explain a passage and its implications to a congregation.

Thus the analysis of the occurrence of πίστις in Chrysostom’s works confirms its importance: it is prevalent and it is a regular feature. Other words based on the πιστ~ root are closely related, and Chrysostom is more likely to use this language when scriptural passages use it.

This still leaves open the issue of the best way of understanding the resonances and meaning of such language. In my research, three metaphors emerged as significant: the military; the economic and the household. Different forms of evidence converge

123 The two forms are statistically significantly correlated. See Appendix A for more details.
to point to these contexts as being significant. The first is of a qualitative nature: that is the impression given through studying Chrysostom’s homilies. This qualitative type of evidence can, however, be backed up with a more structured approach to establish, within Chrysostom’s use of πίστις in his preaching, which were the significant meanings, metaphors or contexts deployed by Chrysostom.

Given the size of the corpus of Chrysostom, it would be impractical to analyse every single instance of πίστις. I therefore selected three substantial series of homilies as a reasonable sample: Chrysostom’s homilies on Genesis; on Matthew; and on Romans.\textsuperscript{125} This sample covers series on an Old Testament book, a gospel and a Pauline letter. In total, this gave rise to 1,419 occurrences of πιστ~ related language.\textsuperscript{126}

I analysed each occurrence within its immediate context, noting the meaning(s) which that context could reasonably expect to evoke. As would be expected, the notion of trust, trusting, belief and believing was frequent. Another frequent use of πιστ~ related language was as an identity term, naming Christians as ‘the faithful’ or ‘the believers’.

Two other non-specific uses are also common: trustworthiness and obedience (thus confirming that obedience was a significant element of the semantic field of πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching).

However, looking at particular metaphorical contexts for πιστ~ related language, three areas stood out, dwarfing all other possibilities. These were the military, the economic and the household contexts. Within the household context, the most commonly used metaphor was that of master-slave, with father-son and husband-wife both also used. Other possible metaphorical contexts were far less common (for


\textsuperscript{126} More details on methodology and a fuller analysis of results can be found in Appendix A.
example, patron-client or friend-friend). The military, economic and household contexts accounted for over a third of the occurrences of meanings or contexts.\textsuperscript{127}

Thus the evidence from the scriptural homilies is that, when Chrysostom uses πιστ~-related language, frequently one of the contexts for appreciating the full meaning of what Chrysostom is saying turns out to be the military, economic or household.

To ensure that this wasn’t a feature purely of homilies on scripture, I conducted a similar exercise on Chrysostom’s baptismal homilies. These homilies are designed to teach a catechumen the basics of the Christian faith. Within them, two features can be tested for. First, does the pattern of using military, economic and household concepts recur here? Secondly, independently of links directly to πίστις, does Chrysostom use these metaphors to illuminate the relationship between the Christian and God?

The results were clear. Again, the three dominant metaphorical contexts used by Chrysostom for πιστ~ related language were the military, economic, and the household (this time also rivalled by the metaphor of the ‘eye of faith’). Secondly, at least one of these three metaphorical contexts was used by Chrysostom to illustrate the relationship between the Christian and God in every single baptismal homily.

To sum up: the analysis of how Chrysostom uses πιστ~ related language demonstrates that a wide appreciation of the range of possible meanings is necessary: alongside trust and belief we need to consider obedience and faithfulness. Appreciating πίστις within the preaching of Chrysostom also requires attention to its frequent use in a variety of relationships, which are in turn used as metaphors for the relationship between Christians and God. In particular, the military, economic and household contexts are key (where the household includes marriage, parent-child and master-slave relationships).

\textsuperscript{127} Where a meaning or context could be specified (980 occurrences). The figure rises to 42\% if obedience (where no additional context was evoked) and allegiance are included.
Chrysostom and Libanius

We are fortunate to have an Antiochene contemporary of Chrysostom, his pagan teacher Libanius, enabling us to compare their use of πίστις. There are some striking differences. In his orations, Libanius uses πίστις an order of magnitude less frequently than Chrysostom.\textsuperscript{128} When he does use it, on many occasions it stands for evidence, or proof, or grounds for confidence.\textsuperscript{129} Sometimes he uses it to mean trust.\textsuperscript{130} Libanius also uses πίστις in the context of agreements, commercial and other, to stand for the good faith of the agreement, or giving one’s word.\textsuperscript{131} He rarely uses it to mean belief.\textsuperscript{132} In this, Libanius appears to be closer to Philo and Josephus (see earlier). Isabella Sandwell has noted how Libanius and Chrysostom differ in their approach to issues of religious identity and allegiance.\textsuperscript{133} This is borne out in their different usage of πίστις. Libanius, less concerned with a separate identity and institutional religion, uses the concept infrequently and usually in a conventional sense of evidence, or pledge. Chrysostom, keen to construct a separate Christian identity, uses πίστις much more frequently and does so with metaphorical contexts where it will evoke faithfulness, loyalty and obedience. The analysis of Chrysostom’s usage in comparison with Libanius’ therefore provides another evidential basis for Sandwell’s argument.

Chrysostom – part of a tradition

As stated, Chrysostom stands as an exemplar of a late antique approach to Paul and justification by faith. He was quoted as an authority by others soon after his death.\textsuperscript{134} As a rising star in Antioch, and as bishop in Constantinople, Chrysostom was a key figure within the early church. Given the way his teaching and preaching

\textsuperscript{128} 32 occurrences of πίστις (0.13 per 1,000 words) in his orations. For all extant works, there are 61 occurrences (0.08 per 1,000 words).
\textsuperscript{129} 17 of the 32 occurrences fit this category. See, for example, Libanius, \textit{Orationes} 12.82, 26.29, 34.12, 45.2, 50.2, 55.34.
\textsuperscript{130} For example, Libanius, \textit{Orationes} 11.66.
\textsuperscript{131} See Libanius, \textit{Orationes} 1.70, 12.13, 32.1, 59.94.
\textsuperscript{132} Libanius, \textit{Orationes} 11.98.
\textsuperscript{133} Sandwell, \textit{Religious Identity in Late Antiquity}.
\textsuperscript{134} For example, both Julian of Eclanum and Augustine appeal to his authority over infant sin and baptism. Augustine, \textit{Contra Julianum} 21-22 (PL 44:654-55).
were widely accepted, it is *prima facie* likely that Chrysostom’s approach was seen as normal and fittingly representative of a wide strand of Christianity at the time.

This is the case for Chrysostom’s use of the military, economic and household contexts for a pattern for the Christian’s relationship with God; it was part of a tradition within Christianity, rather than being a novel setting for πίστις, or a unique approach.

This can be seen through considering Cyril of Jerusalem. This mid-fourth century teacher also left to posterity a series of baptismal homilies. Cyril uses the same type of metaphors for the Christian’s relationship with God that Chrysostom does.

In total, Cyril uses sixteen different metaphors, however nine of these are used only once. Of the six remaining metaphors, that of the vine is used twice. Three metaphors belong within the household context: husband-wife/bride; master-slave; and father-son. These occur a total of twelve times. Military metaphors are used ten times. Financial metaphors are used three times. In total, the household, economic and military contexts account for over two-thirds of the metaphors used.

The results clearly show that Cyril of Jerusalem favours the same metaphors for the Christian’s relationship with God as Chrysostom. However, we can go further than this: Cyril can also see πίστις as belonging naturally within this relationship. For example, in Lecture 17 he tells the catechumens that, if they come to their baptism with faith [*ἐὰν δὲ ἐκ πίστεως προσέλθῃς*], God will care for them as if they were his soldiers:

> The guard, the comforter shall remain by your side through everything. He will care for you just like his own soldier [*ὡς ὁ ἰδίου στρατιώτου*]...

Therefore Chrysostom and Cyril both use similar metaphors for God, and relate these to πίστις, when engaged in the task of preparing adults for baptism.

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135 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1-18.
136 Husband-wife/bride – six times. Master-slave and father-son both occur three times.
137 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 1-18 17.36-37.
Another figure from late antiquity whose teaching on baptism is preserved is that of Gregory of Nazianzus. In his oration, reportedly delivered in Constantinople in January 381, he again uses a wide range of metaphors to explain baptism and to encourage the catechumens to be baptised rather than remaining at this stage. Within this wide range, we can find a similar use of metaphors taken from the military, from finance and from marriage. For example, Gregory urges them not to put off becoming and being known as ‘faithful’ [πιστός], and to fight the evil one, with the ‘shield of faith’ [τὸν θυρεὸν τῆς πίστεως]. He goes on to appeal to the younger catechumens:

Are you young? Stand firm with comrades [μετὰ τῆς συμμαχίας] against the passions, to be counted in the army of God [Θεοῦ παράταξιν]. Be the bravest against Goliath, defeat the thousands or tens of thousands. Benefit in this way from your time of life. But don’t put up with your youth withering away, being killed by incomplete faith [τῷ ἀτελεῖ τῆς πίστεως νεκρωθεῖσαν].

Thus Gregory too turns to military metaphors (and links them with πίστις). He similarly uses financial language (such as the folly of casting away mercy ‘to owe a debt of punishment [χρεωστεῖν κόλασιν]’). And he finishes the oration with the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14).

Military metaphors in particular seem to have been widely used for baptism in late antiquity. Besides their use by Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus and Chrysostom, we can also add Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia. And, like Chrysostom, sometimes both military and wedding imagery could be combined.

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139 Gregory of Nazianzus, In Sanctum Baptisma 16 (PG 36:380).
140 Gregory of Nazianzus, In Sanctum Baptisma 17 (PG 36:380). Gregory is also using the youthful David as a comparison, hence the references to thousands and tens of thousands – 1 Samuel 18:7-8.
141 Gregory of Nazianzus, In Sanctum Baptisma 9 (PG 36:369). See also the instruction to ‘guard the deposit’ – Gregory of Nazianzus, In Sanctum Baptisma 41 (PG 36:417).
142 Gregory of Nazianzus, In Sanctum Baptisma 46 (PG 36:426).
143 Rufinus, Origenis Homiliae in Librum Josua 5.2 (PG 12:848-49); Theodore of Mopsuestia, Liber ad Baptizandos 3.
144 For example, Aphrahat (mid-fourth century) uses both bridal and military imagery in the context of baptism. Aphrahat, Demonstrations 6.1. See Everett
Moving beyond baptism, all three contexts are common as metaphors for the relationship between the Christian and God.\textsuperscript{145} As an example, Gregory of Nyssa’s homilies on the Song of Songs see the scriptures as an allegory for the marriage between God as groom and the Church as bride, where the bride finds her beloved through faith.\textsuperscript{146}

The similarities between Chrysostom and others give rise to a question: does Chrysostom directly depend upon others for the use of these metaphors? The evidence is not clear enough to be definitive one way or another. However, some of the particular ways that Chrysostom deploys some of the metaphors are not exactly paralleled elsewhere. For example, Chrysostom describes baptism as a ‘spiritual marriage [\(τῶν\) πνευματικῶν \(γάμων\)].’\textsuperscript{147} This phrase appears to be unique to Chrysostom.\textsuperscript{148} This suggests that, even if Chrysostom was drawing upon others, that he was able to apply the tradition in a fresh way.

However, it is reasonable to suppose that his use of these metaphors was part of a long tradition, rather than a direct influence by one or two others. That these three contexts should provide a rich supply of metaphors for the relationship between the Christian and God is no surprise. All three are used in the New Testament, and so are part of a long and well established tradition.\textsuperscript{149} In the subsequent chapters

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\textsuperscript{146} For example, Brakke examines how Athanasius terms virgins as brides of Christ. David Brakke, \textit{Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

\textsuperscript{147} Gregory of Nyssa, \textit{In Canticum canticorum}. See the study by Laird, \textit{Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith}. See in particular Gregory of Nyssa, \textit{In Canticum canticorum 6} (GNO 6:183) and Gregory of Nyssa, \textit{In Canticum canticorum 14} (GNO 6:419) where he defines faith as loving God with one’s whole heart, soul strength.

\textsuperscript{148} Its only other occurrence is in a spurious Chrysostom sermon on baptism. John Chrysostom, \textit{Catecheses ad illuminandos} 1.1.

\textsuperscript{149} For example, the military metaphor is explicit in Ephesians 6:10-17; the financial metaphor is explicit in Matthew 18:23-35 and 25:14-30; the marriage metaphor in Ephesians 5:21-33. The metaphors also extend into the Old Testament (for example, the description of Israel as the bride of God as in Hosea 1 & 2).
dealing with each specific context, I shall give further examples of others with similar approaches to Chrysostom.

To sum up: Chrysostom’s approach stands squarely within a common tradition. The metaphors that he used were ones with a long heritage, and he used them in similar ways to others in late antiquity (whether directly dependent on others or not). In particular, the link between πίστις and the military, economic and household contexts was not unique to him. Chrysostom is an exemplar of late antiquity in this regard, rather than an atypical phenomenon.

**Semantic richness**

Having outlined the range of meanings of πίστις, and shown how Chrysostom often placed πίστις metaphorically within a military, economic or household context, I shall now also argue that Chrysostom did not use πίστις in a strict, univalent way. In other words, Chrysostom could and did move from one meaning of πίστις to another, or evoke multiple meanings. Again, Chrysostom was not unusual in this; his usage was conventional for the period. Semantic richness (or ambiguity or slippage) was standard. This argument has been made in particular by Gerald Downing.¹⁵⁰

In outlining my argument, I shall first summarise Downing’s argument that a semantically rich understanding of words was the norm in the ancient world, and that excluding possible meanings was unusual. I shall then demonstrate how Chrysostom slips easily between different meanings of πίστις and also links it to household contexts and metaphors, thereby evoking particular resonances of faithfulness and obedience.

Downing writes in the context of the πίστις Χριστοῦ, or ‘faith of Christ’ debates, where commentators argue over whether Paul meant the term (and similar ones) to mean faith in Christ or the faithfulness of Christ.¹⁵¹ Within these ‘faith of Christ’


¹⁵¹ These include: Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 2:16, 20, 22; and Philippians 3:9. Other passages also relate to the debate, for instance the interpretation of Romans 1:16-17.
What is ruled out, then, it is here argued, is any hard precision, any clear lines between possible connotations of particular words, the kinds of “nice” distinctions desired in some theological or ideological discourse.\footnote{Downing, “Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith,” 156.}

Downing now addresses the semantic ambiguity of πίστις and its cognates, pointing out the richness of the terms, and how one meaning implies another, intertwining trust, faithful obedience, trustworthiness, and more. His conclusion on πίστις Χριστοῦ is:

Taking into account ancient understandings of how language works, and noting ancient usage of the key vocabulary, and failing any explicit exclusions from the semantic field of πίστις, the faithfulness of the one trusted is inevitably also there, in the picture, albeit in softer focus.\footnote{Downing, “Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith,” 160.}

My argument builds on that of Downing. Chrysostom uses a wide range of meanings for πίστις when preaching, and slips easily from one meaning to another, evoking in the process different contexts. Three examples demonstrate the point.

The first example comes when Chrysostom is preaching on Romans 8:24, ‘for by hope we were saved’.

It’s not necessary to look for everything here, but also to hope [ἐλπίζειν]. For we brought God only this gift [τὸ δῶρον]: trusting him [τὸ πιστεύσαι αὐτῷ] that what he promised will happen, and we were saved by this path alone...

...So don’t say to me, yet again hope, yet again what we can expect, yet again faith [πάλιν ἐλπίδες, πάλιν προσδοκίαι, πάλιν πίστις]. For in the beginning you were saved like this, and you brought only this dowry [ταύτην τὴν προῖκα] to the bridegroom.\footnote{The second person singular is used by Chrysostom in this passage when addressing the congregation. John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 14 (PG 60:532).}

The passage demonstrates the way that one meaning of πίστις can blur into another quite naturally. Initially, Chrysostom is talking about hope. This leads him to the sole gift that Christians bring: trusting God. However, a short while later Chrysostom invokes a marriage context, with specific references to a bridegroom
and a dowry that is πίστις. Within a marriage context, πίστις evokes meanings of fidelity. Thus at first, trusting God was evoked; by the end of this passage, being faithful to God is being evoked. Chrysostom slides easily from one meaning to another, exploiting the semantic richness of πίστις and cognates rather than endeavouring for precision. So Chrysostom uses the marriage context in preaching about πίστις, evoking meanings to do with fidelity.

The second example comes from Chrysostom preaching about Abraham’s faith and fatherhood of the nations, from Romans 4:17:

For what does he say? ‘...in the presence of God in whom he trusted [Κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσε Θεοῦ]’. He means something like this. Just as God is not God of just a part, but father of everyone [ἀλλὰ πάντων πατήρ], so also is [Abraham]. And again, just as God is father not according to a natural relationship [οὐ κατὰ τὴν φυσικὴν συγγένειαν], but according to the affinity of faith [κατ’ οἰκείωσιν πίστεως], so also is he. For obedience makes him father of us all [ἡ γὰρ ὑπακοὴ ποιεῖ πατέρα πάντων ἡμῶν].

The metaphor of father naturally also evokes the partner in the relationship – the child and, given the patriarchal nature of the ancient world, the son in particular. Again, we start with a human trusting God. However, when Chrysostom introduces πίστις, he does so within the context of father-son relationships, where it stood for faithful obedience. This explains the way in which Chrysostom can slide from talking about trusting, to faith, to obedience, within a couple of sentences. As in the previous example, πίστις does not have a precisely delineated definition, but a rich semantic domain freely plundered by Chrysostom.

The third example concerns the master-slave context, and comes from Chrysostom’s comments on Romans 1:5 – the ‘obedience of faith’ [ὑπακοήν πίστεως]. Chrysostom remarks of Paul:

Notice the politeness of the household slave. He wants nothing to be of himself, but everything to belong to the Master [Ὅρα

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159 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 8 (PG 60:460).
160 This verse has itself been drawn into the ‘faith of Christ’ debate.
What is striking is how readily Chrysostom turns to a familiar household context, that of slave and master, in preaching on the passage. In this, no doubt Chrysostom is influenced by Paul’s own use of this metaphor, both for himself (Romans 1:1) and for his audience (Romans 6:14-23). Additionally, ‘Master’ (Δεσπότης) is itself a favourite term of Chrysostom for Christ; he uses it this way on 63 occasions in his various homilies on Romans. And the metaphor of being a slave of God was common currency in any case. However, when the slave-master context is juxtaposed with πίστις, again certain meanings – faithfulness and loyalty – are likely to be strongly evoked, particularly if paired with obedience. In other passages, Chrysostom compares the faithfulness of good masters to slaves with that of the ultimate master, God.

The examples demonstrate two points. First, Chrysostom moves easily from one part of the range of meanings of πίστις to another, naturally and without needing to draw attention to what he is doing to his congregation. These are practical demonstrations of the semantic richness or ambiguity in understanding πίστις that Downing argues for. Secondly, Chrysostom, in encountering πίστις, can turn to common contexts that also act as metaphors for the relationship of the Christian to God; within these contexts, faithfulness, trust and obedience are central to the relationships rather than cognitive belief.

Thus Chrysostom’s approach confirms the arguments of Downing. When this preacher interprets a Pauline passage where πίστις is an issue, he can readily slip

162 It is used, for example, in fourth century inscriptions: SEG 31:1415; Bandy 101.
163 See John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam i ad Timotheum 16 (PG 62:589). I consider this passage in more detail in chapter five.
164 The use of the household metaphor for the relationship with God can also be seen as an example of the way in which, over time, Christianity aligned itself to traditional Roman values. The change is explored in Kate Cooper, “Relationships, Resistance and Religious Change in the Early Christian Household,” in Religion and the Household, ed. John Doran, Charlotte Methuen, and Alexandra Walsham (The Boydell Press, 2014), 5-22.
and slide from one meaning within its semantic range to another, strengthening particular evocations through using common household relationships as metaphors.\textsuperscript{165}

If Downing provides support for semantic richness from the interpretive approach of late antiquity, current critical approaches to texts can also reinforce this. One model for considering the study of ancient texts has been provided by Vernon Robbins, who takes a socio-rhetorical approach.\textsuperscript{166} A perennial temptation for interpreters of the New Testament and early Christian texts has been to focus narrowly on one aspect of a text in isolation from others, including its cultural and social setting.\textsuperscript{167} The rise of social-scientific methodology since the 1980s has been a response to the limitations of such an approach.\textsuperscript{168} Within this growing field, Robbins pioneered an approach fusing examination of the literary and rhetorical features of a text with its social context.\textsuperscript{169} The approach demonstrates how integrating social-scientific concerns and contexts with traditional readings leads to better, richer readings of ancient texts.

Robbins argues for seeing text metaphorically as a tightly woven tapestry, with thick textures of meaning. He attempts to categorise different textures and

\textsuperscript{165} Support for Downing also comes from the field of cognitive psychology, where the phenomenon of semantic priming (speeding the recognition of a word through priming with a conceptually related word) is well established. For a review see Margery Lucas, “Semantic Priming without Association: A Meta-Analytic Review,” \textit{Psychonomic Bulletin & Review} 7, no. 4 (2000): 618-30.


\textsuperscript{167} Hence the lament of Meeks, who complained about the isolation of New Testament study ‘not only from secular study of the Roman Empire, but even from church history’. Social-historical and social-scientific approaches were viewed with suspicion owing to concerns over reductionism and applicability. Wayne A. Meeks, \textit{The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 1.


elements within this meaning, ranging from the real author, through to the implied author, the text’s narrative, the implied reader, to the real reader. All this takes place within a certain context or world. As interpreters, we come to the text from within our own world.¹⁷⁰

Robbins argues for a dynamic approach, where different elements interact – thus constructing a different implied reader has implications for what the implied and real author are trying to communicate.¹⁷¹ In particular, he draws attention to different textures involved in this process of constructing meaning, identifying four categories: inner texture; intertexture; social and cultural texture; and ideological texture.

Inner texture refers to the text itself, and how language and patterns of language operate within this text, without much concern for other influences outside the text.

Intertexture is the recognition that texts quote, allude to and echo other texts, and in so doing affect the meaning of the original text. Intertextuality takes this dynamic seriously, seeing how not only at the level of quotation but also at the level of underlying narrative other texts dynamically interact with a given text.¹⁷²

Social and cultural texture recognises that texts are located in a particular world or context, and are mimetic of that context. Thus, to appreciate the meaning of a text,

¹⁷¹ Elements of this can be seen in the varied attempts to construct the likely audience of Chrysostom’s sermons. The sermons are part of the evidence used to create an implied reader, but scholars vary in their interpretation of the evidence. This results in different implied readers (more or fewer slaves; proportion of men and women; elite vs non-elite for example), which in turn affects how we read and interpret the sermons. See the differing conclusions of: MacMullen, “The Preacher’s Audience (AD 350-400),” 503-11; Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*; Mayer, “Who Came to Hear John Chrysostom Preach?,” 73-87.
¹⁷² Strictly, anything and everything is potentially a text (hence Derrida’s aphorism that there is no outside-the-text: Jacques Derrida, “Biodegradables: Seven Diary Fragments,” *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 4 (1989): 873.). Therefore social and cultural, and ideological texture could theoretically count as intertexture. However, Robbins’ categories are useful in recognising different types of intertext.
it is necessary to try to understand the social and cultural context and the way that this interacts with the text. Here, insights from a variety of disciplines are sought, ranging from social anthropology (for example, consideration of honour-shame cultures) through to archaeology and geography (how did the physical environment interact with the text?).

Finally, ideological texture considers ‘the particular ways in which our speech and action, in their social and cultural location, relate to and interconnect with resources, structures and institutions of power.’\textsuperscript{173} What ideologies are present in the text, and what is the ideology of the text?

Within this framework, I am arguing for a richly textured approach to understanding Chrysostom’s use of πίστις. Interpreters have usually considered the inner structure, with a thin meaning attributed to πίστις of belief or trust. However, the other textural dimensions have been less well served. I shall now consider them.

In terms of intertexture, the main other text that is considered when interpreting Chrysostom’s homilies is the Bible. This is clearly right – Chrysostom is usually commenting on scripture, and clearly interacts with it in his preaching. However, when we move to social and cultural texture, we find that it has rarely been carefully considered. Yet if we turn to the world of Chrysostom, we find that πίστις was an important concept in a range of significant social and cultural relationships. If we wish to interpret Chrysostom better, this textural dimension clearly needs to be analysed. I have already given evidence in this chapter showing that three contexts in particular – the military, the economic and the household – are often linked explicitly or implicitly to Chrysostom’s use of πίστις.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{173} Robbins, \textit{The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse}, 36.

\textsuperscript{174} As a comparison, a recent study of faith in Gregory of Nyssa by Laird went beyond the scriptural to note the philosophical intertextual resonances at work (such as parallels with Plotinus, and going back to Plato). However, despite consideration of the role of faith in uniting the Bride to the Bridegroom, Laird never discusses the role that πίστις played in marriage within late antiquity, or its potential relevance in understanding its role in uniting husband and wife. Laird, \textit{Gregory of Nyssa and the Grasp of Faith}. 
This also links closely to the ideological texture. Chrysostom is preaching with a purpose, and therefore ideologies are key to appreciating what he is doing. These ideologies are embedded in the social and cultural world. Within the three contexts on which I am focusing, the military clearly embodies ideologies to do with hierarchy, obedience, and the power structure of the empire. The economic embodies ideologies of human value and financial power and the place of wealth. The household context embodies ideologies of the structuring of society, whether the appropriate relationship between husband and wife or father and son, or the justification and support of a slave society.

In considering Chrysostom’s preaching, these aspects therefore also become relevant. How is Chrysostom interacting with these ideologies? Is he reinforcing them, using them for another purpose, or seeking to transform them? What implicit ideologies does he hold himself? To miss these questions is to miss part of the meaning of the text.

Much reading of Chrysostom stays within the bounds of inner texture or intertexture, but is often limited to scripture as a textual partner. I would argue that perhaps this is because of our own context, another element that Robbins notes is key in interpretation.\textsuperscript{175} I live in a context where faith is often equated with cognitive belief. Additionally, faith is often seen as an individual matter (perhaps a result of the Reformation) rather than a community matter. The result is that it becomes harder to appreciate a context in which relationship is important to faith’s meaning and faith is seen as a communal matter that can shape society. This can lead to a thin reading of Chrysostom.

My analysis in the coming chapters can therefore be seen as offering a thicker description, or a richer tapestry, of the meaning inherent in Chrysostom’s use of πίστις. Chrysostom’s preaching as a text is multi-textured, but most analysis concentrates on the inner texture or on some intertextuality, often limited to the Bible. In the chapters ahead, I shall show how the social and cultural texture reveals new aspects to the meaning of Chrysostom’s preaching. I shall also show how this enables us to appreciate more clearly the ideological texture of his preaching; how

\textsuperscript{175} Robbins, \textit{The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse}, 24-27.
he uses socio-cultural interactions to support, use and transform the ideological structures of his world. I shall not formally use Robbins’ categorisations at each turn. However, my argument may be considered a creative synthesis of the social, cultural and ideological textures of Chrysostom’s preaching.

**Laying the foundations: conclusion**

In this chapter, I have established some foundations that future chapters build on. In particular, I have shown that πίστις, with a broad range of meanings in the ancient world, encompassed within this semantic range the sense of faithfulness, obedience, loyalty and trust, as well as cognitive belief. In approaching Chrysostom’s preaching, these meanings should not be isolated hermetically from one another, but rather we should expect a rich tapestry of meaning, with multiple evocations possible and with the meaning potentially slipping and sliding from one metaphorical context to another. It is important to study πίστις within Chrysostom’s preaching as it regularly occurs throughout his corpus. When it does occur, frequently military, economic or household contexts are evoked, encouraging us to consider πίστις not just as a cognitive state of mind, but as a word that belongs within a reciprocal relationship such as general and soldier, lender and borrower, or master and slave. This enables us to notice how Chrysostom uses πίστις to use, strengthen or transform existing ideologies in his preaching. In his use of military, economic and household contexts as a rich basis for metaphors, Chrysostom stands firmly within an existing and long-standing tradition.

Having laid the foundations, we can now proceed to consider in more detail how Chrysostom uses in his preaching on πίστις the military, economic and household contexts, and how a focus on these contexts can illuminate his preaching in a way that a focus solely on cognitive belief fails to do so.
3. The Military Context

The terrified barbarian chiefs who had kept to the terms of the treaty gathered together hastily, deeply ashamed of that one’s transgressions, and swearing oaths upon oaths. Julian ascended a tall stand in the middle of the barbarian country, and gazing over those chiefs lined up in subjection, standing with the crowds, he both reminded them and threatened them. Then he left.  

Introduction

It is 361. Julian, recently proclaimed Augustus by his army in Gaul, is heading for a showdown with Constantius, the emperor (it will be averted by Constantius’ death). To weaken Julian, Constantius encourages the barbarian chief Vadomarius to invade Roman territory, breaking oaths of loyalty. Julian deals decisively with the threat, punishing those involved and exiling Vadomarius to Spain. This is the context for the above scenario. The remaining chiefs gather together with their tribes to proclaim their loyalty to Julian.

The incident is a small one amongst many others related by ancient historians and orators. But it is also typical. Concerns over who can be trusted, who demonstrates their loyalty, who is obedient and who betrays others run through the accounts of the lives of emperors. The issue is acute when armies are involved. In the military-dominated world of late antiquity, the virtue of loyalty takes on special resonance.

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176 Libanius, Orationes 18.108.
177 This brief reconstruction is based upon Libanius, Orationes 18.108 and Ammianus Marcellinus, Historiae 21.3-4.
In such a world, metaphors based on the military also reverberate powerfully. Chrysostom shows no hesitation in their use. His homilies are scattered with references to the army, used to give vivid illustrations and to drive points home to his congregation.

In this chapter I argue that Chrysostom uses the power of these metaphors in the context of πίστις. In particular, I argue that the πίστις required of a Christian is presented both implicitly and explicitly as encompassing military-like loyalty and obedience. Through this Chrysostom aims to reinforce the congregation’s faithfulness to God, but also reinforces by association faithfulness, loyalty and obedience to the bishop and church (with questioning or going to other ‘heretical’ churches seen as desertion). Additionally, this metaphor reinforces the status quo, where the emperor could expect and command loyalty and obedience from his subjects as God could from Christians.

To demonstrate this, I first give an example of Chrysostom using military metaphors in connection with πίστις. Next, I show how the military context would have been familiar both to Chrysostom and his congregations, whether in Antioch or Constantinople, and also that obedience and loyalty were considered vital within that military context. I then return to Chrysostom’s preaching, giving further examples of him using the metaphor of soldier for the Christian in relation to πίστις. I use these examples to demonstrate the ways in which Chrysostom tried to change his congregations’ behaviour.

**The Christian as soldier**

Chrysostom’s baptismal homilies to catechumens offer us the opportunity to see him instructing his hearers in the basics of Christianity in both doctrine and behaviour. These show how his congregations may have already been primed through such teaching naturally to associate the meaning of πίστις with a military context.\(^{178}\) It is striking that right at the outset Chrysostom compares baptism to enlisting in the military:

\(^{178}\) The congregation would also include those neither baptised nor preparing for baptism.
This is a time for joy and gladness of the spirit. Behold, the days of our longing and love, the days of your spiritual marriage, are close at hand. To call what takes place today a marriage would be no blunder; not only could we call it a marriage but even a marvellous and most unusual kind of military enlistment [στρατολογίαν]. Nor does any contradiction exist between marriage and military service. That no one may think there does, let him listen to the blessed Paul, the universal teacher, who has used both these similes [παραδείγμασι]. In one place he said: I betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ. In another text he spoke as one arming soldiers [στρατιώταις] about to go forth into battle and said: Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <Did you see how St. Paul uses both similies [sic] in the same context?>

The relationship between πίστις and marriage will be dealt with in a later chapter. At the beginning of the catechumens’ journey to baptism, therefore, one of the two patterns (παραδείγμασι) presented to guide them is that of military service. Whilst Chrysostom proceeds to expound on marriage at first, Chrysostom refers back to the military metaphor:

...now it is opportune for us to proclaim them to those who have yearned for the yoke of Christ, and who have run to this spiritual enlistment [τὴν πνευματικὴν ταύτης στρατολογίαν]...

In particular, in introducing the central doctrines (which Chrysostom refers to as ἡ πίστις), he again reminds them that they are soldiers:

Faith [ἡ πίστις], then, is the foundation of piety. Let me speak to you briefly of this faith, so that we may lay an indestructible foundation. Then we may build the whole building with safety. It is fitting, therefore, that those who have enlisted in this special army of the spirit [τοῦτο τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀπογραψαμένος] believe in [πιστεύειν] the God of the universe, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Here Chrysostom places πίστις squarely within a military context through the language of enlisting (suggesting that we could translate πιστεύειν as ‘trust in’ or ‘be faithful to’). Given the theme of enlistment, Harkins finds a link with the military oath, arguing that, ‘the profession of faith which immediately follows the “registration” might have been associated in Chrysostom’s mind with the military oath’.  

This theme of enlistment is repeated at the beginning of the second instruction:

Again, let me address a few words to those who have enlisted in Christ’s special army [τοῖς εἰς τὸ ἰδίον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπογραψαμένοις]; let me show them the power of the weapons [τῶν ὀπλῶν] they are about to receive...

This is a theme that reappears in his instructions. In a separate series of talks to catechumens, Chrysostom makes a similar point:

In the case of recruits for an army of this world, those whose task it is to induct them into the army look for bodily size and health. Not only must the future soldier [τὸν μέλλοντα στρατεύεσθαι] have these qualities, but he must also be a free man. If he be a slave, he is rejected. But the King of heaven looks for no such thing.

Therefore some of the congregation will have been prepared through their catechumenate to think of themselves as having enlisted at baptism into the army of Christ, with their understanding of πίστις informed by this. This association is

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182 Harkins, *Baptismal Instructions*, 214. Harkins is commenting on both this passage and also on John Chrysostom, *Catech. Illum.* 2.1 (*PG 50:133*).

183 John Chrysostom, *Catech. Illum.* 2.1 (*SC 50:133*). Translation by Harkins, *Baptismal Instructions*, 43. Wenger plumps here for the sense of those who have registered themselves as the property of Christ. See also note 3: ‘Chrysostome emploie le terme τὸ ἰδίον comme synonyme de propriété...’. But, as Harkins argues, the military sense seems inescapable given the immediate reference to weapons, and Chrysostom’s previous usage. Harkins, *Baptismal Instructions*, 214.


185 Chrysostom does not make an explicit comparison with the military oath. However, one of his key concerns in his instructions is to transform the way of life of his catechumens. A particular concern of his is the common practice of swearing oaths. Chrysostom interprets scripture as forbidding completely this practice, and regularly targets it both in instructing catechumens, and his usual congregations.
strengthened by considering the actual words that the candidates would say during the baptismal service:

Did you see what the terms of the agreement are? After the renunciation of the wicked one and of all things which are important to him, the priest again has you say: “And I put myself under your command, O Christ.” [Καὶ συντάσσομαι σοι, Χριστέ]186

The particular word used in the liturgy here – συντάσσομαι – has strong military overtones.187 In a separate instruction, the military overtones are raised by Chrysostom himself:

Although you were all quivering with fear, did you rebel against your master? Do you look with scorn upon his cruelty? Who has brought you to such madness? Whence came this boldness of yours? “I have a weapon [Ὅπλον ἔχω],” you say, “a strong weapon.” What weapon, what ally [ποίον ὁπλόν, ποίαν συμμαχίαν]? Tell me! “I put myself under your command, O Christ [Συντάσσομαι σοι, Χριστέ],” you reply.188

Therefore within both the catechumenate, and also within the baptism liturgy itself, the catechumens would be encouraged to consider baptism as enlisting in God’s army, with the consequence that πίστις would be associated with this military context.

This example shows us how closely linked military metaphors and the Christian’s relationship with God could be in Chrysostom’s preaching. I shall demonstrate how such metaphors would be drawing from the everyday experiences of both Chrysostom and his congregations in both Antioch and Constantinople.


187 The meanings of τάσσω include: to draw up in order of battle; to command; to enrol; to serve among the infantry; to appoint to any service (particularly military). See “τάσσω”, LSJ.

The familiarity of the military context

As Chrysostom preached in both Antioch and Constantinople, I shall deal with each in turn, looking at evidence from official positions, events and homilies to show how familiar metaphors based on armies and the military would be.

Antioch

There is a variety of evidence available for considering the role of the military in Antioch. I bring in evidence first from the administration of the city, then the presence of military personnel, followed by two key events in Antioch’s history. I also bring in evidence from Chrysostom’s own homilies.

In the late antique period, Antioch was nominally run by a city council of local oligarchs, the βουλή or curia.189 In practice, however, real power was concentrated in the hands of the two governors: the comes orientis (the senior of the two) and the consularis Syriae. Although theoretically both were part of the civil administration rather than military, Liebeschuetz points out evidence that at least two of those who were comes orientis in Antioch carried out military operations, which suggests some military force was available. This is supported by the role played by the comes after the infamous riot of the statues, who brought in the military units to punish offenders.190 Thus at least one of the governors present in the city could be said to have a quasi-military role.

In addition to the two governors, there was also a general stationed in Antioch, who was probably the magister militum per orientem.191 Liebeschuetz points out that although Libanius exchanged letters with a number of such generals, they appear not to have been prominent in city politics or events. He goes on to explain that

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189 The whole issue of authority within Antioch in this period is covered in detail in J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 101-18. Much of this section is dependent upon his work.

190 Liebeschuetz, Antioch, 110-11. See below for a fuller discussion of this event.

191 Liebeschuetz, Antioch, 115-6.
'there were not many soldiers stationed near Antioch', with the bulk lying further east on the edge of Syria.

All this would suggest a limited awareness of the military. However, particular events may have radically increased that awareness, leading to a sensitivity to the military that would last throughout the period of Chrysostom’s preaching.

The first such event took place when Chrysostom was a young boy. Antioch was used as a military base during the Persian wars (as it had been previously under Constantius II), with the emperor Julian taking up residence and then leading his campaigns into Persia from Antioch in 362-363. Soldiers flooded the city, making their impression through an excess of drinking and gluttony (feasting on the sacrifices ordered by Julian). The period would have been memorable, with Julian’s unhappy stay and the destruction by fire of the temple of Apollo at Daphne.

However, the second event is likely to have had a more immediate impact for Chrysostom’s congregation: the riot of the statues. In 387, a new tax was announced in the city’s courthouse. The councillors pleaded, to no avail, that the burden was too much. The news spread, and a mob formed. Incited perhaps by a theatrical claque, the mob turned violent, and ended up defacing images of the emperor and his family set up in public. It is unclear whether the images were portraits, sculptures or both; but it was a grave insult to the emperor Theodosius. The riot was quelled rapidly by a company of archers, and soon after the comes brought military personnel into the city. The following weeks were tense, with many fleeing from the city. The emperor could choose to destroy the city. Ultimately, Theodosius showed clemency. However, it appears that a consequence of this disturbance is that soldiers (ἐγκαθήμενος λόχος) were stationed permanently

192 Liebeschuetz, Antioch, 116.
193 Ammianus Marcellinus, Hist. 22.12.6. He picks out two legions in particular as disgracing themselves – the Petulantes and the Celtic.
within the city walls. As the riot happened only a year after Chrysostom had first been ordained priest, he usually preached to a congregation used to having soldiers amongst them on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{195}

Based on these two incidents and their aftermath alone, it therefore seems probable that the imagery of a soldier would have been immediately relevant and familiar to an Antiochene congregation. However, there are also indications that soldiers attended Chrysostom’s congregations. In chapter one I outlined how recent scholarship suggests that (despite MacMullen’s arguments\textsuperscript{196}) Chrysostom’s congregations were diverse, with a wide cross-section of society. In particular, Mayer and Allen note how Chrysostom addresses not just the elite, but also slaves, artisans and (of particular relevance) soldiers.\textsuperscript{197} In one example, in an address to those preparing to be baptised, Chrysostom can assume that some will go after the service to military duties:

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\text{…let each one leave the church to take up his daily tasks, one hastening to work with his hands, another hurrying to his military post [ὁ δὲ εἰς τὸν τῆς στρατείας κατάλογου σπευδέτω], and still another to his post in the government.}\textsuperscript{198}
\]

Maxwell, in addressing the diversity of Chrysostom’s audiences in Antioch, notes a list of sins specific to each occupation that Chrysostom discusses (including

\textsuperscript{195} Liebeschuetz notes from Libanius’ orations the issues that then arose: soldiers refusing to pay for food or drink, and extorting money.

\textsuperscript{196} MacMullen, “The Preacher’s Audience (AD 350-400),” 510.


workmen, artisans and land-owners). The first occupation that Chrysostom attacks is that of soldier, showing the presence of the military in that congregation.\(^{199}\)

Thus there is evidence from Chrysostom’s homilies that soldiers themselves were likely to be present in congregations in Antioch.

In Antioch, therefore, military imagery would have immediate reference points for the congregation. The military commander for the East was based in the city; the *comes* had some degree of military power at his disposal; the city’s use as a base for Julian’s Persian campaign would still have been present in the memories of many; there were now, as a result of the riot of the statues, soldiers garrisoned in the city, and soldiers were present within the congregation itself.

**Constantinople**

As the imperial capital, Constantinople naturally had a strong military presence and connections. In particular, links between the imperial family and the military were strong, with marriages between the Theodosian dynasty and generals or their relatives common.\(^{200}\) The imperial guard were a constant presence in the city, and on occasion even accompanying the emperor into church (without weapons).\(^{201}\) It is also likely that, as in Antioch, soldiers were regular members of the congregation to whom Chrysostom preached. These factors by themselves would ensure that military imagery would be familiar to all.

Additionally, the dramatic events in Constantinople while Chrysostom was bishop (from 398 until his exile in 404) would also ensure that military imagery was related

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\(^{199}\) Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, 72-76; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt. 61.2 (PG 58:590)*. He goes on to make it clear that the military occupation itself is not at fault, pointing out that Cornelius was a centurion.

\(^{200}\) For example the empress Eudoxia, the wife of the emperor Arcadius, was the sister of Arbogast and brought up in the household of a son of the general Promotus. There are other examples. See J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24.

to current events and crises. What was theoretically the eastern empire’s own army led by the Goth Gainas marched to Constantinople in 400; Gainas started making demands of the emperor Arcadius and the government. Part of the army was now garrisoned in the city itself. Chrysostom was himself involved in negotiations between the imperial government and Gainas’ army. However, fighting broke out while Gainas was outside the city walls, and 7,000 of the Gothic army and retinue were massacred. As Liebeschuetz states, ‘there was now, at last, and probably for the first time, open war between the East Roman government and its German field army’. Gainas ended up retreating through Thrace, looking for food for his troops, and was finally defeated and killed the following year.

The occupation, massacre, and subsequent time of uncertainty (many feared Gainas would return to attack the city) would have been fresh in the minds of the populace of Constantinople for many years afterwards – certainly throughout the brief years that Chrysostom was the undisputed bishop.

**Chrysostom’s links to the military**

That Chrysostom had a part to play in the Gainas affair has already been alluded to. It is worth sketching out some other military links, to show Chrysostom’s familiarity with the military and in dealing with soldiers (at least those of high rank).

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202 There is also the famous account of Chrysostom standing firm against Gainas’ request for a church (‘Arian’) for his army in Constantinople. Chrysostom refused, and according to the accounts we now have, Gainas went away with his tail between his legs. Kelly speculates that this loss of face may have been a significant factor in Gainas’ decision to withdraw his troops from the capital; the withdrawal sparked the massacre. See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 145-62. The confrontation is told in most detail by Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.32.2-8.

203 Reports vary as to how, but there are indications that Arcadius himself gave the orders to kill a large number sheltering in the church of the Goths.

204 Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 118.
The first connection begins with his birth; his father was a senior civil servant within the office of the *magister militum per Orientem*. Whilst his father died soon after Chrysostom was born, it raises the possibility that his family (his mother, his elder sister and his aunt whose Latin name suggests she was his father’s sister) may have retained links with those in the headquarters of the foremost military men in the eastern empire.

Once Chrysostom was preaching in Antioch, it seems likely that Chrysostom moved in elite circles, as he was to do so in Constantinople:

> ...we see him rapidly becoming immersed in a system of patronage in which select élite men and women favorable to his activities play key roles...\(^{206}\)

Mayer argues that ‘we ought to suppose that he was already familiar with the kinds of circles in which he found himself in Constantinople’.\(^{207}\) She develops this point by examining various kinds of circumstantial evidence that show or imply links to the Antiochene male and female aristocracy and clergy; links that continued once he moved to Constantinople and after that to exile.

Libanius similarly moved in exalted circles in Antioch. Whilst Liebeschuetz can state that, ‘Libanius’ circle was almost entirely civilian. We therefore hear little about soldiers or veterans’,\(^{208}\) it is also clear that he knew a number of the generals who were stationed in Antioch as the *magister militum*, as is evidenced by the letters he wrote to them.\(^{209}\) If the generals felt obliged to show their respect for culture and rhetoric by making the acquaintance of the famous Libanius, they may well have felt a similar obligation or curiosity in making the acquaintance of one of the city’s other famous rhetors, Chrysostom. We are again left with the possibility that Chrysostom was himself in at least occasional touch with high ranking generals.

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\(^{205}\) Older accounts take Palladius to mean that his father was the *magister militum* himself. This view was corrected by A. H. M. Jones, “St. John Chrysostom’s Parentage and Education,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 46, no. 3 (1953): 171.

\(^{206}\) Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch,” 62.

\(^{207}\) Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch,” 63.

\(^{208}\) Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 41.

Once we move to Constantinople, we are on much firmer ground. Chrysostom played a key role in the Gainas crisis, acting as a negotiator for the imperial palace with Gainas. Kelly argues that this began with negotiations for hostages that Gainas had taken; Chrysostom travelled over the water to Chalcedon to plead for the former consul Aurelian, the general Saturninus, and the count John.\textsuperscript{210} His role continued throughout;\textsuperscript{211} when Gainas and his army had left Constantinople and were in Thrace, Chrysostom was amongst the party sent to negotiate.\textsuperscript{212} Chrysostom clearly had close links to the highest levels of society, and was trusted to act diplomatically in dealing with a rebellious general and his troops.

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that definitely in Constantinople, and probably in Antioch, Chrysostom was personally acquainted with military officers of the highest rank.

**Summary**

To sum up: most citizens of Antioch and Constantinople (in the period that Chrysostom was preaching in each city) would have close exposure to the military. This would sometimes have been in dramatic events, such as having an army encamped in the city, or involved in some way in mob violence (whether controlling the riots or encouraging a massacre of other soldiers). But it would also have been through the everyday presence of soldiers in the city: in Antioch having troops garrisoned in the city; in Constantinople the ever-present imperial guard. Chrysostom in particular is likely to have had additional contacts with high-ranking military officials; this is certainly the case for his time in Constantinople, but seems plausible for his time in Antioch as well. Therefore, whenever Chrysostom reached for a military metaphor, he was using one with vivid and fresh connotations in both

\textsuperscript{210} Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 152-54. Note that Liebeschuetz has a different interpretation of the sources, but still showing a basic involvement with the crisis. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 110.

\textsuperscript{211} See above for Chrysostom standing his ground against the request of Gainas to be allowed an ‘Arian’ church for worship within the city walls.

his and his congregations’ minds. These connotations would include the importance of faith, loyalty and obedience, as I now demonstrate.

**Loyalty and obedience in the Roman army**

It is as true today as ever that any army depends upon the discipline of loyalty and obedience. The Roman army was equally aware of its importance; perhaps more so, because of the role that legions had played over the centuries in making and breaking emperors. Generals in particular therefore were keen to ensure the loyalty of their troops. By the time of Chrysostom another factor that made loyalty a key factor was the changing make-up of the army. Increasingly, the army was composed of Germanic tribes, whose members could reach the highest levels of the military. Simultaneously, the supply of regular troops was diminishing, whilst the use of federate troops (allied or auxiliary troops) was increasing. An emperor could not rely complacently on the loyalty of troops or generals to Rome and the empire. The changing status of Gainas, sometimes fighting for the empire, sometimes fighting the empire, illustrates the reasons.

The empire and the army had developed, therefore, a number of symbols and rituals to strengthen the loyalty and obedience of troops to their generals, and to the emperor. In this next section, I highlight some of these, to demonstrate how these concepts were given both high prominence and so intimately tied up with notions of the military. In particular, I examine the oath of allegiance, the Legion standard, finger rings given by Constantine to generals, and accounts from the fourth century indicating the priority that was given to loyalty.

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213 The latest act governing the armed forces of the United Kingdom begins the section marked ‘Discipline’ with the following headings: assisting an enemy (ie disloyalty); mutiny (disobedience and disloyalty); desertion (disloyalty); and then insubordination (disobedience). *Armed Forces Act.*

214 Stilicho was a Vandal; Alaric and Gainas Goths.
The oath of allegiance

Swearing a formal oath of allegiance is common among many armies. The Roman army also saw the value in such an oath (sacramentum). Gibbon mentions it as a factor in the relative peace from the time of Augustus to Commodus, commenting:

The legions respected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.

Closer to our period, Vegetius gives a clear account of the oath and its importance:

The military mark, which is indelible, is first imprinted on the hands of the new levies, and as their names are inserted in the roll of the legions they take the usual oath, called the military oath. They swear by God, by Christ and by the Holy Ghost; and by the Majesty of the Emperor who, after God, should be the chief object of the love and veneration of mankind. For when he has once received the title of August, his subjects are bound to pay him the most sincere devotion and homage [fidelis], as the representative of God on earth. And every man, whether in a private or military station, serves God in serving him faithfully who reigns by His authority. The soldiers, therefore, swear they will obey the Emperor willingly and implicitly in all his commands, that they will never desert and will always be ready to sacrifice their lives for the Roman Empire.


216 This Latin word for oath, which also came to be the term for sacraments, later inspired Zwingli to combine the two senses in his sacramental theology. In his approach, a sacrament becomes the believer’s pledge of loyalty and obedience. For a brief overview, see Alister E. McGrath, Reformation Thought: An Introduction (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 123.


218 Vegetius, De Re Militari 2.5. Translation from N. P. Milner, Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science, trans. N. P. Milner, 2nd rev. ed., Translated Texts for Historians vol. 16 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 34-35. There is debate over where and when Vegetius wrote. Some argue for a date around 430 in Constantinople. However, Barnes argues convincingly for an earlier date in the 380s, probably in the western empire. For further details see Timothy D. Barnes, “The Date of Vegetius,”
Two particular points are worth highlighting. First, and most obviously, the account of the oath shows the priority placed upon loyalty and fidelity to the emperor, even to the point of sacrificing one’s live. But secondly, a clear parallel is made between serving God and serving the emperor as a soldier; indeed the two are equated. Faithful service is shown by obedience to emperor, which is a form of obedience to God. The pattern that Chrysostom uses in his metaphors is here made explicit.

The oath was crucial in tying together the disparate ethnic groups and identities, as well as the differing type of troops, that made up the late Roman army. Coming from different backgrounds and contexts, they were united in their loyalty to the Roman Empire and the emperor, and tied in legally, as Stefan Esders argues:

For this purpose [the right to settle], Roman citizenship was unable to provide the legal basis – that was exactly what they lacked – but it was their military oath by which they had sworn allegiance to the Roman emperor. They pledged this oath to recognise the majesty of the Roman people and their emperor, and it tied them into the institutional and legal context of the late Roman army.\(^{219}\)

Other evidence confirms that the oath was a well-known feature of the army:

It was certainly recited upon enlistment, on the third of every January, and on the anniversary of the emperor’s accession to power.\(^ {220}\)

\(^{219}\) Stefan Esders, “Treueidleistung Und Rechtsveränderung Im Früheren Mittelalter,” in Rechtsveränderung Im Politischen Und Sozialen Kontext Mittelalterlicher Rechtsvielfalt, ed. Stefan Esders and Christine Reinle, Neue Aspekte Der Europäischen Mittelalterforschung (Münster: LIT, 2005), 30-31. My translation. See also (ibid.) the example he gives of a fifth century gravestone, inscribed ‘Francus ego cives, Romanus miles in armis...’ CIL III 1 3576.

\(^{220}\) Helgeland, “Roman Army Religion,” 1479. The information comes from the military religious calendar, the Feriale Duratum found in the 1930s. See also Sara Elise Phang, Roman Military Service: Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 117-20. The oath was enough well known to be singled out by Tertullian for criticism, as he saw it impossible to swear loyalty to the emperor and to God: Tertullian, De Idololatria 19.
That oaths were used in practice is shown by the account of Ammianus Marcellinus of Julian and his troops. The setting is Julian declaring his position openly against his rival Constantius, and deciding to march his army swiftly into position. Before he does, he needs to ensure that his troops will stay loyal to him in the ensuing civil conflict. His solution: to get his soldiers to swear an oath to him:

And when all had been bidden to take the usual oath of allegiance, aiming their swords at their throats, they swore in set terms under pain of dire execrations, that they would endure all hazards for him, to the extent of pouring out their life-blood, if necessity required; their officers and all the emperor's closest advisers followed their example, and pledged loyalty [fidem] with like ceremony. Alone among all the prefect Nebridius, with a loyalty that was firm rather than prudent, opposed him, declaring that he could by no means be bound by an oath against Constantius, to whom he was indebted for many and repeated acts of kindness. Upon hearing this the soldiers who were standing near, inflamed with anger, rushed upon him to slay him; but the emperor, at whose knees he had fallen, covered him with his general's cloak.\footnote{Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Hist.} 21.5.9-12. Translation from J. C. Rolfe, \textit{Ammianus Marcellinus: With an English Translation}, 3 vols., vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library vol. 315 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940).}

Again there are a number of points that are worth closer examination. Vegetius tells us what should happen; Ammianus’ account indicates that the oath was important and did take place. Additionally, we can also see the power of an oath in practice; Nebridius won't take the oath to Julian (even though his refusal almost results in his death) because he is loyal to Constantius. And here again the link between loyalty as a meaning for ‘faith’ is found: \textit{fides} (the close Latin equivalent to \textit{píστις}) here is used in the sense of loyalty to Julian.\footnote{As argued in chapter two.} Julian recognises and honours Nebridius' loyalty to Constantius and protects him (and subsequently lets Nebridius return in safety to his Tuscan villa). Thus the incident serves as an example of the high status given to loyalty in the Roman army, and how this is linked semantically to \textit{píστις}.\footnote{A further example of the ritualisation of loyalty and its importance militarily can be demonstrated in the counterpart to the military oath; the discharge from military service. From the time of Claudius the soldier had to return to Rome for the diploma of discharge. ‘The building where this took place was the temple of Fides,
The imperial standard

If an oath of allegiance is a ceremonial and ritual symbol of loyalty and faithfulness, armies ensure that there are also physical symbols permanently with troops to inspire and remind them of where their allegiance should lie. In the modern British army, there are colours or standards for each regiment. These are consecrated (which again underlies their perceived importance) and never deliberately destroyed unless to prevent capture by the enemy. The Roman army had a similar system, with the imperial standard (the eagle) accompanying each legion, carried by the aquilifer.

The importance of the standard can be seen in a battle incident related, according to Eusebius, by Constantine:

> For he said that once, in the middle of an encounter, all of a sudden the noise and confusion took hold of the army, which led the one shouldering the standard [τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν ὄμων φέροντα τὸ σημείον] to be in an agony of cowardice. Therefore he handed it over to another, as he wished to flee from the battle. But as soon as the other one had taken up the burden, and he had stepped down from the guardianship of the standard [τῆς τοῦ σημείου φυλακῆς], an arrow struck him, piercing his stomach and taking his life. He, having paid the penalty for cowardice and disloyalty [δειλίας καὶ ἀπιστίας], lay there dead. But the one who raised up the trophy of salvation [τὸ σωτήριον τρόπαιον] found it to be the safeguarding of his life. For though many arrows were fired at him, the bearer was preserved from danger, the staff of the trophy [τὸ δὲ τοῦ τροπαίου δόρυ] taking everything that was fired.

which personified the army’s loyalty to Rome.’ Helgeland, “Roman Army Religion,” 1501-02. For another example where fides clearly means loyalty in this context, and is compared directly with loyalty to Christ or God, see also Cyprian, Epistula 74.3-9.1. I am grateful to Stefan Esders for this and other useful references.

224 Colours which are too old to be used are ceremonially laid up in places of worship.

225 These too were seen as sacred, and never to be destroyed. Helgeland gives some examples of the lengths that would be gone to in order to retrieve a standard that had been lost in battle. Once recovered, it would be laid up in the temple of Mars. See Helgeland, “Roman Army Religion,” 1475-76.

226 Eusebius, Vita Constantini 2.9.
Here, the standard referred to would be one with rich symbolism, made up of a long spear covered in gold, with a cross at the top, and above the cross a wreath with ΧΡ in its centre. Beneath the cross was a portrait of Constantine and his family, and beneath this was a richly embroidered cloth. The standard here therefore has double symbolism: it stands both for the emperor and also for the Christian God. The standard bearer deserts his post, and is condemned by his cowardice and disloyalty [δειλίας καὶ ἀπιστίας]. Here, the antonym of πίστις is being used for a lack of fidelity and loyalty, both to the emperor and also, in this case, to God. That Eusebius thinks the story worth recounting shows both the miraculous nature of this Christian standard (protecting the standard-bearer) but also serves as a warning of a lack of faith(fulness) both to emperor and to God.

The army therefore had both ritual and physical symbols of loyalty and faithfulness to the emperor. These symbols were highly regarded and universal in the army. They can be seen as reliable indicators of the importance of loyalty.

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227 See the description in Eusebius, Vit. Const. 1.29-31.
The ring of Constantine

Figure 1. A gold finger ring with the inscription FIDEM CONSTANTINO. Item AN00122785. Courtesy of the British Museum.

In addition to the universal symbols of the oath and the standard, archaeological finds have unearthed more personal symbols of loyalty. At various locations in western Europe, gold finger rings have been found with the inscription FIDEM CONSTANTINO: ‘loyal/faithful to Constantine’ (Figure 1).\textsuperscript{228} Other fibulae have inscriptions that link them to Licinius, Maximian, and Diocletian. Johansen speculates that:

A reason for this may be the overriding need to ensure the loyalty of the troops in the divided empire; indeed, most of these items were

\textsuperscript{228} Twenty have been found so far. Some have the alternative inscription FIDES CONSTANTI. For more details see Ida Malte Johansen, “Rings, Fibulae and Buckles with Imperial Portraits and Descriptions,” \textit{Journal of Roman Archaeology} 7 (1994): 223-42.
probably intended as special rewards to soldiers and higher-ranking officers.\textsuperscript{229}

The more personal nature of these gifts indicate how highly the emperors valued loyalty in their generals and soldiers.

\textbf{Πίστις as loyalty in the army}

The oath, the finger ring and the standard all demonstrate the importance of loyalty in the army. With military sources being predominantly Latin, often the evidence has revolved around \textit{fides} and its equivalence to πίστις. Additionally, there are examples showing πίστις used to mean loyalty. This can be seen in Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century BC how Perdiccas commended the loyalty of one of his generals to others:

he ordered them to obey Eumenes in all things because of his skill as general and his firm loyalty [διὰ τὴν τῆς πίστεως βεβαιότητα].\textsuperscript{230}

Another example comes from Plutarch in the first century, writing of how the tribune Antonius Honoratus roused troops to maintain loyalty to Galba rather than Nymphidius. Plutarch relates at the end of the speech:

These things being said by the tribune, all the soldiers sided with him, and going to others were urging them to remain loyal to the emperor [τῇ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα πίστει].\textsuperscript{231}

Thus πίστις was understood as loyalty when placed within a military context. This is also illustrated by the following tale regarding Constantius (Constantine’s father) which combines loyalty to God with loyalty to emperor.

\textbf{The story of Constantius}

Eusebius recounts an event whereby Constantius tests the loyalty of his highest serving officials. If they wish to remain in office, he orders them to sacrifice to demons, or lose their position. Some choose to sacrifice; others refuse. It as at this point that Constantius reveals that it was a test:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{229} Johansen, “Rings, Fibulae and Buckles,” 229.
\item\textsuperscript{230} Diodorus Siculus, \textit{Biblitheca Historica} 18.29.2.
\item\textsuperscript{231} Plutarch, \textit{Galba} 14.3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Well then, the marvellous one uncovered the hidden ploy. Then he passed judgment on those who were cowardly and self-seeking, but those who followed their conscience [συνειδήσεως] before God he received most favourably.  

Constantius goes on to explain his reasoning:

Then he declared that those who had been a traitor to God were not worthy of a king. For how should those who were caught out being heartless regarding the higher power keep loyal [πίστιν φυλάξαι] to the emperor?

It is those who sacrificed who end up being expelled from the imperial household, and those who were ‘worthy of God’ he decrees as also being worthy of high positions in the empire.

The veracity of the incident is, in some respects, immaterial. That Eusebius chooses to include it shows that the episode would resonate with his readers. Again, the episode highlights the high value placed upon loyalty, in this case even when it conflicts with loyalty to the emperor. It also demonstrates again the close link that could be made between having faith in/being faithful to a god, and being faithful or loyal to an emperor. This link is made more explicit in the next exemplar, the funeral oration delivered by Ambrose on the death of Theodosius.

**Ambrose’s funeral oration for Theodosius**

The death of Theodosius in 395 left two sons in charge of the empire; Honorius, aged eleven at the time, and Arcadius, aged seventeen. This was a source of potential strife; would the army accept child-rulers? This issue is addressed by Ambrose in his funeral oration for Theodosius. Ambrose preaches:

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232 Eusebius, *Vit. Const. 1.16.*
233 Eusebius, *Vit. Const. 1.16.*
235 During this period it was the army who formally either gave their consent for emperors who had been proposed, or who elected emperors. Accession ceremonies were military in their setting. See Sabine G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, ed. Peter Brown, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage vol. 1
An emperor of such greatness, then, has withdrawn from us. But he has not wholly withdrawn; for he has left us his children, in whom we can both see and embrace him. Their age should not trouble us! The loyal support of his soldiers makes the emperor’s age fully grown \[fides militum imperatoris perfecta est aetas\]. For age is fully grown when strength is. This is reciprocal. For the faith (fides) of the emperor produces strength in his soldiers \[quia et fides imperatoris militum virtus est\]. You are calling to mind, no doubt, what victories the faith of Theodosius \[Theodosii fides\] gained for you.\(^{236}\)

Here, Ambrose plays rhetorically with fides, bringing together the loyalty of the soldiers to the emperor (to which ultimately Ambrose is appealing) with the religious faith of the emperor. Additionally, he links the faith of the emperor with the strength of the soldiers – militum virtus. MacCormack points out that

The latter reflects a much-repeated slogan on the coinage of this period – a pointer to Ambrose’s ability to understand and utilise contemporary politics to propagate the Christian empire.\(^{237}\)

The pattern continues through the oration. After an account of Theodosius’ faith displayed on the battlefield, with a cry to God having dismounted his horse, Ambrose can continue with another appeal to loyalty:

Thus the faith of Theodosius was your victory; let your faithfulness be the strength of his sons \[Theodosii ergo fides fuit vestra Victoria: vestra fides filiorum ejus forti
tudo sit\]. Thus does faith \[fides\] augment age. After all, Abraham, in seeking to beget a son in his old age, did not think about his time of life; and nor did Sara, in intending to give birth. And it is not to be wondered at that faith \[fides\] augments age, since it also makes the future present. For what is ‘faith’ \[fides\], other than assurance \(\text{substantia}\) of those things for which we hope? So the scriptures teach us. If, then faith \[fides\] is an assurance of things

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\(^{237}\) MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, 336-37. See also her insightful comments on this passage within the context of a funeral and consecration. MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, 145-50.
hoped for, how much more is it an assurance of things which are visible?²³⁸

Again we see the rhetorical interplay between loyalty to the young emperors and the Christian faith of Theodosius. Here, the soldiers’ loyalty will strengthen the young emperors, just as Abraham gained strength in his old age through his faith. Ambrose has directly compared the allegiance of the soldiers to Abraham’s faith. Ambrose continues by quoting from Hebrews 11:1, about faith being the assurance of things hoped for, and therefore all the more an assurance of things visible. This is no call for a cognitive belief in the divine; it is a plea for loyalty to the two young emperors visible before the army and trusting them both now and in the future, and thus strengthening them (the immediate context for introducing Hebrews 11:1). Liebeschuetz also points out that Ambrose implies:

The faith in ‘things which can be seen’, for which Ambrose calls, is confidence in the boy emperors, especially the 11-year old Honorius. This was indeed vital if the dangers of child-rule were to be avoided.²³⁹

Therefore, in this oration from Ambrose, we find mixed together, all under the concept of fides: military loyalty and fidelity to a general or emperor; trust or confidence in an emperor; trust in God; and the ‘faith’ of the emperor. The oration, delivered half-way through Chrysostom’s preaching period, is testament to how, in the late fourth century, the notion of ‘faith’ fitted easily with military loyalty, so that the two could be elided together for religious and political propaganda.

We also have firm grounds for believing that Chrysostom himself knew of this oration.²⁴⁰ This in itself would not be unlikely; after lying in state in Milan, the body


²⁴⁰ Ambrose’s reference to Theodosius dismounting in the heat of the battle and then crying out to God is echoed by John Chrysostom, who is the only ancient author to refer to the incident. However, whilst Ambrose recounts Theodosius crying out the ambiguous ‘Where is the God of Theodosius?’, Chrysostom has Theodosius offering a prayer, strongly suggesting that Chrysostom is dependent upon Ambrose. See John Chrysostom, Adversus Catharos (PG 63:491-92). See also MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, 336.
of Theodosius was taken to Constantinople for burial. It would not be surprising if a copy of the funeral oration also made its way eastwards, and for the archbishop to read what was said. We know then that Chrysostom was aware of the link made between military loyalty and faith by other preachers. However, the use by Ambrose suggests that the comparison was part of the common currency of ideas within this late antique period in both east and west, and that Chrysostom was already familiar with and using such a link in his own preaching.

**Summary**

When considering the Roman army of the fourth or early fifth century, we find that the concept of loyalty was deeply embedded. Loyalty and obedience to the emperor were enshrined ritually through the military oath of allegiance taken by all soldiers on enlisting (and again if necessary at times of crisis or potential realignments of loyalty). They were also enshrined physically through the presence of the imperial standard. The high value that emperors themselves placed upon loyalty is physically manifested in gold rings and fibulae given to high ranking soldiers. That these values were widely known and appreciated is demonstrated by tales of emperors highly valuing loyalty, even when it is directed towards their adversaries or means losing the emperor’s favour. Additionally, there are links made by contemporary writers and preachers between loyalty to the emperor by a soldier, and having a relationship of πίστις with God or with gods (and in at least one case we can be sure that Chrysostom was aware of such a sermon). All these factors indicate that, if Chrysostom makes a military metaphor based upon the relationship between a general or an emperor and a soldier, it needs to be understood and decoded taking into account the values of loyalty and obedience as being prime. It also indicates that these values need to be recognised as being present, implicitly where not explicitly, whenever such metaphors are used, and that πίστις also needs to be read with these references in mind.

We now return to Chrysostom, to give a brief demonstration that such military metaphors do exist throughout his preaching, and that they can be interpreted as equating faith in God, the Christian’s contribution to their salvation, with being
loyal, faithful and obedient to God, as a soldier is loyal and obedient to a general or emperor.

**Military metaphors and πίστις**

The earlier examples from Chrysostom came from baptismal homilies; I now turn to his homilies on Romans to show how noticing the link between πίστις and military connotations can add depth to our understanding of his preaching.

As an exemplar, I shall focus initially on Chrysostom’s homily on Romans 4:1–21.241 Within this homily, Chrysostom talks extensively both about πίστις and military metaphors.242 I shall point out how the two inform each other, thereby enabling Chrysostom to emphasise particular points to his congregation.

The first comes early in the homily. Chrysostom explains that Paul is contrasting faith by works, but does so saying ‘...and makes the battle of faith [τὴν μάχην τῇ πίστει] against works...’.243 Military language and πίστις have therefore been associated near the start.244

As Chrysostom continues, it might appear that he is defining πίστις as just belief, arguing that it is more praiseworthy than abstaining from stealing to trust (πιστεύειν) that God can do the impossible.245 However, this is placed firmly within the context of relationship; such trust is linked by Chrysostom with genuine love, a love that is reciprocated by God. Faith and love are inextricably bound together in this presentation.

As Chrysostom continues, he again brings in military imagery when discussing Romans 4:11, where Paul argues that Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of righteousness through faith. Chrysostom compares this directly with a soldier and his military tattoo:

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242 Within this homily alone there are 111 occurrences of πιστ~ related words.


244 Chrysostom has also already referred to being justified by faith as being a great victory (περιουσία νίκης πολλῆς). John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom. 8* (PG 60:454).

Not only is circumcision less than faith \([\text{τῆς πίστεως}]\), but even exceedingly inferior to it, as much as the sign is to the action which the sign points to, as much as the military tattoo is to the soldier \([\text{ἡ σφραγὶς τοῦ στρατιώτου}]\).\(^{246}\)

Chrysostom continues to link πίστις with military contexts further on, this time referencing Eph. 6:16 and the shield of faith while commenting on the battle against the devil that the Christian must wage.\(^{247}\) Therefore, at various intervals throughout the homily, Chrysostom uses military imagery in the context of πίστις, which is itself placed in the context of relationship as well as belief. Given the way that the congregation has been primed, this enables us to appreciate the extended metaphor with which Chrysostom finishes the homily. In an attempt to get his congregation to love each other, he compares the congregation to an army. First he turns to the military camps, arguing that the congregation act like they are on guard against each other, instead of at peace.\(^{248}\) He continues by asking how they expect others to join the church, if they can’t even treat their fellow members well, thus additionally showing an evangelistic concern. He then returns to the military metaphor:

But when I see us marshalled in battle order under one general \([\text{ὑπ’ ἑνὶ στρατηγῷ παραταττομένου}]\), yet still standing against each other, and biting and ripping apart each other’s limbs, some for money, others for glory, others simply jeering and scoffing, and causing untold injuries \([\text{μυρία τραύματα}]\) to each other, and the dead treated worse than those in war, and that only the bare name ‘brothers’ remains, I can’t compose any lament worthy of this tragedy.\(^{249}\)

So again Chrysostom gives his congregation the image of them being enrolled in the army under the command of Christ. This army is a disaster: the soldiers are fighting


each other. Chrysostom continues in this homily by arguing that the congregation ought to be united together in defence against the devil (διαβόλου), whom Chrysostom also describes as a military general (στρατηγῷ). The fight consists in putting up patiently with insults and wrongdoing, and praying for those who mistreat you. In so doing you are helping to remove the wounded (those who have mistreated you) from the battlefield. This all comes at the end of a homily saturated with the language of πίστις.

This extended example demonstrates the power of the military metaphor. The metaphor first of all defines the Christian’s actions. He or she needs to be prepared to fight spiritually against the world, the flesh and the devil (sometimes referred to as the general of the opposing forces). Secondly it defines appropriate weaponry including the shield of faith. Thirdly, it defines the relationship to other Christians: a united front is necessary; there is safety in numbers; and there ought to be peace, trust and openness to each other. Fourthly, it defines the relationship to Christ. Christ is the Christian’s general. The relationship therefore demands a response from the Christian suitable to a soldier: loyalty and obedience. Through these military metaphors, πίστις moves beyond evoking merely cognitive belief, or even trust, to include qualities such as allegiance and obedience. These associations encourage us to see them as present implicitly throughout the homily.

This homily is not an isolated incidence. Chrysostom freely makes use of military metaphors. Another example occurs when Chrysostom preaches on Romans 13:12, ‘Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light’ (NRSV). This leads Chrysostom to float two different metaphors before his congregation, mixing together (as in the baptismal homily) marriage and the military:

Yes, for the day is calling us to the front line [πρὸς παράταξιν] and to the fight [μάχην]. But don’t be afraid at hearing of the front line and weapons [παράταξιν καὶ ὀπλα]. ...What then, is there no need to fight? You do need to fight, but not to be distressed or labour. In fact, this isn’t war [πόλεμος], but a dance and a festival [χορεία καὶ πανήγυρις]. This is the nature of these weapons, this is the power of the general [τοιαύτη ἢ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ δύναμις]. And just as the bridegroom sets out from the bridal chamber with a happy face, so

also does the person fortified by these weapons. For he is simultaneously soldier and bridegroom [καὶ γὰρ στρατιώτης ὁμοῦ καὶ νυμφίος ἐστίν].

Chrysostom aims to encourage his congregation every day to fight spiritually, yet at the same time not to discourage them by making that seem too great a burden. So we see his solution: to emphasise both the battle and the resources. Our armour is that of the light, and God is our general, so although we need to fight, in fact we can also rejoice like a bridegroom. The metaphor as a soldier serves double duty; it encourages the Christian to fight, but it also serves to illustrate the Christian’s relationship with God. Thus the metaphor of soldier and general is strengthened.

Specific parts of the metaphor are used elsewhere in Chrysostom’s preaching on Romans. For example, Chrysostom repeats the metaphor of the devil as a military general. He also, in an unusual twist, repeats the metaphor of God as a general when commenting on Romans 1:24, ‘Therefore God gave them up...’. Here, Chrysostom explains the phrase by presenting God as a general who leaves his army to face the enemy without his assistance. We also find other military metaphors used from time to time. They are also a feature, not just of his homilies on Romans, but of his preaching in general.

As an example, consider his homily on 2 Corinthians. Chrysostom presents the example of Abraham before the congregation, expanding from his comments on 2 Cor. 1:22. He contrasts Abraham, prepared to sacrifice his beloved son, with any of the world’s kings and emperors. In celebrating Abraham’s victory, Chrysostom describes him as:

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254 See, for example John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom. 24* (PG 60:628), where he compares the listener to a soldier who must be able to handle his weapons with ease.
...the standard-bearer [τὸν τροπαιοῦχον], the courageous, the victor without a battle. For it is just as if some general [τὸς στρατηγὸς] who has the bravest soldier [ἀριστον ἔχων στρατιώτην] should use his mastery of weapons, his standing, his strength to terrify the enemy. God, likewise, by his [Abraham’s] mind, his character, his standing only that of a righteous man, terrified and routed our common enemy the devil.256

The whole episode portrays Abraham as God’s soldier, faithfully obeying his general. Chrysostom, at the end of the homily, then encourages his hearers to consider themselves also as soldiers of God, declaring that:

For the Spirit is placed upon the faithful [τοῖς πιστοῖς τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐπιτίθεται] just as a military tattoo is upon soldiers [στρατιώταις σφραγὶς]. And should you desert [λειποτακτήσῃς], it is clear to everyone.257

Here a clear link is made between receiving the Spirit, being faithful, and showing loyalty like a soldier, with the vocabulary of desertion for those who turn away. Thus in the one homily Chrysostom assumes that the relationship between Christian and God can be properly compared to a soldier and general, with the Christian described as πιστός.

This relationship can also be seen in a homily of Chrysostom’s on Philippians, commenting on Phil. 3:18 and those described as enemies of the cross. He remarks:

For the cross belongs to the soul who is lined up ready for battle [παρατεταγμένης], ready to die, not seeking relaxation.258

In a similar vein, he can describe the dead (Christian) husbands of widows as being soldiers in heaven, enlisted in a heavenly army (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς αὐτὸν στρατεύοι, εἰς ἐκείνην καταλέξαι τὴν στρατολογίαν).259 He can also berate his congregation for taking things easily when they should be ready for spiritual warfare, describing them as ‘spiritual soldiers’ (τῶν πνευματικῶν στρατιωτῶν).260 Or he can encourage

256 John Chrysostom, Hom. 2 Cor. 3 (PG 61:415).
257 John Chrysostom, Hom. 2 Cor. 3 (PG 61:418).
259 John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses 6 (PG 62:433).
260 John Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Thess. 3 (PG 62:411).
them in the same vein, urging them to be a brave soldier with battle armour ready, as the Christian is the 'soldier of Christ' (τοὺς τοῦ Χριστοῦ στρατιώτας)\(^{261}\), borrowing some of Paul’s imagery from Ephesians 6. The spiritual battle can range broadly; in another homily Chrysostom uses it of the struggle to control sexual impulses.\(^{262}\) He can also use it to emphasise the great responsibility upon a priest, who has command of part of the army, painting a picture of contemporary warfare including both navy and army, filling in the horrors of war, and then declaring that anyone raw and inexperienced would be inadequate to lead in such circumstances (thus justifying, at this early stage of his life, his refusal to be priested).\(^{263}\) And, unsurprisingly for Chrysostom, he can also use the metaphor to attack the theatres, seeing those who work there as enemies used by the devil ‘to weaken Christ’s soldiers’ (ἵνα τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐκλύσῃ τοῦ Χριστοῦ).\(^{264}\) Examples could be multiplied.

Chrysostom used military images, similes and metaphors throughout his preaching. As indicated in chapter two, in this Chrysostom belongs to a long tradition, going back to the military metaphors within the New Testament itself.\(^{265}\) This continues with Clement of Rome, who uses the metaphor to emphasise the importance of loyalty and obedience:

\[
\text{So let us serve as soldiers [στρατευομέθα], brothers, with all seriousness under his faultless orders. Let us consider the soldiers who serve under our commanders – how precisely, how readily, how obediently they execute orders.}^{266}\]

Clement’s letter was circulated in late antiquity, being known to Eusebius, Jerome and Didymus the Blind among others.\(^{267}\) Thus from the first centuries onwards the military metaphor was common. In the early part of the fourth century, Athanasius


\(^{262}\) John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor. 37* (PG 61:320).


\(^{265}\) For example, 1 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 6:10-18; Phil. 2:25; Phlm. 2; 2 Tim. 2:3-4.

\(^{266}\) Clement of Rome, *Epistula i ad Corinthios* 37.1. See also Clement of Rome, *Epistula i ad Corinthios* 21.4; 28.2.

compares Antony to being a soldier fighting demons in the desert.\textsuperscript{268} We have already seen Ambrose using the link between military and Christian faith to effect in his preaching. Other contemporaries of Chrysostom did likewise. For example, Gregory of Nyssa plays heavily upon the metaphor of battle in his writing against Eunomius, comparing Basil to a strong soldier of Christ \(\text{τοῦ Χριστοῦ στρατιώτης}\) fighting in the front-line with the shield of faith, with other Christians behind him also called to do their duty. Within this extended metaphor, God is at one point called ‘faithful’ \(\text{πιστὸς}\), at another Christ is called the general \(\text{ὁ στρατηγός}\). At issue are matters of belief, but they are placed in a context where belief, loyalty and obedience are inseparably united in any discussion of ‘faith’ – \(\text{πίστις}\).\textsuperscript{269} Thus Chrysostom’s approach to using military metaphors can be considered as within the mainstream of the Christian tradition of late antiquity.

**The military context: conclusion**

Chrysostom’s extensive use of military imagery would be accessible to his congregations, whether in Antioch or Constantinople. Repeatedly, he compares the Christian’s relationship with God to that of soldier and general, or soldier and emperor. He uses the comparison for a multitude of rhetorical points, whether to urge his congregation not to be lax, or to encourage them with their ‘general’, or to point out the spiritual weapons and armour available to them, or to set before them examples of other spiritual soldiers. Throughout, there is an expectation that the soldier owes loyalty and obedience to the general, and that the general cares for his soldiers: a reciprocal relationship. This expectation is bound up in the meaning of \(\text{πίστις}\). Similar expectations lie at the heart of the relationship between the Christian and God; again, these are bound up in \(\text{πίστις}\).

This link between military and Christian \(\text{πίστις}\) enables us to see richer connections when military metaphors are used. Because \(\text{πίστις}\) in the military context represents qualities of loyalty and obedience, it is an effective metaphor in strengthening such qualities in a Christian context where \(\text{πίστις}\) governs the relationship between Christian and God. This may be explicit, however the close

\textsuperscript{268} Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 5.7; 65; 88.

\textsuperscript{269} Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 2.1.1-10.
link also means that even where πίστις is not being directly addressed, military metaphors could still implicitly evoke such a link. Additionally, in cases where use of πίστις may at first seem to be solely about belief, its military resonances imply that the relationship between the Christian and God also need to be considered. For Chrysostom and his congregations, πίστις in a spiritual context mirrors πίστις in a military context; the word implies faithful loyalty and unquestioning obedience for the Christian to God, and faithful care for the Christian from God.

The spiritual context and military context are also mutually reinforcing. An Antiochene congregation being encouraged to be loyal to God (and thus demonstrating πίστις) is simultaneously implicitly being reminded of their duty of loyalty to God’s representative on earth, the emperor. As they walked about the city, the sight of soldiers stationed there would remind them never to show again the disloyalty against the emperor in the riot of the statues. The call for loyalty to God is also a call to civic obedience and good order.

A Constantinopolitan congregation might hear different resonances. They would have immediate memories of the oppressive atmosphere of a rebellious army encamped in the city itself, and the general Gainas blackmailing the emperor. Loyalty to the emperor here ended up in a massacre of the rebellious army. But this violence is entwined with religious loyalty: the army was rebellious not only against the emperor but also against ‘orthodox’ Christianity. Demonstrating πίστις meant not only supporting the emperor, but also supporting the pro-Nicene church after the example of Chrysostom who refused the request of a church to the ‘heretical’ army.

In all congregations, a military-like stress on loyalty and obedience to God would also reinforce loyalty and obedience to the local bishop and clergy, and a stark warning against ‘deserting’ to paganism, Judaism or other ‘heretical’ churches.

Thus πίστις within a military context encourages the virtues of loyalty and obedience to God and to emperor; and to fighting their foes, whether heretical or physical. ‘Faith’ is not just cognitive belief; it is a term that dynamically expresses a relationship that demands obedience and action. Seeing the military overtones of
πίστις allows us to appreciate another layer to late antique politics and preaching, unveiling additional social and rhetorical forces at work upon congregations, bishops and emperors.
4. The Economic Context

In God we trust.270

The councillors in Cyprus, by an illegal grant of immunity, made a rascally, treacherous, foxy fellow into a millionaire: he came to affluence by the very interest he squeezed out of those who granted him immunity. I expected you, as Antiochenes, to set an example of duty to our neighbours rather than to follow their lead, especially in important matters like this.271

Introduction

Sometime in the late fourth century Libanius, a rhetor and educator of Antioch, composes an oration addressed to the city council. He bemoans what has happened since the death of the emperor Julian. As part of his denunciation of falling standards, he notes that a few have done exceedingly well, whilst lesser members of the council have suffered. Within this oration comes the example above. One person has become excessively wealthy. Libanius highlights two factors. First, through his contacts this person has avoided taxes for which he might have been responsible. Secondly, he has exploited others through money-lending and interest collection.

270 The official motto of the United States, printed on all legal tender, both coins and notes. “To Establish a National Motto of the United States,” in 84-851, ed. 84th Congress of the United States (1956).

Libanius was a contemporary of Chrysostom. If the economic backdrop is one of a privileged few exploiting their position through money-lending, how does that relate to statements about πίστις? What resonances would be employed by a preacher, and heard by a congregation consisting both of the wealthy and the poor? What are the links between ‘faith’ and money?

In the period between 2007-2010, a new phrase entered the popular lexicon: ‘credit crunch’. The American housing market nose-dived, leaving a succession of bad debts. The effect rippled out, affecting many banks and institutions, and making it more difficult for any business to take out a loan. A key feature was a collapse in trust. Institutions doubted whether others could repay them, whether accounts told the whole story, whether bad debts were hidden away or bundled up in so complex a manner that they could emerge at any moment. The crisis highlighted the central link between trust and finance.272 Once we start talking about trust, we enter the territory of faith (it is striking that the US motto, quoted at the start of the chapter, is found on all US notes and coins). But what of Chrysostom, finance and faith?

Chrysostom has been well served in terms of scholarship on his attitudes to wealth. He is known as a preacher who championed the poor and appealed to the rich to give generously:

We can safely say that the concern with wealth was the great theme of all Chrysostom’s preaching.273

Within this scholarship, a large number of different aspects have been covered, such as: the role of patronage;274 the role of women;275 his attitudes to widows;276 his

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272 As noted by the founder of modern economics, Adam Smith. For a review of the relationship between trust and the Great Recession, see Jerry Evensky, “Adam Smith’s Essentials: On Trust, Faith, and Free Markets,” *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 33, no. 2 (2011): 249-67. Note though the distinction that Evensky makes between trust (empirically based) and faith (which for him is ‘belief without doubt’, p.250). I take issue with his definitions.

273 Hartney, *John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City*, 44.

274 Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch,” 58-70.

emphasis on transforming the relationship between rich and poor (including renegotiating identities);\textsuperscript{277} the role of ascetics as intermediaries in the process;\textsuperscript{278} his appeals to status, prudence and self-interest;\textsuperscript{279} the idea of wealth as a loan from God (and giving as loaning to God);\textsuperscript{280} and debt cancellation. This is merely indicative; Chrysostom has a great deal to say about wealth, and so it has been extensively analysed. However, links with πίστις have generally not been explored. Brändle is an exception, but he focused on how almsgiving was an example of how πίστις and works were integrated in Chrysostom’s approach, rather than analysing the role of πίστις within his approach.\textsuperscript{281}

This chapter addresses that deficit. I argue that Chrysostom exploited the financial associations of πίστις in two ways. On the one hand, he used the world of finance to explain and buttress his explanations of πίστις to his congregations, in their relationship with God. On the other, he also used the connotations of πίστις within the financial world as leverage in his preaching to reinforce his arguments about how (usually) the rich should give more money to the poor.

To demonstrate this, I first outline some of the contours of the political and socio-economic landscape of the time, using a text from Libanius, Chrysostom’s contemporary at Antioch, to illustrate some key features of the changing

\textsuperscript{276} Efthalia Makris Walsh, “Wealthy and Impoverished Widows in the Writings of John Chrysostom,” in Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society, ed. Susan R. Holman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 176-86.

\textsuperscript{277} Hartney, John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City; Sitzler, “Identity: The Indigent and the Wealthy in the Homilies of John Chrysostom,” 468-79.

\textsuperscript{278} Mayer, “Poverty and Generosity toward the Poor in the Time of John Chrysostom,” 140-58.


I then summarise the role of πίστις within the commercial vocabulary of the day using papyri and other evidence. I next turn to Chrysostom, reviewing his use of financial language within his sermons. Following on from this, I demonstrate how Chrysostom deliberately employed the links between finance and πίστις within his preaching on Romans in the two ways given above: as an easy to understand metaphor when explaining πίστις; and as leverage when persuading his hearers to change their actions. I further show that Chrysostom’s approach was part of a tradition, demonstrating how similar themes and strategies emerge in other early Christian writings.

It can be difficult to get a feel for what is at stake without an illustration, so before outlining the socio-economic contours of the late antique world, here is an example of Chrysostom using the language of finance and πίστις when preparing catechumens for baptism. In one homily, Chrysostom addresses those sponsoring the catechumens. He brings in the language of money-lending, putting the sponsors in the position of those providing surety for a debt τοὺς ἀναδεχομένους ὑμᾶς. He outlines the great repayments if they take their spiritual duties to the catechumens seriously, but also how they are risking much more than mere money. Their debt is to ‘display great alertness. They have a debt ὀφείλουσι to give guidance and to advise, to set them straight, to show fatherly affection’.  

Chrysostom continues in this vein, thus priming his hearers to be thinking in financial terms. He then turns his attention back to the catechumens themselves, and offers them an explanation of baptism based on business and contracts. The

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282 Peter Oakes discusses possible roles of economics when interpreting early Christian texts. Within his framework, I use economics as an aid to interpretation, rather than either seeing economics as providing a central framework for analysis or trying to generate economic data. The economic evidence I use is based on an eclectic range of different sources. As the aim is to clarify Chrysostom’s preaching, the evidence is mainly based upon the labours of other scholars. See Peter Oakes, “Methodological Issues in Using Economic Evidence in Interpretation of Early Christian Texts,” in Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 9-34.

passage is worth quoting at some length to indicate the strength of the financial language throughout:

Now then, let us discuss with you about the mysteries themselves, and the covenants [τῶν συνθηκῶν] about to be completed between you and the Master. For just as in business affairs whenever anyone should want to entrust his business to someone [ἐμπιστεύσαι τις βουλήθη τινι τά αὐτοῦ πράγματα], a written contract is completed between the creditor and the debtor [γραμματεία ἀνάγκη συντελείσθαι μεταξύ τοῦ ἐμπιστευόμενου καὶ τοῦ ἐμπιστεύοντος], so it is the same thing now. You are about to be entrusted [μέλλετε πιστεύεσθαι] by the Master of all not with perishable, corruptible business that is being destroyed, but with spiritual and heavenly business. And so it is called ‘faith’ [Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ πίστις λέγεται], since it has nothing that can be seen but everything can be observed with spiritual eyes. For a written contract will be completed by both parties, not on papyrus nor in ink, but in God through the Spirit [Ἀνάγκη γὰρ γραμματεία συντελεσθῆναι μεταξύ, οὐκ ἐν χάρτῃ οὐδὲ διὰ μέλανος ἀλλ’ ἐν Θεῷ διὰ πνεύματος]. For the words which you utter here are registered in heaven [ἐγγράφεται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ], and the covenant [τὰς συνθήκας] which you make with your tongue remains indelibly with the Master.284

It is instructive to note the resonances throughout this passage. Commercial language of money-lending and business flows into the spiritual mysteries through the way that πίστις and its cognates (τοῦ ἐμπιστευόμενου καὶ τοῦ ἐμπιστεύοντος, πιστεύοσθαι) work so successfully on both levels.285 Chrysostom is then able to continue to exploit the metaphor in the same homily, by making use of the imagery of the contract between two business parties:

Have you seen what the terms of the covenant are [Εἴδετε οἷα τῶν συνθηκῶν τὰ γραμματεῖα;]? For after the renunciation of the evil one and of all his business interests again he prepares to say: “and I put myself under your command, O Christ [Καὶ συντάσσομαι σοι, Χριστέ]”. Did you see his boundless goodness? Accepting only these

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284 John Chrysostom, Catech. Illum. 2.17 (SC 50:143).

285 Harkins argues that both here and previously πίστις refers to the recitation of the creed as part of the baptism service – the reddito symboli. Given that there is no explicit reference to the recitation here, but there is explicit reference to a declaration of loyalty to Christ, a better solution is to find a link between πίστις and this declaration. The financial context provides just such a link. See Harkins, Baptismal Instructions, 222-24.
words from you, he entrusts such a treasure-store of things to you [Τὰ ῥήματα δεχόμενος παρὰ σοῦ μόνον, τοσούτον ἐμπιστεύει σοι πραγμάτων θησαυρόν]. He forgets all your former folly and reminds you of none of your former actions but he is content with these brief words.286

Later I demonstrate how papyri of contemporary contracts show that πίστις held the meaning of ‘good faith’ – a guarantee between contracting parties. In the baptism ceremony, Chrysostom equates this with the πίστις of the catechumens – their faith, as exemplified in the declaration made. In return, Christ (the other contracting party) entrusts heavenly treasure to the catechumens. We can see too how this links back to the military metaphors surrounding faith. It is the declaration of loyalty and obedience to Christ (Καὶ συντάσσομαι σοι, Χριστέ) which is the ‘good faith’ of the contract.

Thus, in this instruction to the catechumens, and explaining a spiritual relationship, Chrysostom uses the semantic field of πίστις as one which encompasses the business relationship. A reciprocal relationship is implied – and the implications are exploited to the full by Chrysostom.

The concept of πίστις is intimately linked within the fourth century context to commerce, and thus open to a preacher to exploit in both directions. The rest of the chapter establishes the background, and shows how Chrysostom did indeed exploit the connection.

The social and economic landscape

Chrysostom learnt his rhetorical skill in part from the teaching of Libanius, the pagan orator who held the chair in rhetoric at Antioch from around 354 until his death in 394.287 Sometime around 390, Libanius penned an oration to the emperor

286 John Chrysostom, Catech. Illum. 2.21 (SC 50:145).
It is a plea to the emperor to deal with the problem of the military protecting some landowners to the detriment of others, and also protecting tenants taking on their landlords. The oration helps illustrate some of the social and economic background to Chrysostom’s preaching. I shall highlight some of its features, showing the light they shed on both the ancient Roman economy in general, and on significant changes taking place in the fourth century eastern empire.

Libanius begins by flattering the emperor, and giving assurances that he wishes only the best for the military commanders; assurances that have a sting in the tail:

...my wish is for them success and a happy life, but without making any illicit gain [οὔτε κακὰ κερδαίνει] or causing others to behave with complete lack of scruple – misconduct such as is rife at present.

The conflict between Libanius, a local landowner, and military commanders is symptomatic of a wider shift in the balance of power between different elites in the eastern empire. At the beginning of the fourth century, the majority of landowners were local to an area, a municipal elite. Such landowners would be members of the town council, and responsible for raising tribute for the Emperor (essentially, tax). However, over the course of the fourth and fifth century, other groups, the military, provincial elites and the imperial bureaucracy, gain at the expense of the local elites. Libanius’ complaint is thus part of a much longer and wider societal change.

Libanius continues by describing his first complaint, giving an example of large villages with many landowners. Some landowners are paying the local soldiers stationed there for protection, giving them licence to mistreat their neighbours. Libanius describes the payments:

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288 Libanius, Orationes 47. The dating is based on a reference to Maximus’ uprising in 388 in s.35. There is no indication as to whether the oration was actually delivered. See the discussion on rhetoric and its place within persuasion in Peter Brown, Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 29-33.

289 Libanius, Orationes 47.3. Translation from Norman, Libanius. Selected Orations, 503.
And the payment [ὁ μισθὸς] comes from the fruit of the land – wheat, barley, the fruit of the trees, or else bullion or gold coin [ἳ χρυσοὺς ἰ χρυσίου τιμή].

The payment in kind underlines how the empire was ultimately a peasant economy. Most people lived in rural areas, working on the land, to provide enough food to support the overall population. Surplus production from the land was necessary to maintain the cities and the army, but most of the production was necessary to feed the rural population. In contrast, urban centres could be described as being ‘consumption cities’ exploiting the rural economy.

However, the description also indicates one cause for the shift in power to the military and bureaucracy from local elites: the introduction of the gold solidus by Constantine as a currency in the early fourth century. Banaji names this conversion to gold as ‘the decisive economic movement of the late empire’. It created a monetary economy, with the solidus as, literally, the gold standard, being comparatively inflation proof. The military and the imperial bureaucracy both found ways to accumulate such gold, at the expense of the municipal elite. As a

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290 Libanius, Orationes 47.4. Translation from Norman, Libanius. Selected Orations, 503.
294 Technically, he reintroduced it, as Diocletian also had some solidi minted, but relatively few in number.
296 For example, through exploiting the price difference between crops immediately post-harvest compared with later, when scarcity increased their value. The military had the right to demand supplies from landowners. By delaying demands, the military increased the cash value of the payment (and cost to the local landowner).
consequence, the period saw fragmentation of municipal elites and the increasing role of provincial elites. This change occurred against a background of increasing economic expansion in the eastern empire on the back of the stable currency. Allied to this was a growing population, with more settlement in the countryside.  

Libanius continues by arguing that the system of military protection emboldens those protected not to pay the taxes due. Libanius complains about those appointed to collect the tribute (town councillors) being threatened by villagers, and having to return empty handed. As they were responsible for raising the tax, they end up selling their slaves and even their farms:

> They go to their farms, too, not as before, with their children in family parties, but with the prospective purchasers to sell them. A common table [τράπεζα αὐτοῖς κοινὴ] is set out before them, but the seller sees the price of his land turn into tax money [τὴν τιμὴν δὲ τῆς γῆς φόρον ὁ πεπρακὼς γιγνομένην ὁρᾶ.]

Again, this vignette illuminates the fourth century context. As a caricature, there were two taxes: a poll tax; and a property tax. Senators were exempted both from the tax and having to collect it. The responsibility fell onto the municipal elite – the town councillors, or curiales/βουλευταί. A central demand (not just of money, also of food, clothing etc) would be sent from the emperor, read out to a city council by the provincial governor, and then collected by the councillors from that city and its surrounding area. If there was a shortfall, then the councillors were expected to make up the deficit themselves. As councillors needed to be rich enough to make up any shortfall, anyone with sufficient wealth could find themselves enrolled. The

Specific laws were enacted to prevent such abuses. See Codex Theodosianus 7.4.21, and Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity*, 53-54.


298 Libanius, *Orationes* 47.9. Translation from Norman, *Libanius. Selected Orations*, 509. Libanius includes a play upon τράπεζα; it not only refers to a table, but also to a bank.
status as a councillor was hereditary and couldn’t be renounced, in an attempt to
prevent people evading their responsibilities.

However, within this system, burdens could be shifted, and taxes reduced or
avoided. One councillor (the *exactor*) had the authority to deal with arrears. Those
well connected, such as the *principals*, were often allowed to pay taxes late, or build
up tax-arrears. In contrast, others less connected (the *decuriones*) had to pay larger
burdens sooner. This led to effectively two categories of councillors: a few
prominent, well-connected notables who could build up arrears of low tax; and the
rest who could not. This inequality was exacerbated because imperial generosity
often showed itself in wiping out tax-arrears. As only the provincial elite had built
up such arrears, only they benefited from such largesse.299

The passage from Libanius illustrates this system coming under increasing stress.
The *decuriones* are being bankrupted by being unable to raise the taxes, and are
having to sell their land. The result is that the town council is diminished:

> So a councillor is erased from the council [*οὕτω βουλευτὴς βουλῆς ἐξαλείφεται*]: no sponge wipes out his name: he no longer has the
> property.300

Thus the passage illustrates not only the tax system in operation, but also the shift
from the municipal elite to the provincial elite, the imperial bureaucracy and the
military.301 Of course, Libanius’ account can’t be taken at face value: it is in his
interest to make his case as strongly as possible. However, it fits in with other
evidence of such a shift. For example, papyrus evidence suggests that the
proportion of landholding members of councils diminished from about 50% in the
third century to 14% by the fifth century, with most of the decline taking place

301 See also Libanius, *Orationes 49* which focuses throughout on the increasing plight
of the town councils in contrast to earlier times. Libanius, *Orationes 49.2*. Information
about the *curiales* is considered in Roger Pack, “*Curiales in the Correspondence of*
*Libanius,*” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 82 (1951):
176–92. He notes how Libanius, while praising *curiales*, seeks to help various
councillors to move from that status, and that Libanius himself owed much of his
success to not being a member of the council.
during the fourth and fifth century. Wealth was becoming concentrated in the hands of ever fewer people.

In the oration, Libanius next moves to the situation where a landlord owns a village, and in so doing illustrates some features of labour relations at the time. Peasants are paying the military for protection, so that the landlord loses effective authority over them. This is a particular concern for Libanius, who reveals that he has suffered personally in this way, with tenants on his land who:

...conceived the desire not to remain as they were, and, casting off their long-established yoke, they presumed to define how I should employ them [ἡξίουν ὁρισταὶ τοῦ πῶς ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς χρηστέον εἶναι].

Libanius here assumes that he has the right to tell the tenants how to work in some way. It is possible that the tenants (who Libanius informs us had been there for four generations) were legally coloni: not slaves, but restricted in a variety of rights. In particular, the colonate were not free to move, and over time lost other rights. The status was hereditary. The resultant immobility helped to stabilise tax revenue. Banaji argues that, in such cases, effectively the landowner ‘owned’ the labour of the peasant.

Thus the coloni were one group of peasants, with a particular relationship to a landlord. Beyond the colonate it appears a wide range of labour contracts was

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302 See the analysis by Banaji, Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity, 115. Throughout chapters 5 & 6 he documents evidence for major changes in land ownership between the third and seventh centuries.

303 Libanius, Orationes 47.11-12.

304 Libanius, Orationes 47.13. Translation from Norman, Libanius. Selected Orations, 513.

305 Norman assumes that this is the case. Norman, Libanius. Selected Orations, 511 note b.


307 Banaji, Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity, 210.

308 There is debate over the composition of other rural workers, in particular whether slave labour was significant in this period in the eastern empire. MacMullen argues that it was economically insignificant: Ramsay MacMullen, “Late Roman Slavery,” Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 36, no. 3 (1987): 359-82. For the
possible, from a contract of employment with wages in advance, through to making the wages technically a loan, to be repaid by labour, through to share-cropping, where the rent was a proportion of the crop collected.\footnote{Banaji lists six separate types of employment contract. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity*, 198–99.}

The picture that emerges is of a varied peasant labour force, some of whom were legally obliged to provide labour, and who were paid in a variety of forms, some of which were classed as loans.

To return to the oration: Libanius recounts how he had the recalcitrant peasants thrown into gaol by the governor pending a court case. He then claims that the tenants bribed both the general and the governor to secure their release and success in court, via a biased judge.\footnote{Libanius, *Orationes* 47.13–16.} Again, this is illustrative of the growing relative power of the military and imperial bureaucracy over a leading member of the municipal elite.

Libanius claims that his own tale of misery is being replicated in towns everywhere, and expresses his landlord's perspective that if peasants have a complaint or need help that:

> they can even make their masters more kindly disposed towards them, so as either to allow a remission of debts, or even to offer a grant [τὰ μὲν ὀφείλουσιν ἀείναι, τὰ δὲ καὶ δοῦναι]...\footnote{Libanius, *Orationes* 47.19. Translation from Norman, *Libanius. Selected Orations*, 517.}

Here, we see an assumption that the relationship between landlord and peasant is (among other things) that of creditor and debtor (as already noted, perhaps as a form of labour contract). The language and practice of money-lending is therefore at the heart of normal economic practice for all levels of society, from the elite to the rural peasant.
However, we are also seeing the growth of monetisation of power, and hence also a reduction in relationship, again to the detriment of the local elite. As Kelly notes in commenting on this oration:

> Against the unceasing reciprocal obligations of traditional personal networks the payment of money offered [Libanius’ tenants] a less open-ended and more impersonal alternative. It allowed a relatively rapid realignment of social ties and obligations. It held out the possibility of a more flexible and less oppressive arrangement. Such a relationship with a powerful man must have seemed an attractive antidote to the long-term, suffocating exclusivity so self-righteously propounded by landowners like Libanius.\(^{312}\)

However, there is a shadow side to impersonal, monetary-based arrangements. Those without money under such a system not only have no power, but also no-one with any sense of responsibility for them. A traditional municipal landlord might be oppressive, but social pressure might also lead him to ensure that his peasants weren’t starving. A provincial landlord, more distant both socially and geographically from those working the land, had fewer reasons to care.

The rest of the oration describes Libanius’ outrage that the military are so powerful,\(^{313}\) and outrage that they are amassing fortunes while ‘poor’ landlords are suffering (another example of the military accumulating wealth during this period).\(^{314}\) He appeals to the emperor to ensure that existing laws protecting landlords are enforced.

The oration as a whole therefore suggests an economy where wealth is mainly generated through the countryside, but unequally shared. The majority of the population work the land, using labour and their own produce to pay the debts of work, rent and taxes that they owe to the elite. The elite in turn use money as a flexible way of employing and storing wealth, spending it in the cities and


\(^{313}\) Libanius, *Orationes* 47.23.

\(^{314}\) Libanius, *Orationes* 47.29-34.
This in itself drives the development of a variety of financial services. However, the picture is not static. Socio-economic changes were unfolding leading to (in the late fourth century eastern empire) a growing population, greater overall economic prosperity, but also rising inequality. Local, municipal elites (such as town councillors) were under particular stress, but also legal restrictions (via the colonate) acted as a barrier to the free movement of labour of some peasant workers, increasing the possibility of exploitation. The fourth and fifth centuries were therefore periods where, in the east of the empire:

...the rich were getting richer – at least in relative terms – and the poor were getting poorer.

Within this economic context, there were a variety of options for those fortunate enough to have excess capital. They could invest in trade or industry, but this involved risk to the capital, and without any social cachet attached to the investment. They could invest in land, which did give social cachet; the evidence

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315 Fibiger Bang has described this as portfolio capitalism. Fibiger Bang, “Trade and Empire.”

316 The Roman Empire was greatly unequal in any case. Friesen (for the first century AD) concludes that 68% of the population lived at or below subsistence levels, with an imperial or regional elite making up 1.04%. Steven J. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus,” Journal for the Study of the New Testament 26, no. 3 (2004): 347. Oakes uses the area of land that a household occupies in Pompeii as a measure of inequality, coming up with similar figures to Friesen. Peter Oakes, Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul’s Letter at Ground Level (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009). Bagnall, using the gini index as a measure, and Egyptian tax registers as a source, argues that the Roman empire wasn’t significantly different in inequality from nineteenth century England. Roger S. Bagnall, “Landholding in Late Roman Egypt: The Distribution of Wealth,” The Journal of Roman Studies 82 (1992): 128-49. The disparity in wealth can also be seen in wage levels in papyri. A contract agricultural worker might be paid a third of a solidus a year; the top manager of the Apion estate got about 44 solidi a year; the Duke had income from the estate of nearly 3,000 solidi. See table 11a & b in Banaji, Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity, 235-37. See also Kelly, Ruling the Later Roman Empire, 138-45. He provides income examples ranging from a peasant who might survive on the equivalent of one solidus a year, a soldier paying a dowry of 4½ solidi, through to a middle-ranking senator with an income of 72,000 solidi.

317 Kate Cooper, The Fall of the Roman Household (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 102.
suggests many of the elite took this option. They could also deposit the money in a private bank\textsuperscript{318}, or lend the money at a fixed rate of interest (usually 1\% per month).\textsuperscript{319} The latter options were both attractive. They gave good levels of protection to the capital, whilst providing a revenue stream through the interest. The elite therefore were bound up in the practice of lending money, with similar concerns to those of money-lending institutions today: are debtors likely to default, or can you put your faith in them? The debtors themselves would be concerned with ensuring that they were seen as trustworthy, and that they would make good use of the loan to be able to pay back any interest.

Having given an outline of the landscape, in summary this was a society becoming more and more unequal. Old patterns of relationships with reciprocal obligations were breaking down as a disappearing municipal middle class came under increasing pressure. Relationships based on money were taking their place, as a small elite exploited their wealth, power and contacts to further enhance and entrench their own position. Others were forced to borrow from them, through necessity or through wage contracts.

This also highlights how credit and debit were not only the concerns of the elite. As indicated above, peasant workers' pay could take the form of a loan to be paid off by labour. Loans permeated the whole of society, from the richest to some of the least wealthy of all. This is where economics intersects with my concern; as I shall show, Chrysostom uses the language of money to talk about the practice of the Christian faith, and the language of faith to talk about how the rich should use their money. To understand the implications of this more precisely, it is helpful to see how the language of πίστις was commonly used in everyday financial contexts. To do this requires a review of some of the papyrological evidence.

\textsuperscript{318} Private banks existed, working on a fractional reserve principle (of perhaps about 25-30\%), who could issue the equivalent of cheques. Whilst the crisis of the third century led to a decrease in banking and finance, it appears likely that these had recovered to some degree in the east by the time of Chrysostom. See in particular John Chrysostom, in Principium Actorum Hom. 4 (PG 51:97-99).

\textsuperscript{319} Loans could also take the form of produce, usually seed, with no cap on interest rates. See Christopher Howgego, “The Supply and Use of Money in the Roman World 200 B.C. To A.D. 300,” The Journal of Roman Studies 82, no. 1 (1992): 27.
The use of πίστις in financial contexts

In this section I outline some of the ways in which papyrus evidence of contracts and letters dealing with financial matters illuminates the meaning of πίστις within the fourth and fifth century context.

The first example is a papyrus of Egyptian provenance dated to the second half of the fourth century: P.Kell 1 76. It is a letter from Pekysis to Sarapis, following a tax demand for Pekysis’ sister on behalf of her estranged husband Kapiton. The letter reassures Sarapis that the full amount owed, one and a half myriad, will be paid, but only if Kapiton (currently believed to be living in the Nile valley region) returns to Kellis alive. If Kapiton turns out to be dead, then no money will be owing.

The relevant section is where the letter is declared to be a sign of security and good faith of the money being available and being paid should everything go according to plan:

therefore I provide you with this letter as a guarantee and surety [εἰς ἀσφάλειαν καὶ πίστιν], acknowledging to you that I am most ready to pay the one myriad and a half unambiguously if that person comes here in good health.

The language and subject matter make it clear that the context is both legal and financial: the private letter is acting as a written contract. This is also confirmed through the letter being witnessed by a third party, Aurelius Gena, son of Pataias. This first example therefore shows that πίστις could stand for the equivalent of a guarantee or surety; something which one party offered to demonstrated their goodwill, and in which others could place their trust. Another translation would be that πίστις here functions as ‘good faith’. A similar use can be found in the next example, which concerns the sale of a part of an estate: psi.12.1239. Aurelius Kollouthos acts as surety or guarantee for the contract, which involves three children under his legal care.

320 P.Kell 1 76 = HGV P.Kell 1 76 = Trimegistos 33330. Provenance is Oasis Magna Kellis.
321 P.Kell 1 76 lines 16-23.
322 psi.12.1239 = HGV PSI 12 1239 = Trimegistos 17404 = sb.5.7996. The provenance is Antinoopolis, 18th September 430.
pledging security himself, regarding the risk the whole good faith and warranty [πᾶσαν πίστιν καὶ βεβαιώσιν] of this, the contract of sale, upon which depend all the following six contract articles.\textsuperscript{323}

Again, the context shows that guarantee or surety is in mind, with ‘good faith’ an appropriate gloss.

The legal framework within which πίστις can be found extends to official rent receipts, for example one paid to the imperial estates, p.oxy.8.1134.\textsuperscript{324} Here, the manager of the estate provides a receipt to an agent that all the rent owed has been collected, both produce and money:

I acknowledge that I have been paid in full the rents of every sort, whether in kind or money, which you undertook to collect from the responsible cultivators in the administrative district of the village of Nesmimis and other places, discharging the function of an agent in faithful accord [κατὰ τὴν πίστειν] with the list of dues handed to you by me...\textsuperscript{325}

Here, πίστις stands for whether or not the agent has acted in good faith, according to the agreement previously drawn up. Other examples can be multiplied.\textsuperscript{326}

The papyrus evidence thus confirms the strong links between πίστις and finance, extending to being a technical legal term within financial contracts. The technical use expresses ‘good faith’ or ‘surety’: something in which other people can place their trust. Thus the financial background indicates ripe possibilities for links to be made by a preacher between all things economic and financial, and πίστις and its cognates. In the next section, I show that Chrysostom qualifies as a preacher well-versed in the economic realities of his day.

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\textsuperscript{323} psi.12.1239 lines 3-4.
\textsuperscript{324} P.Oxy.8.1134 = HGV P.Oxy. 8 1134 = Trismegistos 21751. The provenance is Oxyrhynchos, 3\textsuperscript{rd} March 421.
\textsuperscript{325} P.Oxy.8.1134 lines 6-9.
\textsuperscript{326} For example, Chr.Mitt.300 = HGV P.Lips. 1 41 = Trismegistos 33701 = P.Lips.1.41, which dates from the end of the fourth century. An abandoned bride demands reimbursement of her dowry so that she can remarry. The phrase ‘good faith of the contract [κατὰ τὴν πίστιν τοῦ γραμματείου] is used (line 7). See also P.Oxy.20.2267 = HGV P.Oxy. 20 2267 = Trismegistos 17203, and psi.3.236 = HGV PSI 3 236 = Trismegistos 31228 for further examples.
Chrysostom and finance

Chrysostom has often been used as an astute social commentator on his time. We should therefore expect him both to know the commercial context well, and to find it in his preaching. He does not disappoint. One example comes when he preaches on Matthew 18:21-35, the parable of the unforgiving servant. Here, as part of his homily, Chrysostom attempts to show his congregation how their sins were equivalent to the 10,000 talents owed by the servant to his master. Chrysostom produces a litany of wrongdoing from a wide category of people: soldiers; craftworkers and artisans; and landowners. Within the litany a repeating theme is that of financial wrongdoing. For instance, the soldiers, amongst many sins, are accused of robbery and fraud (Πόσαι παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἁρπαγαί! πόσαι πλεονεξία!). When he discusses the craftworkers and artisans, he mentions not only dishonesty in buying and selling, but also links it to money-lending:

What should one say of the abuses concerning these things, the outrageous acts, the loans, the interest payments, the contracts full of petty trade, the shameless commerce [τὰς ὤβρεις, τὰ δανείσματα, τοὺς τόκους, τὰ συναλλάγματα τὰ πολλὰς γέμοντα καπηλείας, τὰς ἐμπορίας τὰς ἀναισχύντους;]?

As he turns to the landowner he gives more details about the oppressive relationships between owners and peasants, including unfair loan contracts. First he describes the peasants as like overworked mules, burdened with ‘perpetual and unbearable payments [τελέσματα διηνεκῆ καὶ ἀφόρητα]’, then describes the wretched conditions in which they live:

Can anything be more pitiable than this, when having worked hard throughout the winter, and being exhausted by frost and thunder storms and sleepless nights, they go back empty handed, even falling behind in what they owe [ἐτι καὶ προσφειλοντες], and this starving wreck greatly fearing and shuddering at these torments of the administrators and being dragged about and the demands for

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payment [τὰς ἀπαιτήσεις] and arrests [τὰς ἀπαγωγὰς] and the merciless civic duties.\textsuperscript{331}

Chrysostom continues by berating the landlords for their financial exploitation of such peasants, including sky-high interest rates on loans:

...And yet they devise new types of interest payments [τόκων], not even lawful according to the heathens, and making completely ruinous loan contracts [καὶ δανεισμῶν γραμματεῖα πολλῆς γέμοντα τῆς ἀρᾶς συνιθέασιν]. For they don’t charge 1% on the capital, but they force repayment of 50% on the capital. And these things from someone being required to repay who has a wife, and is bringing up children, and is a human being, and by his own labours is filling both the threshing floor and the wine press.\textsuperscript{332}

Here we see Chrysostom condemning landlords for extortionate interest on loans to their workers. As Banaji points out, this passage is indicative of a debt contract between the employer and the employees.\textsuperscript{333} The owner would pay wages in advance, which were treated as loans. The debt relationship then gives the owner more control over the peasant.

Chrysostom’s denunciation gives a glimpse of how this worked in practice. The peasants were working themselves to death to pay off exploitative loans, with landowners now more concerned about getting their money than about the health of a fellow human. It is another example of how older models of relationships between landowners and tenants were changing from mutual, reciprocal obligations to one that focused on the money.

The passage indicates both Chrysostom’s and his congregation’s knowledge of such contemporaneous employment contracts, and so provides a good example of his use of political and economic realities. This can be further demonstrated in other homilies. As an illustration, the next section analyses a short series of homilies introducing Acts.


\textsuperscript{333} It is possible, but unlikely, that the peasants were sharecroppers. See the discussion in Banaji, \textit{Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity}, 204-05. Wickham also takes this as being wage labour. See Wickham, \textit{Framing the Early Middle Ages}, 276 n.34.
Evidence from *In Principium Actorum*

In a series of homilies (*In Principium Actorum*) introducing the Acts of the Apostles to an Antiochene congregation, Chrysostom reveals his immersion in the socio-economic realities of the late fourth century empire.\(^{334}\) His asides and illustrations are revealing of his attitudes, his knowledge and his rhetorical tactics. The fourth homily also shows how in constructing financial metaphors Chrysostom uses πιστ- related language. I shall take the homilies in turn.

The first homily is revealing in nuancing the reputation of Chrysostom as a radical preacher always attacking the rich and on the side of the poor. In this homily, despite his reputation for targeting wealth, Chrysostom is at pains to point out that he is not attacking the rich, but only those who misuse wealth:

> I do not say these things to condemn those who have wealth [τῶν πλουτούντων], but rather those who use wealth wickedly. For wealth is not an evil thing [Οὐ γὰρ ὁ πλοῦτος κακὸν] if we wish to make proper use of it, but rather the evil is in the pretense [ἡ ἀπόνοια, καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία].\(^{335}\)

Chrysostom is thus less radical than his reputation.\(^{336}\) He has tempered his attack to reassure those with wealth, so potentially keeping them on-side.\(^{337}\) This careful

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\(^{334}\) I am following Compton’s argument that the homilies are for the whole congregation, not just neophytes. The internal evidence supports his conclusions. Michael Bruce Compton, “Introducing the Acts of the Apostles: A Study of John Chrysostom’s *on the Beginning of Acts*” (PhD, University of Virginia, 1996), ch.2. The provenance is probably Antioch; in the second homily Chrysostom refers to the church as being founded by the apostles. Mayer concurs for this homily. See Mayer, *Provenance*, 470.


\(^{336}\) This has also been noted by Mayer, who points out that Stoic notions of poverty appear to have led to two categories: the voluntary poor and the economically poor. The first category includes those who use wealth well and are detached from wealth, even if they retain considerable wealth. Mayer includes the examples of Flavian and Olympias. Thus wealth *per se* is not attacked. See Mayer, “Poverty and Generosity toward the Poor in the Time of John Chrysostom,” 140-58. See also John Chrysostom, *Stat.* 2.14 (*PG* 49:40).

\(^{337}\) González devotes a chapter of his work on faith and wealth examining Chrysostom’s attitudes. He also concludes that Chrysostom does not believe that private property is wrong, but needs to be used appropriately. He also argues that,
approach may explain why Chrysostom was able to maintain a network of contacts with some of the elite of Antioch even years later in exile.\textsuperscript{338} It would therefore be simplistic to see Chrysostom as a radical out to attack the rich at every opportunity: in Antioch, he was one of the elite, and was pastor not just of the poor but of the elite.

Chrysostom also shows some awareness of the economic realities of life for many. In wondering aloud why people are not in church for the Easter octave, he explains that he is targeting the rich because the poor have a better excuse for absence: they need to earn money to live:

\begin{quote}
For the poor [Τὸ... πένητας] to have stayed away is terrible, but it is not as terrible as for the rich who are not present. Why? Because the poor necessarily lack leisure; they are concerned with daily labour, eking out their existence with their hands [ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν ποιοῦμεν τὸν βίον]. They are occupied with the raising of children, they watch over their wife; if they do not toil, the things of life which they do have depart.\textsuperscript{339}
\end{quote}

In passing, we may note the perspective of Chrysostom is that of the male elite: here, anyone who works with their hands or has to raise their own children is poor. This would probably include about 90% of the population.\textsuperscript{340}

The first homily also shows the way in which the everyday language of finance is used seamlessly within Chrysostom’s preaching: he can phrase his request that the congregation come to worship and hear him preach as ‘Lend me two hours of the

\begin{quote}
for Chrysostom, wealth is a usufruct or loan from God to the wealthy held in trust by them. See González, \textit{Faith and Wealth}, 200-13.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{338} Mayer, “Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch,” 66. However, Mayer cautions against a simplistic division of Chrysostom’s ministry into a peaceful, trouble-free Antiochene period and a difficult Constantinople one. See Mayer, “John Chrysostom as Bishop: The View from Antioch,” 466.


\textsuperscript{340} Using Friesen’s poverty scale. Friesen, “Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus,” 347.
day... [Μᾶλλον δὲ μὴ ἐμοὶ δανείσῃς τὰς δύο ὥρας]. This everyday use of loans and debts sits alongside the easy way that Chrysostom also uses wages and labour as spiritual metaphors.

The third homily provides an example where Chrysostom opens a door into the way that late antique society functioned. He is explaining to his congregation how apostles are equivalent to spiritual consuls [Εἰκότως ἢρα ὑπατείαν πνευματικήν ἐκαλέσαμεν τὴν ἀποστολήν], with all the power that goes with a consulship. Chrysostom then details some of the power of the elite:

What then are the tokens of rulership, and what thing is it necessary for the ruler to have? The authority over a prison, just as a master is able to bind some and loose others, to set some free and imprison others. Again, a lord is able to forgive money that is owed, and to acquit those who are accountable, and to command to pay back...[ἀφεῖναι πάλιν χρημάτων ὑφήματα, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀπολύσαι ὅτας ὑπευθύνους, τοὺς δὲ κελεῦσαι ἀποδοῦναι κύριος ἐστιν]

Chrysostom appears to be describing the considerable power that was vested in private hands in the empire – the liberum arbitrium of the pater. The discretion given to settle disputes and hear petitions included ruling on whether debts would be paid or cancelled. He will later compare this with the apostles’ power to forgive sins. But his illustration also demonstrates the ease with which Chrysostom uses the whole panoply of human existence, including economic factors, in his preaching. It is also again an indication of the power imbalances within the fourth/fifth century context.


However, it is in the fourth homily that we find Chrysostom using an extended economic metaphor, combining it with πιστ—related language. He lays the foundations for the metaphor using the parable of the talents, and in particular Matthew 25:27:

And if you guard the things which are said, and hold them fast with much zeal, you would know who are the ones who receive silver [οἱ τὸ ἀργύριον ὑποδεξάμενοι], and who will give an account to the Master concerning these silver pieces on that Day. At that time the ones who were entrusted with talents [οἱ τὰ τάλαντα πιστευθέντες] are summoned, and they are audited; when Christ comes he will demand the bankers for this silver with interest [τοὺς τραπεζίτας τὸ ἀργύριον τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν τόκων]. For ‘it was necessary for you,’ he says, ‘to deposit the money with the bankers, so that when I came I might demand it with interest.’

Here, πιστεύω is used in the sense of ‘to entrust’. More generally, Chrysostom is both familiar himself with the world of banking, and equally can assume that so too is his congregation. This is confirmed by the way that, having begun with this metaphor, he allows a slight detour into the evils of money-lending:

O the great and unspeakable benevolence of the Master! He prevents human beings from demanding interest; he himself demands interest ['Ἀνθρώπους κωλύων ἀπαιτεῖν τόκους, αὐτὸς ἀπαιτεῖ τόκους]. And why? Since the former kind of interest is harmful and deserves condemnation, but the latter kind is praiseworthy and deserving of much return [πολλῆς ἀποδοχῆς]. That former interest, then (I mean, the one from money), damages both the one who gives it and the one who receives it; it also destroys the soul of the one who receives it, and aggravates the poverty of the one who gives it.

Chrysostom goes on to compare lending money to giving deadly medicine; it may seem sweet at first, but long term it is fatal. Again, the perspective assumed is important. Chrysostom is arguing against lending money; the viewpoint is once more that of the elite with money to lend.

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Chrysostom then resumes the spiritual metaphor, urging his congregation to be like bankers who test the genuineness of coins with scales, casting out the false coins:

For indeed you also have a balance and weights, not made of bronze and iron, but composed of purity and faith [ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ ἁγνείας καὶ πίστεως συγκείμενα]; through these things test [δοκίμαζε] every word.\(^{349}\)

Once again, the metaphor shows the easy familiarity with economic realities. But here, we may also note how πίστις is being used. It has become part of the way in which good and bad doctrine may be judged. The context is an Antioch with rival Christian factions, not to mention other competing religious possibilities such as paganism and Judaism. Chrysostom is thus implying that having πίστις will lead to his congregation rejecting all these other possibilities and instead listen to Chrysostom’s preaching (he regards his own teaching as genuine silver\(^{350}\)).

The metaphor continues with Chrysostom urging his hearers not only to receive deposits of teaching but also to share them with others, showing an astute grasp of the importance of banks as a supply of credit to enable an economy to function:

In the case of bankers, if they only store at home the money which they receive, and no longer distribute to others, the whole business of the marketplace will go away [ἄπαν τὸ τῆς ἐμπορίας οἰχήςται]. In the same way, this very thing also happens in the case of those who are listening. If, after receiving the teaching, you keep it to yourself, and no longer share it with others, your whole business will vanish.\(^{351}\)

As he continues, he provides a vignette of the late antique world, where a stream of people visit the bankers in the marketplace, both depositing and borrowing money, and in the process of lending the money the bankers get richer. Chrysostom uses this as an illustration for how his congregation ought to behave:

This is what you also ought to do. For these things do not belong to you, but to the Spirit. Yet, if he shows you the best way to put it to


\(^{350}\) ‘I have deposited the silver...’ John Chrysostom, *Hom. Princ. Act. 4.3* (PG 51:100).

use, you will gather up for yourself much spiritual business [τὴν εὐπορίαν τὴν πνευματικὴν]. This, then, is why God called you ‘bankers’ [τραπεζίτας].

The metaphor enables Chrysostom to offer multiple lessons. If we want to receive (literally ‘buy’ [ἀγοράσαι]) something from God, first we deposit [καταβαλόντες] a prayer with him; similarly we purchase a brother’s soul through depositing teaching. With ‘the word’ being equivalent to money, deposited in us, we are expected to distribute it to others, teaching them. Again, the elite male perspective of Chrysostom is noticeable: he suggests that the hearer can teach his wife [τὴν γυναῖκα τὴν σὴν], his son [τὸν υἱόν σου] and his house-slave [τὸν οἰκέτην σου].

Chrysostom has thus used the metaphor in multiple ways: to deter his hearers from heresy; to reinforce his own authority; to encourage prayer; to encourage his hearers to pay attention themselves to his teaching; and to pass on the teaching to others. He has also suggested that the reality behind the metaphor is abominable; lending money is evil, being harmful to those who have to repay and to those expecting repayment. This contrasts with borrowing from or lending to God, where the gains are real. Throughout, the mercantile backdrop emphasises the value of what is being given or received, and also the necessity of guarding it. As Chrysostom uses the metaphor, he is also helped throughout by the connection between πίστις and related language in a commercial setting, and πίστις in the religious setting. In the commercial setting, πίστις implies trust, but in particular, trusting someone with or being trusted with something valuable. A transaction of some kind is implicit. Therefore, within the religious setting πίστις takes on similar overtones when commercial metaphors are used. To have πίστις implies that you trust God with something – whether your money, your prayer or your life. God can be counted on to repay with interest. Similarly, it is a guarantee that you can be trusted with all the treasures given to you: the teaching; and all the treasures of heaven – and you too will be expected to repay with interest.

Chrysostom, therefore, unashamedly uses commercial, financial language to instruct his hearers about faith. Once more, in seeking to see the importance of finance as a metaphor in dealing with faith, we return to Chrysostom’s preaching to catechumens as he seeks to lay solid foundations for their future Christian lives. We also see a darker side to Chrysostom’s preaching, in a separate situation where he encourages violence in the name of faith using the language of commerce.

**Finance and faith for the catechumens**

An extended example from Chrysostom’s teaching to catechumens was given near the beginning of the chapter. We can also find similar approaches in another baptismal instruction, again using πιστ– related language. It is worth quoting more fully:

> But if the name ‘human’ gives such an encouragement to virtue, how much more ‘faithful’ [πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὸ πιστός]? For you are called ‘faithful’ because of this: you put your trust in God; and you are entrusted by him [ὅτι καὶ πιστεύεις τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ πιστεύῃ παρ’ αὐτοῦ] with righteousness, holiness, cleansing of soul, adoption, and the kingdom of heaven. He entrusted these things to you and deposited them in your keeping [ἐνεπίστευσε καὶ ταῦτα σοι παρακατέθηκεν]; you, again, entrusted and deposited other things with him [σὺ πάλιν ἔτερα αὐτῷ ἐνεπίστευσε καὶ παρακατέθηκεν]: almsgiving, prayers, modesty, and every other virtue. And why do I say almsgiving? Even if you should give him just a cup of cold water, you won’t lose this, but even this he guards meticulously until that day, and he will pay it back with a great surplus [καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς ἀποδώσει τῆς περιουσίας]. This is really amazing. Not only does he guard the deposits [τὰς παρακαταθήκας], but he also increases these repayments [ἀλλὰ καὶ πλεονάζει ταύτας ταῖς ἀντιδόσεσι].

Once again, Chrysostom has set up the commercial metaphor. In this instance, both parties are simultaneously creditor and debtor; God entrusts righteousness and so forth with us; we entrust our good works to God. This already implies a link between πίστις and being faithful, as demonstrated in good works. Chrysostom goes on to reinforce this, in a picture where again πίστις is at the heart of the financial metaphor. He explains why God gives some blessings for the present day, and others for the future:

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And why didn’t he give everything here and now? So that you could demonstrate faith regarding him [Ἡνα οὗ τὴν πίστιν ἐπιδείξῃ τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ], trusting in the things that haven’t yet been given solely from his promise [τοῖς μηδέπω δοθεῖσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ὑποσχέσεως αὐτοῦ μόνης πιστεύον].

Thus in two separate instructions for catechumens Chrysostom uses the financial connotations of πίστις to emphasise aspects of the two-way relationship between the Christian and God.

**Faith, finance and violence**

These examples are relatively benign; however Chrysostom can also use the financial metaphor as part of an attempt to persuade his congregation to engage in active violence to demonstrate their faith. The setting is Antioch, at the time of the riot of the statues. The first injunction to violence was preached before the riots. Perhaps presciently, Chrysostom is concerned about blasphemy, comparing it with insulting the emperor. He encourages his congregation to counter such blasphemy by challenging the person, not only verbally, but if necessary with violence:

If you should hear anyone in the street, or in the middle of the forum, blaspheming God [βλασφημοῦντος τὸν Θεόν], go up to them, rebuke them, and if you need to land some blows, don’t hold back. Slap their face, smash their mouth; make your hand holy through the blow [ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὀψιν, σύντριψον τὸ στόμα, ἁγίασόν σου τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς]... if it’s necessary to punish those who blaspheme against an earthly emperor, how much more those who insult God. The charge is public; the crime is against the state; each person who wishes is legally able to bring forward an accusation.

His aim is to have those who aren’t Christians looking behind their backs nervously if they should consider saying anything that might be considered blasphemy. His next homily comes after the riots, where there has been real blasphemy against the emperor and his family through the destruction of the imperial statues. Chrysostom laments that if only his congregation had taken his instructions to heart, perhaps

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356 The events took place in spring 387; see the chapter on the military context.

357 John Chrysostom, *Stat. 1.32* (PG 49:32). Chrysostom is arguing that the offence belongs to the *ius publicum* branch of Roman law, which allowed anyone to bring a charge, in contrast to *ius privatum* which covered most circumstances.
God wouldn’t have allowed such catastrophe to befall the city. He goes on to compare those who fail to act against such blasphemy with the parable of the talents; the one who buried the talent in the ground was rebuked:

For the person who buried his talent was blamed not because of what he had done (for he gave back everything that had been entrusted to him [ὅλόκληρον γὰρ τὴν παρακαταθήκην ἀπέδωκεν]), but because he hadn’t increased it, because he hadn’t taught others, because he hadn’t deposited the money with the bankers [ὅτι τὸ ἀργύριον τοῖς τραπεζίταις οὐ κατέβαλε]. That is, he hadn’t exhorted, or advised, or rebuked, or corrected those nearby who were being offensive in their worthless ways [τούς πλησίον ἀκοσμοῦντας τῶν πονηρῶν].

The financial metaphor here is clear: if you want to repay God what he has entrusted to you, then that includes actively discouraging offence against God from those nearby, up to and including physical force.

The example reveals the darker side to Chrysostom; being a loyal subject of God is like being a subject of the emperor. No offence can be tolerated; it means being prepared to smash in the face of strangers if you think they are offending God. The financial metaphor is another tool Chrysostom uses to remind the congregation of their responsibilities in the faith.

**Romans, finance and πίστις**

We now return to Chrysostom’s homilies on Romans. As elsewhere, Chrysostom shows his understanding of the economic realities of his congregation. In one example, it is combined with an understanding of psychological realities. In preaching on Romans 13, where Paul urges his hearers to ‘wake from sleep’ (Rom. 13:11), Chrysostom argues that many are spiritually asleep during the day. He goes further – some would be better off really asleep than awake in his sermon:

But the person who is alert like you are, from his own self [τῆς ἑαυτοῦ κεφαλῆς] lets slip many words even for evil, adding up interest, consolidating loan accounts, remembering shameless

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The link is nicely made: τῆς ἑαυτοῦ κεφαλῆς could also mean ‘his own capital’, hence the segue into interest and loans. This small aside also demonstrates an assumption that the typical hearer is wealthy enough to lend money. In other words, again an elite audience is in mind.

However, it is in the seventh homily where Chrysostom combines financial practices as a metaphor for Christian living most clearly. The homily initially exeges Romans 3:9-31. The passage, the heart of centuries of debate surrounding Paul’s theology of justification and soteriology, emphasises righteousness through πίστις over works of the Law. Chrysostom, as usual, goes through each verse or group of verses, giving his understanding (but not addressing the modern debates directly), and concludes with an argument that the Christian is justified through grace and not through the Law. The rest of the sermon Chrysostom devotes to the type of life which is worthy of such a gift, urging his congregation to guard [φυλάττωμεν] earnestly love [τὴν ἀγάπην]. This already evokes both military and financial considerations: the word is that commonly used for guarding deposits at a bank. From this point on the congregation has thus been partly primed to consider financial metaphors. He doesn’t do this immediately, but first considers an example of guarding love ‘rejoicing with those who rejoice’ (Rom. 12:15), to expound on the dangers of envy (ὁ φθόνος). The remedy for envy is to consider Christ’s love in shedding his blood for us, and his command to love one another. But instead of shedding our blood for others, we reverse the commandment.

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360 There is an ongoing debate over both the meaning of ‘righteousness’ (δικαιοσύνη) and also, for many of the verses, whether ‘faith’ (πίστις) refers to the faith of the believer or the faith(fulness) of Christ. For the latter debate, see for example Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, eds., The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009). Similarly, the debate continues over the meaning of ‘works of the Law’: good works, or boundary markers for Jewish identity. See James D. G. Dunn, The New Perspective on Paul, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2008).

361 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:447). ‘If we guard with great earnestness love, the mother of good deeds [ἀν τὴν μητέρα τῶν ἄγαθῶν τὴν ἁγάπην μετὰ πολλῆς φυλάττωμεν τῆς σπουδῆς.']
At this point, Chrysostom points out that Christ’s actions were freely given; not out of ‘debt’ (ἐξ ὀφειλῆς), but our actions are paying back a debt (ὀφειλὴν λοιπὸν πληροῖς). This leads to a reference to the parable of the unforgiving slave (Matt. 18: 21-35), who despite being forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents fails to remit a much smaller amount. Chrysostom therefore affirms that:

For all things that we do, we do towards paying back a debt [ὀφειλὴν πληροῦντες ποιοῦμεν]… ...If then we demonstrate love, if we give our wealth to those in need, we are paying back a debt [Κἂν ἀγάπην τοῖνυν ἐπιδειξῶμεθα, κἂν χρήματα δώμεν τοῖς δεομένοις, ὀφειλὴν πληροῖμεν]...

The metaphor of us being debtors to God is not unusual; Chrysostom does the same elsewhere. However, Chrysostom swiftly reverses this picture, placing God as our debtor. He compares God to a parent who gives a small child some money and wishes the child to keep it safe. The best way to keep what God has given safe is to entrust it to God through giving to the poor. God will guard it carefully, before repaying it with a massive profit [ἀποκαταστήσω τῆς περιουσίας]. Given this, Chrysostom asks his congregation what could be more churlish than ‘not to keep lending to him [μὴ ἄνεχομένων αὐτῷ δανεῖζειν;]? Chrysostom explains that not giving to the poor leads to spiritual poverty before God:

362 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:450). Note that this is a different type of debt relationship from classical penal substitution theories of the atonement. In penal substitution, humans incur a ‘debt’ through their sins, which is ‘paid’ through the cross. Here, the freely given action of Christ creates the ‘debt’.

363 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:450).

364 For example: ‘I have said these things, not wanting to condemn you, but to show how in so many things we are debtors to God [ὀφειλέται τῷ Θεῷ].’ John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam ad Philemonem 1 (PG 62:706). See also John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam ii ad Thessalonicenses 5 (PG 62:500). Here, parents are entrusted by God with the souls [ἐνεπιστεύθημεν ψυχὰς] of their children. Of particular note too is Chrysostom explaining why the faithful are so-called: ‘For we are called “faithful”, not only because we display faith, but also because we are entrusted with the mysteries of God, which not even angels knew before us’ [Πιστοὶ γὰρ οὐ διὰ τὸ πιστεύειν καλούμεθα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ πιστευθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μυστήρια, ἀπερ οὐδὲ ἄγγελοι πρὸ ἡμῶν ἠδειαυ]. John Chrysostom, Hom. Col. 1 (PG 62:301).

365 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:450-51).

So then, this is why we come to him lonely, naked and poor, not having that which is entrusted to us \(\text{τὰ πιστευθέντα οὐκ ἔχοντες}\), because we don’t deposit it with the one who guards it more meticulously than everyone. And on account of this we shall receive the harshest judgment. And, our debt being called in, what will we be able to say about their loss? What kind of excuse will we be able to put forward? What defence? For what reason did you not give? Didn’t you trust that you would receive it back again \(\text{ἀπιστεῖς, ὅτι λήψῃ πάλιν;}\)?

If we give away our worldly wealth, we are banking it with God in the expectation of great returns. This contrasts with the poor returns that the world offers:

And should we need to lend \(\text{δανείζειν}\), we are overly concerned with those who pay a high return, and carefully look out for those who are prudent. In contrast, God, who is prudent, and offers not one hundredth but a hundred-fold, we desert, and we search for those who aren’t going to pay back to us even the capital \(\text{οὐκ ἀποδώσοντας ἡμῖν οὐδὲ τὸ κεφάλαιον}.\)

Chrysostom continues by pointing out the poor returns given by rich food, vanity, greed, or over-indulgence, painting them as the debtors of the rich. He asks his congregation:

So tell me, will we lend \(\text{δανείσομεν}\) to these based upon such a punishment, and we won’t entrust the same things to Christ \(\text{οὐ πιστεύσομεν αὐτὰ τῷ Χριστῷ},\) who offers us heaven, immortal life, ineffable good things?

Here we see Chrysostom using the language of commerce to hammer home a point to the congregation about their behaviour both in relation to their wealth and also in relation to their actions. But we can also see within his argument the language of faith: he argues that we should be ‘entrusting’ \(\text{πιστεύσομεν}\) our wealth to Christ in a sermon which initially focuses on righteousness by faith.

Blake Leyerle has offered an astute analysis of these and similar passages in Chrysostom’s works. She argues that the context is one where the wealthy generally appeared only concerned about their own status. As a result:

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...the concept of philanthropy in late antiquity was less an extension of any concern for the welfare of the destitute, than part of a desire to publicize one’s social standing.\textsuperscript{370}

Leyerle then examines how Chrysostom deals with \textit{philotimia}, the love of status and honour. She notes a number of different rhetorical strategies that he uses. These include arguing that seeking honour is enslaving; and that love of honour is effeminate and a type of prostitution. Chrysostom then moves to financial language, arguing that real \textit{philotimia} comes from investing in heaven, and therefore the best investment is giving to the poor. For those worried about slow repayments, Chrysostom argues that the poor are also the best patrons. Thus there is a mutual relationship between the poor and the rich, but one where the rich are the clients of the poor.\textsuperscript{371}

Leyerle also notes the way that this inversion is then also applied by Chrysostom to the relationship between the wealthy and the clergy. The clergy become the patrons; the wealthy become clients. She argues that Chrysostom thus bound together the desire for status – \textit{philotimia} – with a concern for secure investments.\textsuperscript{372} Her observations help explain partly why Chrysostom used this type of metaphor. However, consideration of the role of πίστις shows that Chrysostom is also availing himself of an additional strategy.

Considering the passage above from this perspective highlights the element of trustworthiness. Riches are things entrusted [τὰ πιστευθέντα] by God. If you fail to give them to God via the poor, it betrays that you don’t trust [ἀπιστεῖς] in God to

\textsuperscript{370} Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money,” 34.

\textsuperscript{371} A similar mutuality is found in the Shepherd of Hermas: ‘So whenever the rich go up to the poor and supply them with their needs, they believe that what they do for the poor will be able to find a reward from God, because the poor are rich in intercession and confession, and their intercession has great power with God’. \textit{Shepherd of Hermas Similitude} 2. Paul also gives an example of mutuality in Rom. 15:27 between gentile and Jewish Christians (though this isn’t picked up by Chrysostom).

\textsuperscript{372} See, for example, her conclusion. Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money,” 47. See also her discussion on the theatre as a place which encouraged \textit{philotimia}, and a similar concern by Chrysostom that the wealthy should seek heavenly rather than earthly glory and wealth through investing in the poor. Leyerle, \textit{Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives}, 53-56.
repay. The language is repeated later in the homily, where Chrysostom points out the infinitely better returns offered by God.373

The effect of this language is to place πίστις firmly within the financial context and vice versa. This pattern is not isolated to his homilies on Romans; it is a recurring feature. For example, in preaching on 1 Timothy, Chrysostom argues:

Concerning the guarding of this mystery [περὶ τῆς τοῦ μυστηρίου φυλακῆν], then, let us be trustworthy [Αξιόπιστοι]. He entrusted to us so great a mystery, but we don’t entrust our money to him [Αὐτὸς ἡμῖν τηλικοῦτον ἑπίστευεν μυστήριον· ἡμεῖς δὲ αὐτῷ οὐδὲ χρήματα πιστεύωμεν.]. But he, on the one hand, says ‘deposit these things with me’, where no-one can plunder them, nor moth nor robber ruin them, and he undertakes to pay back a hundred-fold, and we aren’t persuaded [οὐ πειθόμεθα].374

The language of these examples links πίστις with a mutual relationship between God and Christian, but within a financial context, where both are mutual creditors and debtors. The effect is to cement a firm bond between πίστις and what the Christian does with their wealth. A true display of πίστις means trusting God with your money, and you give your money over to God by giving it to the poor. A failure to give to the poor becomes a failure of πίστις. The relationship between the rich person and God is as much at stake as the relationship between the rich and poor.

Chrysostom’s context was one where mutuality and reciprocity between rich and poor was weakening, being replaced by commercial considerations that inevitably favoured the rich and powerful. Chrysostom uses the language of commerce that was in danger of destroying mutuality to restore it between rich and poor, as

373 John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:451).

374 John Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Tim. 11 (PG 62:555). The idea of investing in heaven can also be found in John Chrysostom, Ad Viduam Juniorem (SC 138:52). Here not only is the young widow banking her wealth in heaven, but also she is transferring her money to her husband (Christ) in so doing. Chrysostom therefore uses a mixture of two separate metaphors to make his point. Chrysostom can also invoke the concept of creating a debt of gratitude from God, as between friends when one provides hospitality for the other. See in particular John Chrysostom, Hom. Col. 1 (PG 62:304). ‘The one who invites the lame and the poor has God as a debtor [ἔχει τὸν Θεὸν ὀφειλέτην].’
Leyerle points out. This study of πίστις shows that Chrysostom is additionally engaged in developing real mutuality between the rich person and God.

The overall effect of Chrysostom’s tactics is to place πίστις at the heart of the economic and social world of his Christian congregation. Those with capital to lend (particularly those gaining in power and wealth, the imperial bureaucracy and the provincial elites) are challenged to ‘lend’ to those who cannot repay on earth, to trust God with their money, to seek a guaranteed future in a spiritual rather than a material realm. Those at a lower level, the local elite, would still recognise the force of the analogy as they used loan contracts as a form of labour contract. They would fully appreciate, given the difficult financial pressures they faced, the force of Chrysostom’s assessment that riches on earth are fickle and faithless. Those who relied on loans from others would appreciate Chrysostom’s insistence that God too has loaned them wealth, which they would be entrusted to repay. All of Chrysostom’s exhortations in these areas are amplified by the evocation of πίστις lying behind them. ‘Faith’ and finance are intimately linked.

**Other Christian preachers**

Chrysostom is not unique in using the linkage between πίστις and finance to preach about both to a congregation. It is a trope which occurs in both the eastern and western empire. In an earlier age in the west, Cyprian can urge:

> Let the poor feel that you are wealthy; let the needy feel that you are rich. Lend your estate to God; give food to Christ \([\text{diuitem te sentiant pauperes, locupletem te sentiant indigentes patrimonio tuo Deum faenera, Christum ciba}]\).^{376}

Similarly, Commodianus, from a similar time and place as Cyprian, has an instruction to pastors. Within an acrostic form, he urges pastors to:

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376 Cyprian, *De habitu virginum* 11. See also a similar plea in Cyprian, *De lapsis* 35. Here, Cyprian encourages the penitent to lend their wealth to God to heal the wound caused by their sin.
Consider, when you feed the sick, you are also lending on high
[Respice, cum pascis, infirmos, et feneras alto].

Within the east, similar approaches to Chrysostom’s teaching of catechumens can
be found in Cyril of Jerusalem. He lectures on faith to his candidates, focusing on
them receiving the teaching of the Church (by implication in particular a creed). He
carries on:

Keep them reverently, lest the enemy should strip any who have
become lax, or lest some heretic should distort any of the traditions
to you. For on the one hand faith is putting money in the bank, just as
we now have done, but on the other hand God demands back from
you the accounts of the deposit [Πίστις μὲν γάρ ἐστι τὸ βαλεῖν τὸ
ἀργύριον ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν, ὅπερ ἡμεῖς νῦν πεποίηκαμεν Θεὸς δὲ παρ’
ὑμῶν ἀπαίτεῖ τῆς παρακαταθήκης τοὺς λόγους].

Here, the catechumens become the ‘bank’ in which the faith has been deposited.
This allows Cyril to emphasise how carefully they need to keep and guard the faith,
as God will want the deposit back. Again, we see the usefulness of the link between
πίστις and finance for creating rhetorical leverage with those listening to a homily.

The example from Cyril is one where finance is used to inform the hearers about
faith; the opposite can also be found, in preaching on usury. Posterity has left only
two sermons and preachers directly on the subject of usury: Gregory of Nyssa and
Basil of Caesarea, both recently analysed by Ihssen. Her thorough analysis
includes the common theme of heavenly usury, noting that Basil also argues for
considering giving to the poor a loan which will be repaid with interest by God.

However, she does not explore the full rhetorical power of how Basil contrasts

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377 Commodianus, Instructionum 2.33.
378 Cyril of Jerusalem, Catecheses ad illuminandos 1-18 5.13.
379 She argues that Gregory deliberately set out to complement Basil’s approach.
Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, “Basil and Gregory’s Sermons on Usury: Credit Where
Credit Is Due,” Journal of Early Christian Studies 16, no. 3 (2008): 403-30. This study in
turn has been revised as part of her later work: Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, They Who
Give from Evil: The Response of the Eastern Church to Moneylending in the Early Christian
380 Ihssen, “Basil and Gregory’s Sermons on Usury: Credit Where Credit Is Due,” 420-
22.
earthly and heavenly usury. The passage used for illustration comes from Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis:

O poor one, lend to the rich God. Put your trust in [Πίστευον] the one who is at all times taking up the cause of the afflicted in his own person and supplying grace from his own stores. Trustworthy guarantor [Ἀξιόπιστος ἐγγυητής], he has vast treasuries all over the earth and sea. In fact, even if you were to demand back the loan in the middle of the ocean, you would be guaranteed to receive the capital with interest.\footnote{Basil of Caesarea, Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis (PG 31:321). Translation (slightly altered) from Susan R. Holman, The Hungry Are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 190.}

The language of faith and commerce are elided; good faith is properly found in striking a deal with God. The overlapping meanings help to point the congregation towards Basil’s aim of giving rather than lending to the poor.

Gregory does the same. In his sermon, which similarly tries to convince his hearers of the evils of usury, he compares those who rely on loans and contracts with God:

What is to blame for this? The writing on the paper – the guarantee of having been squeezed [ἡ ἐν τῷ χάρτῃ γραφή, ἤ ὀμολογία τοῦ στενωθέντος]. You will give to the bank, you will pay the dues. So then, I urge you, on the one hand there is the debtor, and impossible difficulties on account of putting faith in the written contract [διὰ τὴν συγγραφὴν πιστεύεται]; on the other hand there is God, rich, calling out and not being heard.\footnote{Gregory of Nyssa, Contra usurarios (9.198).}

Gregory is playing with financial language here throughout. The written contract is normally seen as the guarantee; here, it guarantees trouble. It is this contract, this guarantee, in which the debtor has put their faith rather than in God; the good faith of an agreement rather than the good faith of God. Once again, the full rhetorical effect of this passage can only be appreciated by realising the financial overtones of πίστις.

There is an added, hidden factor that may also have increased the force of what Basil, Gregory and other bishops said. Access to official, public justice was expensive...
and slow.\footnote{See, for example, Kelly, \textit{Ruling the Later Roman Empire}, 138-43.} For centuries, the empire had in practice relied on the private power of local members of the elite to sort out disputes, offering access to justice of a sort through the exercise of their \textit{liberum arbitrium}.\footnote{This reflects the ‘minimalist’ view of the working of the Roman Empire, as heralded in Fergus Millar, \textit{The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 BC-AD 337} (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1977). For a longer discussion on the discretion that the elite had to exercise judgment, and the implications for a minimalist view on early Christianity, see Cooper, “Christianity, Private Power, and the Law.” Hence also ‘The Roman state can be understood as a tenuously thin net of public authority spread across a swarming hive of private interest’. Kate Cooper, “Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman Domus,” \textit{Past and Present} 197 (2007): 24.} However, the rise of Christianity saw a rival source of authority – the figure of the bishop. The rivalry occurred in two areas. First, bishops seem to have taken on a greater role as mediators to parties in dispute. But secondly, bishops are appealed to as rival authorities to a \textit{dominus}. Bishops begin to interfere in the private affairs, with power through the possibility of loss of status if the \textit{dominus} was being criticised explicitly by a representative of the church, and implicitly by God.\footnote{This phenomenon is explored in Cooper, “Closely Watched Households.”} We can see both parts of this process in action through letters sent by Basil regarding the case of a widow seeking to renegotiate payments of a loan to the guardian of the heirs of her deceased husband.\footnote{The relevant letters are Basil of Caesarea, \textit{Epistulae} 107 (to the widow), 108 (to the guardian with whom she is in dispute) and 109 (to Helladius, as an influence upon the guardian).} First, the letters make it clear that Basil has already been involved as a third party to whom others can turn when there is a dispute; Basil despairs with the widow Julitta about someone who can ignore agreements already made in the presence of Basil and the ex-prefect.\footnote{Basil of Caesarea, \textit{Epistulae} 107.} He reassures the widow that he will continue to fight on her behalf, and so writes to the guardian. Here, as part of an appeal to the honour of the guardian, Basil gives a reminder of what has already been promised, and queries the changes of conditions. He asks for the original conditions to be restored:

\begin{quote}

I beg you to be mindful of your generosity, and having looked to the Lord, who repays kindnesses [καὶ πρὸς τὸν Κύριον ἀπιδόντα τὸν
\end{quote}
In addition to the reminder, Basil has also introduced God as a participant in the case. He has done so by appealing to the guardian to treat God as the debtor, not the widow, using language of repayment. Basil continues to use both God and the concept of repayment as rhetorical levers to elicit action in his letter asking for support in the matter to Helladius:

Seeing then as how the Lord is the one who makes the matters of orphans and widows his own, in the same way be eager to lend your efforts in this matter, in the hope of the payment from our God himself. [ἐπ’ ἐλπίδι τῆς παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν μισθαποδοσίας].

The vignette is thus an example of the growing intrusion in late antiquity of the bishop into the private (in the sense of not state) sphere, both in interfering directly and in mediation. The vignette also illustrates, though, how Basil links finance and faith directly when dealing with individuals. We lack the evidence to be sure that Chrysostom used the same strategies when dealing with individual cases, but the example of Basil makes it at least plausible that he did so. Not just in the congregation, but in all their dealings with clergy, the dominus of a household was likely to be made aware of a strong link between their dealings with money and their status before God; where they put their ‘good faith’ was a union of the financial and spiritual realms, closely watched by others.

Chrysostom was therefore not alone in his approach linking πίστις and finance in his teaching. He stood in a long tradition covering both the east and west that used the financial resonances of the language to urge Christians to act in particular ways, often through giving to the poor.

The economic context: conclusion

Chrysostom was embedded in his social and economic context. Within the eastern late antique empire, this was one of deepening economic inequality with the curial
class under great pressure at the expense of the military and provincial elites, and most people having precarious finances. Worries about money were endemic (both repaying loans, and securing them), with loans involving every section of society from the richest looking to put money to use through to the poorest peasants receiving loans as a form of an advance on wages. Within this economic landscape πίστις could take on a technical term meaning something like ‘good faith’; it represented a bond between creditor and debtor, meaning not only that someone could be trusted, but that they could be entrusted with something valuable.

Chrysostom, in line with other Christian preachers of his time and previously, exploits this financial resonance of πίστις and related language within his preaching, something missed by previous studies on Chrysostom and wealth. Casting the Christian’s relationship with God as being one between creditor and debtor allows him to urge Christians to lend to God, whether through prayer, good deeds, or giving to the poor. Here, πίστις has that connotation not only of trust but of entrusting something to someone. God as debtor can be trusted to repay the capital with interest literally out of this world. Chrysostom is also flexible enough to reverse the relationship: God is the creditor and the Christian is the debtor. Here, God entrusts the Christian with valuables, whether sound teaching or all his blessings. The Christian needs to repay the debt, again through good deeds, prayer or giving to the poor, or even through violence aimed at any who offend God. At a fundamental level, the whole relationship between the Christian and God can be likened to a business contract, with πίστις as the commercial term at the heart of the relationship.

In summary, Chrysostom uses the financial aspects of πίστις to address his congregations’ behaviour through comparing the reciprocal relationship between creditor and debtor to the reciprocal relationship with God. The financial overtones also enable him to move easily from the relationship with God to address financial matters with his hearers, leading to repeated calls to the elite to give to the poor, creating or strengthening a sense of mutual reciprocity that the rise of commercial considerations was in danger of destroying. His flexibility with who is creditor or debtor allows him to adopt both a carrot and stick approach: God as debtor will
repay greatly if money is deposited with God via the poor; God as creditor expects returns on the ‘talents’ he has invested in the Christian.

Such a message would resonate not just amongst peasants or artisans, but also the increasingly desperate curial class, all potentially facing financial pressure and woes. But Chrysostom was careful to calibrate his preaching; the elite might have felt under scrutiny, but wealth itself was not a target. Chrysostom wished for transformation but not for revolution.

Previous studies have noted Chrysostom’s concern about wealth and poverty, but ignored or not noticed the dimension of faith. This chapter demonstrates how important that dimension is to appreciating Chrysostom’s approach to wealth and the wealthy. Chrysostom’s use of πίστις and finance ensures that the relationship between the Christian and God informs the Christian’s financial relationships, and the financial relationships inform the Christian of what their relationship with God should be like. At the heart of the relationship, and acting as the lynchpin between the Christian and God, and rich and poor, lies πίστις.
5. The Household Context

...the primary and smallest parts of the household are master and slave, and husband and wife, and father and children; one should reflect on these three... 392

Introduction

Other chapters examine how Chrysostom uses metaphors based upon the military and economic context. Important as these are, perhaps the primary context for understanding the late Roman empire is through the lens of the household. The basic components were much the same as in the time of Aristotle (quoted above). Taking a male householder, the primary relationships were husband and wife, master and slave, and father and son. 392 In this chapter I demonstrate the interactions that Chrysostom made in his preaching between πίστις and the power dynamics of the relationships within the household. In particular, I argue that Chrysostom exploited the use of πίστις within the household context to encourage his congregations to be faithful and obedient to God (and his representatives the bishops), just as he also preached that God in turn was faithful and caring of them.

391 Taken from ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἐλαχίστοις πρῶτον ἔκαστον ζητητέον, πρῶτα δὲ καὶ ἐλάχιστα μέρη οἰκίας δεσπότης καὶ δοῦλος, καὶ πόσις καὶ ἄλοχος, καὶ πατήρ καὶ τέκνα, περὶ τριῶν ἀν τούτων σκεπτέον εἶ ἡ τί ἔκαστον καὶ ποῖον δεί εἶναι. Aristotle, Politica 1.1253b.

392 I focus on the male householder. As will become apparent in the discussion, females also could be in positions of authority and power over land and slaves. However, Chrysostom tends to use male stereotypes when using the metaphors of owner and slave or parent and child.
However, he also used this heavenly relationship both to challenge and to reinforce existing earthly relationships, as he sought sometimes to transform and sometimes to shore up existing patterns of relationships. Thus, paying attention to the household context of πίστις within Chrysostom’s preaching illuminates not only his preaching strategies but also the changing realities of domestic relationships in the late antique period, and the preacher’s role in that changing dynamic.

The changing realities of the power dynamics within the relationships were coming about through a variety of economic, social and religious pressures. Chrysostom also used the relationships in different ways from each other. Thus I first outline the concept of the household in late antiquity, before analysing Chrysostom’s use of each of the three relationships in more detail.

**The household in the fourth century**

In this section I outline the concept of the household in late antiquity. This leads on to discussing power dynamics within the household, and changes that were in place during the fourth century.

**The concept of the household**

The household, οἶκος or domus, was central to the social construction of the Roman empire. Given its importance, it is worth clarifying some of the terms around the household, as parallels with modern forms of family can prove misleading, as Richard Saller and Kate Cooper point out in their articles that deal directly with this issue. The related term familia is also potentially misleading. As Cooper notes, this term denoted the dependants – whether slave or free (principally children) – under the patria potestas of a Roman paterfamilias. It did not include the wife. In contrast, domus was a flexible term that could cover the physical space (for the elite, this

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393 See, for example, the comments of Kate Cooper: ‘The domus, along with its aspects of family and dynasty, was the primary unit of cultural identity, political significance, and economic production.’ Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 14.


395 Cooper, “Approaching the Holy Household,” 133.
could mean many estates), but also could cover everyone within a broad ‘household’ – so wife as well as slaves and others.\textsuperscript{397}

For the highest elite, the household was also effectively a family firm, covering all the economically active possessions and properties in addition to homes actually lived in by the householder.\textsuperscript{398}

The \textit{domus} was also the stage upon which the householder (\textit{dominus}) portrayed himself to public gaze, within the competitive honour-based society. It was an arena deliberately used to interact with the wider community.\textsuperscript{399} Thus his status did not depend solely upon his own actions, but upon all the relationships within the household. Any failure of appropriate recognition of his place and authority by subordinates would result in loss of face:

\begin{quote}
The \textit{domus} was a testing ground for a man’s ability to sustain relationships of reciprocity with dependants and allies.\textsuperscript{400}
\end{quote}

This sense of the household as stage interacts at our time with the liminal legal status of the wife to create ambiguous power dynamics within the household.

\section*{Power dynamics within the household}

Marriage at this time was \textit{sine manu}; that is, the wife remained legally under the power of her father. This affected property rights within a marriage. The dowry that accompanied the wife would have to be returned upon death or divorce. Other property which she owned not only did not automatically become the husband’s,

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\textsuperscript{397} Saller, “‘Familia, Domus”, and the Roman Conception of the Family,” 342.
\textsuperscript{399} This issue is discussed in more detail in Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 3-33.
\textsuperscript{400} Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 7. Chrysostom uses this as leverage, for example in discouraging drunkenness. See John Chrysostom, \textit{Hom. Rom. 13} (PG 60:521).
but could not legally be transferred to the husband (or vice versa). This gave the wife a certain power within the household. If the husband annoyed her too much, and she owned property, she could divorce and walk away with her money. However, this was counterbalanced by the legal situation of the children, who belonged to the husband’s *familia*. Leaving a husband might mean she never saw her children again. The wife’s position within the household was also confirmed legally by the debt of *reverentia* and *obsequium* owed not just to the father but also to her from the children.\footnote{See Richard P. Saller, “Symbols of Gender and Status Hierarchies in the Roman Household,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan (London: Routledge, 2001), 86.}

The elite wife also played a significant role in establishing her husband’s status through her own conduct in the household; as a supporting character in her husband’s social performance, she could help to make or break his role. Additionally, she could be a property owner (*domina*) in her own right entirely separately from her husband.

The father-son dynamics were also ambiguous and in flux. Children were legally under the power (*patria potestas*) of the father (the *paterfamilias*) and expected to obey him. However, changes set in motion by Diocletian and accelerated by the gold standard adopted by Constantine led to a situation where a young, ambitious man would do better to move from his provincial hometown and join the imperial civil service than to remain and, as a town councillor, be liable for tax demands.\footnote{If the man could achieve senatorial status (*honorati*) through the imperial civil service, then he was also exempt from tax on returning home. For the opportunities to accumulate wealth in the imperial civil service, see Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*.} This also perhaps encouraged marrying ‘down’ or having a concubine; wives of lower status might object less to moving around the empire.\footnote{Anecdotally, I saw similar marriage strategies being used by some of those joining a large multinational and who expected to move frequently around the world for the next ten to twenty years. This issue is discussed in more detail in Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, 147–60.} The effect was to weaken the authority of the father over the son, who might be geographically absent or returning with higher status than the father left behind.

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402 If the man could achieve senatorial status (*honorati*) through the imperial civil service, then he was also exempt from tax on returning home. For the opportunities to accumulate wealth in the imperial civil service, see Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*.
403 Anecdotally, I saw similar marriage strategies being used by some of those joining a large multinational and who expected to move frequently around the world for the next ten to twenty years. This issue is discussed in more detail in Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, 147–60.
Additionally, Christianity offered a potential resource for justifying rebellion against parents by preaching moral independence and asceticism. Citing a comment by Augustine about a fictional son speaking to his father, Kate Cooper notes: ‘this is only one of an ocean of Christian texts proposing that young men – and sometimes women – should listen to their consciences rather than their fathers’. Counterbalancing this, Christianity offered some reassurance that obedience was still required, only to a spiritual father such as a bishop instead.

Thus opposing values were at work. The traditional Roman power of the paterfamilias was still present, a force to be reckoned with, but others were gaining power. This helps illuminate the constraints John Chrysostom was operating under in his preaching. Given the still central role of the dominus/paterfamilias, he would not be in a position to undermine this too much. As the dominus was also seen as the ‘steward of wealth and power in the community’, any call for renouncing all wealth would be seen as a ‘betrayal of senatorial values’ and as a dereliction of duty.

The changes also meant a change in the relationship between a husband and his father-in-law. Traditionally, the links were important; the reciprocal obligations meant that the wife’s family might be a source of help and advancement. However, this also was weakening in the fourth century; if you have moved half-way across the empire, your in-laws are much less important. Similarly, if you have married a lower-status woman, your in-laws may not be in a position to help you anyway. This weakening of the bond between families, coinciding with a weakening legally of the power of a father over his adult daughter, led to concerns about the level of female independence. Women could be significant property owners, and now

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404 Cooper, The Fall of the Roman Household, 28.
405 Alluded to in Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 3-33.
406 Cooper, The Fall of the Roman Household, 38.
407 Estimates range from 15-50% ownership by women. As an example, Chrysostom’s friend Olympias was ‘fabulously wealthy, with estates in Thrace, Galatia, Cappadocia and Bithynia, as well as numerous properties in Constantinople itself.’ Kelly, Golden Mouth, 112. For more on the actual figures see Cooper, The Fall of the Roman Household, 113 n.69.
independent from both father and husband; there seems to have been a desire to establish wives more firmly under the control of their husbands.408

To summarise: the household was a pivotal stage for the elite, where they negotiated their status with their peers and others. Within the household, the father had important legal rights over his children and slaves. However, his wife could own property in her own right and was not under his jurisdiction. Ultimately, she could leave him, taking her money. The fourth century was also a period where the power dynamics were changing; an elite householder would find himself having less power over his son (who might have gone abroad for advancement), and over his son-in-law (who might well be higher status). Socially, the church was potentially encouraging disobedience through its emphasis on moral independence and, from some sections, emphasis on ascetic ideals. This was balanced by an attempt to generate obedience from wife to husband, and from everyone to bishops.

Given this context, I now demonstrate the role that πίστις played within the social construction of the relationships within the household. I then analyse how Chrysostom’s preaching used πίστις within this context, and how his preaching in turn sought to influence the power dynamics within the household. The following sections examine these issues for husbands and wives, father and sons, and masters and slaves.

**Husband and wife**

This section examines Chrysostom’s use of the marriage metaphor for the Church’s relationship with God, and what it can indicate to us about the role of πίστις in his preaching. In particular, I argue that the metaphor leads us to see πίστις as meaning faithfulness to God, just as a bride is called to be faithful to her bridegroom. This faithfulness brings with it connotations of obedience and self-control (faithfulness in one’s actions). It also implies trust (faithfulness in one’s belief). To demonstrate this we need a clear appreciation of how marriage was viewed by Chrysostom and

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408 This is a central part of Kate Cooper’s argument regarding the fifth and sixth century household manuals (such as *Ad Gregorium in palatio*) in Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household.*
generally in the late antique Eastern empire. What virtues were associated with
marriage; did Chrysostom subscribe to them; and how does this impinge on his
preaching?

To set the context for what follows, I first provide an example of how Chrysostom
uses a marriage metaphor in his preaching. Next, I explore how this would have
been received by his congregation. I do so by briefly outlining the traditional late
antique attitudes towards marriage (in particular the virtues proclaimed as
important in the wife). I then demonstrate that Chrysostom himself has a very
traditional Roman view of marriage, seeing the same virtues as being important.
This in turn allows us to gauge the likely place of πίστις within Chrysostom’s
marriage metaphors. Finally, I return to Chrysostom’s preaching to show how this
does indeed make sense of both his use of marriage metaphors and his assumptions
about πίστις.

The bride of Christ

There is a long scriptural tradition of using the marriage metaphor for the
relationship between God and his people.\textsuperscript{409} It is no surprise, therefore, that a
commentator as soaked in scripture as Chrysostom should also make use of it. And
he does so, regularly. In the example that follows, Chrysostom is preaching on
Romans 8:24: ‘For we are saved by hope’.

It’s not necessary to look for everything here, but also to hope
[ἐλπίζειν]. For we brought God only this gift [Τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον
εἰσηνέγκαμεν τῷ Θεῷ τὸ δῶρον]: trusting him [τὸ πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ] that what he promised will happen, and we were saved by this path
alone...

...So what saved you? Only hoping in God, and trusting him about
what he has promised and given, and you have nothing more to bring...
[τί οὖν σε ἔσωσε; Τὸ εἰς τὸν θεόν ἔλπίσαι μόνον, καὶ πιστεῦσαι
αὐτῷ περὶ ᾧν ἐπηγγείλατο καὶ ἔδωκε, καὶ πλέον οὐδὲν ἔσχες
εἰσενεγκεῖν.]

...So don’t say to me, yet again hope, yet again what we can expect,
yet again faith [πάλιν ἐλπίδες, πάλιν προσδοκία, πάλιν πίστις]. For in

\textsuperscript{409} The most obvious New Testament example is Eph. 5:21-33. See also Rev. 21:9, and
Hosea. Of course, the metaphor also arises in Romans 7.
the beginning you were saved like this, and you brought only this dowry to the bridegroom [Οὕτω γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐσώθης, καὶ ταύτην τὴν προῖκα εἰσήνεγκας τῷ νυμφίῳ μόνον].410

The passage in Romans is looking to a future redemption. Chrysostom has already covered this in the homily up to this point. But the verse prompts yet another chance to remind the congregation to look to their heavenly future rather than material rewards here on earth. In the course of this, Chrysostom brings in, not just hope, but also ‘faith’ (πίστις, τὸ πιστεύειν). In this particular context, it functions as a synonym for hope, and therefore trusting God. However, Chrysostom develops this point, and in so doing introduces other connotations to the word. He is keen to ensure that his congregation realise that πίστις is all the Christian brings to God. To emphasise this, he uses a marriage metaphor. Christ (or God) is the bridegroom, and implicitly the person in the congregation is the bride.411 Πίστις is the dowry that the bride brings: her contribution to the marriage.

The metaphor raises a number of questions, but in particular we need to ask: what roles does πίστις play in marriage generally in the late antique east (and was this understanding shared by Chrysostom)? Once we know this, we can begin to appreciate the connotations that may be present in this and other discussions of πίστις by Chrysostom.

Marriage in the late antique period

In delineating the role played by πίστις, I first outline what were seen as the general virtues appropriate to a Roman wife. I then demonstrate that Chrysostom also valued the same virtues in marriage. In other words, I argue that Chrysostom had a conventional Roman view of what a good wife should be like. Having established this foundation, I then consider the role played in particular by πίστις within discussions of marital virtues.

411 Chrysostom is using the second person singular to address the congregation at this point.
Traditional Roman marital virtues

When considering what would be seen as the virtues of a wife in the Roman tradition, we are at first travelling on well-worn ground. It was in 1958 that Williams (using poetry and comedy as sources for the marriage ceremony) argued that three particular virtues could be associated with Roman marriage:

...the ideal of a single marriage to one husband, of wifely obedience or dutifulness, and of the eternal marriage-bond. These three interrelated ideals are Roman and in no way Greek; any one of them might at any time be the spontaneous conception of a human mind, but all three, held together consistently over hundreds of years, are a peculiar creation of the Roman genius.412

Treggiari followed up this argument by examining evidence from tomb inscriptions and literary sources.413 The results broadly confirmed Williams’ hypothesis, though also showed up some other facets. Within the epitaphs, terms of affection outweighed those relating to the virtues of a wife. Noting this, Treggiari nevertheless identifies the virtues for which wives are praised.414 These include some which relate to sexual fidelity: castitas (relating to purity) and pudicitia (relating to the conscience ‘which keeps a person from shameful actions’).415 She also confirms Williams’ stress on the importance of the eternal marriage bond, with univira (being married to only one husband) being a term of praise.416 Other virtues relate to the kindness or probity of the wife (comitas and pietas),417 and (a

414 Some of these are also applied to husbands.
415 Treggiari, Roman Marriage, 232-33.
416 This is notable as it goes against the stress Roman society and law (since Augustus) placed in practice on remarriage for widows until the legislation enacted by Constantine in 320. For the background to the change in legislation see Judith Evans Grubbs, Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine’s Marriage Legislation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 103-39.
417 Treggiari, Roman Marriage, 241-43.
particularly Roman feature) industriousness, represented by spinning wool (lanificium). Within marriage she also finds the ideal of partnership (societas).

There remain three other virtues which repay closer attention. First (and most directly relevant for us) she finds faithfulness (fides) praised:

The reciprocity of fides is neatly expressed in the phrase the butcher Aurelius Hermes applies to his wife: ‘fida fido viro’ (‘faithful to her faithful husband’).

This faithfulness includes, but is not limited to, sexual fidelity. Treggiari argues that it covers a broad range of areas, including being trustworthy whether of finances or secrets. The key point is that fides is explicitly associated with marriage, and that it related to faithfulness.

Similar grave inscriptions in Greek mirror the Latin epigraphs in exalting faithful wives, showing that πίστις, like fides, indicated marital fidelity in this context. For instance:

Pōlla, faithful wife of Ἰζμηνίου Διραδιώτου.

This sentiment is repeated in other inscriptions. And Chrysostom himself does the same. As bishop of Constantinople, having been absent from the capital for months, on his return he gave heart-warming praise to his congregation. He tells them they are like a sober-minded wife, so that he can be ‘confident of your good intent, your love, your faithfulness, your goodwill [τῇ γνώμῃ, τῇ ἀγάπῃ, τῇ πίστει, τῇ εὐνοίᾳ], because I know that my wife is a woman who strives to be sober-minded

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418 Treggiari, Roman Marriage, 243-44.
419 Treggiari, Roman Marriage, 237. The inscription comes from Rome, 75-50 BC. I.1221 = 6.9499 = ILS 7472 = ILLRP 793.
420 Agora 17 112 = SEG 14:153 found in Athens. No date given.
421 See IG II¹ 3850, IG II² 8173, Erythrai 152, TAM III 819, IG II² 8802 and IG IX,2 448.
422 See Kelly, Golden Mouth, 181-83.
Thus Chrysostom and his congregation would normally have understood πίστις in a marriage context to mean faithfulness.

A second virtue to be found in a marriage is that of harmony – *concordia*. Treggiari notes (amongst other evidence she cites) that ‘*Longa Concordia* was what you wished a bridal couple’. The third virtue is that of *obsequium*. Here Treggiari deviates from the analysis of Williams, who glosses it as obedience. She notes that occasional epitaphs apply the virtue to both spouses, and proceeds to argue that inscriptions suggest that it mainly implies co-operation rather than having implications about status. She follows this up with an analysis of the term within literature, summarising:

> In short, compliance, complaisance, obligingness seem more prominent in the *obsequium* of a wife than the strict obedience which might be demanded of a soldier or a slave or freedman.

Although not used by Treggiari herself, the argument seems to point perhaps to ‘respectful’ as an appropriate gloss for *obsequium*.

Treggiari continues by exploring whether the role of women in Roman marriage is more equal to men than has hitherto been given credit. She concludes:

> ...Rome’s particular (though not entirely original) contribution to the ideology of marriage was the ideal of the wife’s faithfulness to one man, the eternity of the bond, and the partnership of the couple. Subordination of the wife, I would argue, was not essential or important by the time of Cicero.

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424 Cooper notes the importance of this virtue as a rhetorical tool in the positioning of the Roman household. Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*. See chapter one for the role of marital harmony in negotiating status.


Treggiari herself notes that subordination returns as an expectation in later Christian sources (she covers roughly from the first century BC to the second century AD).\(^{428}\) The overall picture initially sketched out by Williams has been filled in. Within this picture, fides occupies a significant portion of the canvas.

Evans Grubb develops the work of Treggiari, taking us into the later period of Constantine, and also comparing ‘pagan’ with ‘Christian’ attitudes to marriage. Whilst others have assumed a great divide between these, she argues that there is no sharp divide between the ideology of late antique Christianity and paganism.\(^{429}\) The continuity in the rhetoric of marital virtues is also reinforced by Cooper: ‘it would be a mistake to suggest a monolithic Christian rejection of marital concord, self-mastery, or the good influence of women’.\(^{430}\)

To summarise: the traditional Roman virtues associated with a wife are that she should be: faithful; chaste; respectful; and industrious. The marriage itself should be a harmonious, affectionate partnership. Ideally the woman will only ever have the

\(^{428}\) Treggiari, Roman Marriage, 239. Given the hierarchical nature of Roman society, I have some doubts over Treggiari’s hypothesis. I also wonder whether she has allowed enough weight to the age difference at marriage, which might skew power in a relationship. Men were typically over 25 when they married, whilst women tended to be in their teens or early twenties. See Richard P. Saller, “Men’s Age at Marriage and Its Consequences in the Roman Family,” Classical Philology 82, no. 1 (1987): 21-34. There are some indications that age at marriage in rural areas may have been younger for both men and women. See Walter Scheidel, “Epigraphy and Demography: Birth, Marriage, Family, and Death,” Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics (2007), http://ssrn.com/abstract=1096436.

\(^{429}\) Evans Grubbs, “‘Pagan’ and ‘Christian’ Marriage.” This is essentially the same as chapter 2 of Evans Grubbs, Law and Family in Late Antiquity. She points to the continuity in decorations of pagan and Christian sarcophagi to demonstrate similar Christian and pagan.

\(^{430}\) Cooper, The Virgin and the Bride, 17. Evans Grubb and Cooper also both attack the thesis of Veyne that there was a marked shift in morality from before Augustus to after. See Paul Veyne, “La Famille et L’amour Sous Le Haut-Empire Romain,” Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations 33, no. 1 (1978): 35-63. For an outline of how the term σωφροσύνη changes from ancient Greek literature through to late antique Christianity, see Helen North, Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 312-13.
one husband throughout her life. We might therefore expect to see these traditional virtues reflected in the writings of Chrysostom. This is exactly what we do find.\footnote{431}

**Chrysostom and traditional marital virtues**

Chrysostom is always alert to the possibility of trying to change his congregation’s ways. In an early sermon, as he preaches his way through Genesis, he comes to the passage where Isaac’s marriage to Rebecca is arranged (Gen. 24). He uses the occasion to contrast their, in his view, dignified, simple wedding with the depraved ceremonies accompanying current weddings. Complaining about obscene songs and rituals, Chrysostom continues:

All this ought to be anathema, and the girl instructed from the beginning in respect [τὴν αἰδῶ], and priests summoned to strengthen the harmony of the union [τὴν ὁμονοιαν τοῦ συνοικεσίου] by prayers and blessings so that the love [ὁ πόθος] for her spouse may be increased and the maid’s sober-mindedness [τῆς κόρης ἡ σωφροσύνη] may be heightened. Thus by every means the practice of virtue [τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἔργα] will enter that home...\footnote{432}

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\footnote{431} Not just in Chrysostom, of course, but many late antique Christian authors. So Augustine, for instance, can speak of marriage as a ‘friendly and true union of the one ruling, and the other obeying [aletius regentis, alterius obsequentis amicalis quaedam et germana conjunctio]’; that the couple ‘owe faith to each other [fidem tamen sibi pariter debent]’; and outlining three goods of marriage as being ‘offspring, faith, sacrament [proles, fides, sacramentum]’. The emphasis on faithfulness, a harmonious marriage, and respectfulness from the wife is all traditionally Roman. Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali* 1, 4 & 32. From an earlier period (c.240-320) Lactantius also asserts traditional values as he berates Plato’s suggestion of having women in common in marriage, asking ‘Where, then, is the virtue of chastity? where conjugal fidelity? [ubi est igitur uirtus castitatis? ubi fides coniugalis?]’ and goes on to argue that such a system destroys affection [caritas] in a marriage. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 3.21 (CSEL 19:249).

This short appeal by Chrysostom to his congregation neatly encapsulates much of the traditional Roman approach to marriage. The bride is encouraged to learn to respect her husband, to be chaste, and to love her husband. The prayer is that the marriage will be harmonious. These combined are seen as virtues.

Other passages confirm this impression. Chrysostom’s preaching on Ephesians 5:21-33 emphasises that the wife should be subject to the husband, but links this in to having a harmonious marriage:

...as when he says here, ‘wives, be subject to [ὑποτάσσεσθε] your husbands, as to the Lord.’ Why do you suppose? Because if these are in harmony [ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ], the children are also well brought up, and the household is orderly, and neighbours enjoy the fragrance, along with friends and relatives. But if it’s the reverse, then everything is turned upside-down and confused. For just as when generals are at peace with each other, everything is in order [ἐν ἀκολουθίᾳ], and again if they are stirring up trouble, then everything is topsy-turvy; now this also is the same.  

Thus for Chrysostom the submission of the wife to the husband is intricately linked to a harmonious marriage. Chrysostom also has the traditional Roman view that the woman’s sphere of influence is the household. This is seen in a homily giving advice on the best type of wife:

Our life is customarily organized into two spheres: public affairs and private matters, both of which were determined by God. To woman is assigned the presidency of the household [τὴν τῆς οἰκίας]


434 It is also worth noting the comparison to generals: another example of the way in which Chrysostom often turns to military metaphors. See chapter three. For a discussion on the inter-relationship of the sexes according to Chrysostom, see David C. Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church: The Full Views of St. John Chrysostom* (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1996), 138-68. ‘Harmony’ would have had special resonances for a congregation in Antioch. One of the churches was dedicated to *Homonoia-Concordia* by Constantine after reuniting the empire. The church was octagonal, a symbol for *homonia/harmony*. See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, “On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960): 14. The article also shows the continuity in the importance of harmony in marriage through the Christianisation of the empire, from the goddess Concordia being associated through to *concordia/homonoia* as a Christian virtue being associated.
It is worth noting in particular that Chrysostom singles out spinning and weaving—activities that symbolised a wife’s industriousness and were traditionally Roman.

Chrysostom also held (again as a traditional Roman would) the view that it was best if a woman only married once; in other words, that for a woman to be univira (the Latin term) was praiseworthy (though Chrysostom himself never uses the equivalent, relatively rare, Greek term μόνανδρος). In Antioch he wrote a treatise which addressed this issue in particular, advising widows not to remarry if possible (though remarriage was permissible): marriage consists of a woman being content with one man. Remarriage deprives both husbands of ‘the honour and love befitting from a wife’.  

To summarise briefly: Chrysostom clearly advocates the same marital virtues that had been traditional in Roman culture for hundreds of years. These include that the wife should be chaste, respectful and industrious; that the marriage should be harmonious and affectionate; and that the wife ideally should only marry once. Given this, it is fair to assume that when Chrysostom uses πίστις and its derivatives in the context of marriage, it evokes these same traditional values and therefore relates to the faithfulness that a spouse owes his or her partner.

435 John Chrysostom, Quales Ducendae Sint Uxores (= De Laude Maximi) (PG 51:230-31). Translation from Clark, Women in the Early Church, 36. The passage is also referenced by Ford, though he abbreviates Clark’s longer excerpt (not given above) which has the effect of excising Chrysostom’s less favourable comments about the abilities of women. Ford, Women and Men in the Early Church, 185-86.

436 John Chrysostom, De Non Iterando Conjugio (SC 138:170). See the discussion of this treatise (including the possible date of 382-83) in Kelly, Golden Mouth, 46-48. Chrysostom may have been influenced by his mother’s example, who remained single after being widowed at around the age of twenty. See Chrysostom’s account of his teacher Libanius finding out and exclaiming in surprise (which Chrysostom takes to be praise). John Chrysostom, Vid. 2 (SC 138:lines 95-106). Note that Kelly wrongly references this as PG 48:624; the correct Migne reference is PG 48:601. Kelly, Golden Mouth, 5 n.20.
Having established this point securely, we can now examine how Chrysostom does metaphorically link faithfulness in marriage with the Christian’s relationship with God.

**Marriage imagery and πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching**

As with the military and economic contexts, one of the first places to look when exploring whether it is fair to place emphasis on a particular metaphor is the teaching that the catechumens received from Chrysostom when preparing for baptism. It is here that the foundations of faith are being addressed and patterns laid down for thought and behaviour as a baptised member of the Church. It is striking, therefore, that Chrysostom reaches for the marriage metaphor directly from the very start of his instructions:

>This is a time for joy and gladness of the spirit. Behold, the days of our longing and love, the days of your spiritual marriage [τῶν πνευματικῶν γάμων], are close at hand. To call what takes place today a marriage would be no blunder...\(^{437}\)

Chrysostom continues by quoting from Paul to justify this statement.\(^{438}\) He then expands on the metaphor, inviting his hearers to identify themselves as a prospective bride, and outlines the wealth and kindness of the bridegroom. Chrysostom emphasises how sordid, depraved and ugly the bride is, yet Christ ‘our bridegroom hurries to save our souls’.\(^{439}\)

Chrysostom now provides pointers as to what the contribution of the bride is to be. He further enlarges the marriage metaphor, reminding his congregation that at a wedding there are gifts brought by the groom, a dowry brought by the bride, and a formal contract setting out the dowry.\(^{440}\) He now explores the nature of the dowry:

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\(^{438}\) 2 Cor. 11:2.


\(^{440}\) For the general background, including legal, to the arrangement of marriages and dowries see Evans Grubbs, ““Pagan” and “Christian” Marriage,” 365.
What, then, is the dowry contract [τὰ προικῷα γραμματεῖα] in this marriage? Nothing but the obedience [ἥ ὑπακοὴ] and the agreement which will be made [αἱ συνθῆκαι αἱ μέλλουσαι] with the Bridegroom.  

Thus here the dowry brought by the bride is obedience, and the ‘agreement’, which refers to the actual confession made during the baptism service, renouncing Satan and entering into Christ’s service. This implies fidelity; earlier in the instruction Chrysostom has explained how a young woman getting married will forget everything (and everyone) else and ‘gives over her entire will [πᾶσαν αὐτῆς τὴν γνώμην]’ to the bridegroom. Thus the metaphor implies that the Christian will forsake everything else, and be faithful and obedient to Christ. Marriage and πιστ- related language are combined in other baptismal homilies. Chrysostom can declare ‘listen, faithful ones, to what kind of bridegroom you are coming [ἀκούσατε οἱ πιστοί, ποίῳ προσέρχεσθε νυμφίῳ]’ to encourage modest behaviour. In a separate homily, the connection is made more explicitly. Chrysostom begins with an extended metaphor of the bridegroom and bride, including asking:

Do you want to learn what she [the bride] is called? She is called faithful and holy [βούλει καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς μαθεῖ πιστὴ καὶ ἁγία].

Later in the homily, he again compares the declaration with the dowry that the bride brings, as well as being a contract with the bridegroom.

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442 See, for example, John Chrysostom, Catech. Illum. 2.17-21 (SC 50:143-45). The link between dowry and faith is implied a little later in this homily, where Chrysostom declares that what we bring [αὐτοὶ τὰ παρ᾿ ἑαυτῶν εἰσενέγγκατε] is a confession and understanding fixed in ‘devout faith [ἐν τῇ εὐσεβεῖ πίστει]’. John Chrysostom, Catech. Illum. 1.19 (SC 50:118).

443 For example, a little later in the same homily Chrysostom declares that what we bring [αὐτοὶ τὰ παρ᾿ ἑαυτῶν εἰσενέγγκατε] is a confession and understanding fixed in ‘devout faith [ἐν τῇ εὐσεβεῖ πίστει]’. 

444 John Chrysostom, Catech. illum. 1.12 (SC 50:115).

445 John Chrysostom, Catechesis De Juramento (PK 164).

446 John Chrysostom, Catech. Ult. (PK 169).
The dowry metaphor in particular is repeated in another homily, *Homilia de capto Eutropio*. In part, this is because Chrysostom chooses to preach on Psalm 45, which he takes as a metaphor for Christ marrying the church. Here, however, Chrysostom gives the metaphor a twist. The bridegroom provides a dowry and an engagement ring. The engagement ring – traditionally a pledge of ‘love and fidelity’ from the bridegroom to the bride – is the Holy Spirit, a pledge of the promises to come.

The dowry from the bridegroom is divided into two: blessings that the Christian can experience in the present life; and blessings that belong to the life to come. However, Chrysostom still addresses the dowry that the bride is to bring:

> What does the bride contribute [εἰσφέρει]? Let us see. What then will you bring, so that you won’t be without a dowry [ἀπρόικος]? ‘What do I have’ she says, ‘to bring from altars, from the steam of sacrifices, from demons? What do I have to bring? ’ What? Your will and faithfulness [Γνώμην καὶ πίστιν].

Chrysostom continues by arguing that the bride is to abandon her parents (Psalm 45:10 lends itself to this interpretation) and be united to Christ her lover. Here, by implication, the parents are the pagan gods and religion. The πίστις that the bride will bring means abandoning other gods and being faithful to Christ. Again, Chrysostom proceeds to link this to obedience. Later in the same homily (by now preaching on ‘and the king will desire your beauty’), where we might expect ‘faith’ to recur, it is obedience that has taken its place:

> To the sinful woman he has said ‘Listen!’ and if she will obey [ὑπακούσει] she sees what type of beauty is given to her.

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447 John Chrysostom, *Homilia De Capto Eutropio* (PG 52:395-414). Despite the title, the homily was probably delivered on the occasion of the capture of Count John by the army occupying Constantinople under Gainas. This would date it to 400 in Constantinople. See Alan Cameron, “A Misidentified Homily of Chrysostom,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988): 34-48. The homily is also discussed by Kelly in his biography: Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 153-56.

448 Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 149.


There is a parallel passage earlier in the homily where Chrysostom explicitly states that the bride’s response to ‘Listen!’ (a quote from Psalm 45:10) is ‘faith’:

Since her dowry [ἡ προῖξ αὐτῆς] was through hearing (what is ‘through hearing’? Through faith. [τί ἐστιν ἐν ἀκοῇ; Ἐν πίστει] ‘For faith comes from hearing’)...452

Chrysostom comes to the same passage when preaching on the psalms. Again, he takes Psalm 45:10 as referring to the church as a bride, and again he uses the rest of the verse to argue that Christians are to abandon their old ways. He continues (commenting on Psalm 45:11) by explaining that the beauty comes ‘from obedience to him [ἐκ τῆς ὑπακοῆς αὐτοῦ]’.453 Thus his interpretation of the same verse alternates (sometimes within the same homily) between the bride responding by being obedient, and the bride contributing πίστις.

To recap on the last examples: Chrysostom regularly makes use of marriage as a metaphor for the Christian’s relationship with Christ. The wedding gifts or dowry that the bridegroom brings are blessings both now and in the future, with the Holy Spirit (like an engagement ring) as a pledge of the future blessings. In return, the bride’s dowry is sometimes described as being obedience, sometimes πίστις, with Chrysostom seeming to find it easy to switch between the two. Such obedience and πίστις involves abandoning the past (particularly pagan religion) and being united with Christ the bridegroom with the whole of one’s will.

Within this scheme, the most natural meaning of πίστις is ‘faithfulness’ for two reasons. First, it does full justice to the marriage context, where we have shown faithfulness to be a central, traditional virtue. Secondly, it makes sense of the way in which Chrysostom can switch to obedience (faithfulness in action) in any case. Within the context of a Roman marriage this association is strengthened: a faithful wife would be respectful or obedient to her

453 John Chrysostom, Exp. Ps. 45 (PG 55:200). He uses Psalm 45:10-11 in a similar vein (urging his congregation to beautify their souls, not their bodies) on other occasions (in eight homilies in total, including the first baptismal instruction already cited). See for example John Chrysostom, Contra Anomoeos, Homilia 12 (= De Christi Divinitate) (PG 48:812).
husband. The meaning of faithfulness should not, though, be limited to ‘obedience’. Being faithful also implies trusting the husband (faithfulness in belief).454

We can therefore infer from Chrysostom’s use of marriage as a metaphor with catechumens that πίστις carries with it the connotation of faithfulness, obedience and submissive trust. This is replicated in his preaching elsewhere, as I shall now show. To demonstrate how Chrysostom uses πίστις consistently within a marriage context, I examine in detail an example from Chrysostom’s preaching on Romans.

The example comes from Chrysostom’s comments on Romans 1:17 (‘For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “the one who is righteous will live by faith.”’). He begins by arguing that ‘righteousness’ indicates the abundance of God’s grace, and then reminds his congregation that:

you didn’t accomplish it through toiling and labouring, but you receive it as a gift from above [ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνωθεν δωρεᾶς λαμβάνεις], bringing one thing only from your household, being faithful/trusting [ἐν μόνον εἰσφέρων οἶκοθεν, τὸ πιστεῦσαι].455

The language here so closely parallels passages explicitly using a marriage metaphor that we are entitled to see the metaphor as operating here also.456 We may note in particular: God’s gift described as δωρεᾶς; the verb for ‘bringing’ εἰσφέρων; and ‘from the household’ οἶκοθεν. The pattern (God’s gift, our sole contribution) is also identical with the passages already covered. The rest of the passage confirms this impression. Anxious to allay his hearers’ incredulity that the worst of people

454 Here, see also Chrysostom’s comments while preaching on the martyr Lucian. He declares that ‘A bride seated in the bridal chamber is not as beautiful and pleasing as a soul that appears in church... ...for the person who attends here with faith and dedication [μετὰ πίστεως καὶ σπουδῆς] goes away taking countless treasures.’ Note the natural link that Chrysostom makes between marriage and πίστις in a way that implies faithfulness, given the partnership with ‘dedication’ (σπουδή). John Chrysostom, In Sanctum Lucianum Martyrem (PG 50:522). Translation from Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil, St John Chrysostom: The Cult of the Saints, ed. John Behr, Popular Patristic Series (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2006), 67.


456 See also Chrysostom’s preaching on Romans 5:2, where again he declares that ‘we contributed only faith [ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν πίστιν εἰσηνέγκαμεν μόνον]’. Again, there are parallels in the language used. John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 9 (PG 60:468).
can be made righteous, Chrysostom uses Paul’s quotation from Habakkuk\(^{457}\) to demonstrate that God has always operated in this way. He then uses ‘faith’ as a tool with which to attack ‘heretics’, (anomoians whom pro-Nicenes accused of claiming to know God in his essence), stating that ‘since what God gives transcends all reason, naturally we need faith [εἰκότως πίστεως ἦμιν δεῖ]’.\(^{458}\) In particular, he attacks controversies and speculation: ‘Now being fond of controversy [ἡ φιλονεικία] is unworthy, and it’s not the time for meddling curiosity [τὸ πολυπραγμονέιν]’.\(^{459}\) Chrysostom then raises up Rahab as an exemplar: despite being a prostitute, she was saved ‘by faith [πίστει]’.\(^{460}\) He goes on to extol the unquestioning trust that Rahab had.

This might seem to imply that ‘faith’ is to do primarily with trust, yet Chrysostom, as he continues, makes clear that we are called to unquestioning obedience:

> Therefore knowing these things, and more beside, let’s never demand an accounting from God for what happens, but whatever he should command us to do, let’s accept it; and neither be a busybody nor meddle, even if to human reason the order should seem extraordinary.

> Ταῦτ’ οὖν εἰδότες, καὶ τὰ τούτων πλείονα, μηδέποτε τὸν Θεὸν εὐθύνας τῶν γινομένων ἀπαιτῶμεν, ἀλλ’ ὅπερ ἂν ἐπιτάξῃ, δεχόμεθα· καὶ μὴ περιεργαζόμεθα μηδὲ πολυπραγμονῶμεν, κἂν ἀνθρωπίνοις λογισμοῖς ἔστινæ δοκῇ τὸ κελευόμενον.\(^{461}\)

He goes on to give the example of Abraham being prepared to slay Isaac, and Saul failing to obey God, ‘from which we learn never to require a reason for God’s commands, but only to yield and to obey [ἀλλ’ εἴκειν καὶ πείθεσθαι μόνον]’.\(^{462}\) He finishes by describing πίστις as the mother of all blessings [τὴν πάντων τῶν ἁγιάζων μητέρα πίστιν], enabling the congregation to be orthodox in doctrine and safe in

\(^{457}\) Hab. 2:4.


In this passage we therefore see Chrysostom using πίστις both to mean trust (including trusting doctrine) and to mean obedience, within a setting that strongly implies a marriage metaphor. He is thus able to use πίστις as a weapon against dealing with heretics, whom he accuses of meddling curiosity in things far beyond human knowledge. The church as bride of Christ allows political control of the theological agenda. In this, there are also parallels with Athanasius’ approach to the control of virgins in Alexandria. Brakke argues that Athanasius seeks to dissuade virgins from going to the rival Hieracas (an intellectual who encouraged potentially ‘heretical’ academic discussion) through the rhetoric of labeling them as ‘brides of Christ’:

In this effort, the title ‘bride of Christ’ proved a convenient image: according to Athanasius, the virgins’ fidelity to their husband the Word required a private life devoted to the cultivation of true thought, not a public life involving conversation with men.\(^{464}\)

Athanasius applied the term ‘bride of Christ’ to virgins to achieve his political goal; Chrysostom applies the term to the whole church for a similar goal, the disengagement of his congregation from rival groups whom Chrysostom regarded as heretics. We can also see a similar pattern in a Latin writer using fides. Lactantius compares polytheism with a woman having numerous husbands:

...she will either be called a prostitute or an adulteress. For when a woman lacks modesty, chastity, and fidelity, she must of necessity be without virtue. So too the religion of the gods is immodest and unholy, because it lacks fidelity, because that unsettled and uncertain honour has no source or origin [sed haec aut meretrix aut adultera nominabitur: a qua enim pudor castitas fides abest, uirtute careat necesse est. sic et religio deorum inpudica est et incesta, quia fide caret, quia honos ille instabilis et incertus caput atque originem non habet].\(^{465}\)

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\(^{463}\) John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 2 (PG 60:410).

\(^{464}\) Brakke, Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism, 58.

\(^{465}\) Lactantius, Inst. 4.3 (CSEL 19:281).
Thus here marital fidelity and religious faith are linked in fides to discourage the reader from worshipping pagan gods. Having faith in God implied throughout the empire a marital-like faithfulness.

Πίστις was therefore a concept which could control every aspect of life, both thought and deed, in demanding unquestioning faithfulness, trust and obedience to Christ the bridegroom.

**Husband and wife - conclusion**

In this section I have shown how Chrysostom’s use of marriage metaphors can inform us as to the meaning, connotations and use of πίστις in his preaching. Declaring that the Church (and the individual Christian) is the bride of Christ leads to an examination of the virtues that the congregation would associate with a bride. The bride is to be faithful; chaste; respectful; and industrious. The marriage itself should be a harmonious, affectionate partnership. Ideally the woman will only ever have the one husband throughout her life. Chrysostom uses this model as a preaching aid, extending the metaphor by suggesting that the Christian’s only dowry was πίστις, which involves forsaking all others and committing and submitting oneself wholeheartedly to Christ. In his preaching, Chrysostom uses this not only to emphasise the close union of the Christian with Christ, and the great blessings that Christ brings, but also in a political battle with rival churches. By emphasising πίστις as meaning complete trust and unquestioning obedience, he urges his congregation to avoid listening to or engaging with the rivals, in a fashion similar to that of Athanasius seeking control of virgins in Alexandria. Thus, seeing the marriage context lying behind his use of πίστις allows us to see more clearly the force of his arguments seeking to control his congregation. Questioning the church (his church, and ‘orthodox’ bishops), or even worse going to rival churches has become infidelity not only to the church but to God.

Additionally, the dual use of πίστις for both physical and spiritual relationships reinforced the traditional Roman marital virtues of faithfulness and respectfulness. In a context where a wife had legal and financial opportunities for freedom from her husband’s control, assertions of the importance of faithfulness, obedience and
respect offered some reassurance to elite males within an ambiguous household power dynamic.

**Father and son**

In this next section, I demonstrate how Chrysostom used (or not) the father–son relationship with reference to πίστις. To do this, I first give a brief outline of some of the forces at work within these relationships. I then examine how Christian writers and speakers of the period in general preached on the faithfulness of Christ, arguing that doctrinal debates of the time led to little emphasis being placed on this aspect. I then show how this was also true for Chrysostom, thus explaining an otherwise curious lacuna in his approach to πίστις.

**Father-Son relationships in the late antique period**

An understanding of the relationship between fathers and sons in the late antique period requires an examination of the different elements that affected that relationship. This is a complex web of interacting social, psychological, economic and legal forces.

Socially, the son was expected to show pietas and obsequium to his father; the father was expected to show pietas to and exercise auctoritas over his son. As the discussion earlier indicates, obsequium has a range of meaning, from obedience to respectfulness. The wife had some freedom of manoeuvre; in the worst case scenario she could divorce her husband and walk away with her own wealth. However, the situation for sons was different, as the social expectation of obsequium interacted with legal and economic realities.

Legally, father-son relationships were governed by patria potestas, as alluded to previously. This was a long-standing legal tradition, which differentiated the

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Roman empire from those of its neighbours. Antti Arjava has tackled the question of whether patria potestas was still ‘a living issue in Late Antiquity’.

From a legal standpoint, the situation remained. Theoretically, the paterfamilias had complete power familia until the father’s death, even if the son was an adult. The son could not own anything in his own right, or undertake independent financial transactions. In practice, the situation was more nuanced. First, a majority of males reaching the age of twenty five had no father still living. However, pressures remained on the minority who did, combined with social pressure not to earn a wage. This minority depended upon their father’s death for inheritance and independence.

Some independence could be gained before this. The father could give the son an allowance or a peculium, or a son might inherit from his mother. A father could also ‘free’ his son from his power (emancipatio). The son, if one of the elite, could also earn a respectable wage through working for the imperial civil service. This option removed the son from the father’s immediate control, ensured the avoidance of future curial and tax duties, and (as a notionally military office) gave a legally independent wage, the peculium castrense.

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668 It was recognised by Romans themselves that they were different in this regard from other nations. See the frequently cited comparison in Gaius, Institutiones 1.55.
671 Becoming more common, but still not universal in late antiquity. Arjava, “Paternal Power in Late Antiquity,” 161-62. The emancipation could still be reversed if the son showed disrespect to his father. See, for example, Cod. Theod. 8.13.2. Disrespect could also be treated in other ways: Chrysostom suggests that a son who insults his father is unworthy to be looked after by the household slaves. See John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 18 (PG 60:580).
672 Arjava, “Paternal Power in Late Antiquity,” 149-50.
In practice, theoretical rights of physical force by a *paterfamilias* were rarely used. Threats to disinherit or to vary the inheritance remained more potent, as can be seen in the experience of Gregory of Nazianzus, forced to return to Nazianzus to assist his father or face disinherance.\(^{473}\)

In contrast, Libanius (complaining of his students’ behaviour) bemoans the fact that fathers don’t use this threat enough:

> For fathers no longer threaten their children or ban them from the banks or the baths if they are careless, neither do they punish them, or hold out the threat of throwing them out, of disowning them, of lavishing the inheritance on another...\(^{474}\)

Chrysostom alludes to the tensions of sons remaining under the power of their fathers: “The son, should he see his father living to a great age, is depressed \[βαρύνεται]\(^{475}\).

A similar tension is found in some sardonic words from Epictetus:

> Throw between you and your child some land, and you’ll come to learn, how soon the child wants to bury you, and you pray that the child dies.\(^{476}\)

Shaw, taking Augustine as a case-study, argues that the economic dependence produces ‘...an ideology of almost servile dependence and obedience from the sons’.\(^{477}\) Thus, legally and economically, there were reasons for tensions between fathers and adult sons.

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\(^{475}\) John Chrysostom, *Hom. Col. 1* (*PG* 62:303). Chrysostom is comparing various kinds of human love (friends, husband and wife, father and son) with the far greater love of the Spirit. Therefore this passage does not deny father-son love but argues that God’s love is incomparably greater.

\(^{476}\) Epictetus, *Dissertationes Ab Arriano Digestae* 2.22.10.

\(^{477}\) Brent D. Shaw, “The Family in Late Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine,” *Past & Present*, no. 115 (1987): 21. Shaw recognises that Augustine may not be representative. I share this concern; in the area of physical punishment of wives
Eva Cantarella notes that ‘the major conflict between generations in ancient Rome did not concern teenagers, as is so often the case in modern times, but adult sons.’ She examines claims in more recent scholarship that literary evidence portrays a more positive relationship, encapsulated in the mutual *pietas* owed between father and son. However, she provides examples from legal codes, plays and speeches that the economic control of the father was seen as oppressive; it is in this light that she views parricide as a real concern: ‘Along with other texts, rhetorical texts show Roman fathers as obsessed by the fear of being killed by their sons.’ As for *pietas*, she argues that it was not symmetrical. The son was meant to give total respect and obedience to the father; the father could exercise *pietas* and still control (or *in extremis* order the death of) his son.

In such a context the emphasis on the loyalty of sons to fathers became even more important. Certainly a number of different texts buttress it in various ways, both non-Christian and Christian. One example can be found in Proba, who creates a Christian poem through a cut-and-paste job on classical authors. Cooper notes that:

> Proba seems to have understood the Christian relationships as reflecting rather than subverting the bond of loyalty evoked by the earlier poet.

Such traditional values can be seen in the description of Jesus’ relationship to God (at his baptism):

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479 Cantarella, “Fathers and Sons in Rome,” 286.

480 Cantarella, “Fathers and Sons in Rome,” 297. In this she is sympathetic to Veyne. On his views, see for example Veyne, “La Famille et L’amour Sous Le Haut-Empire Romain,” 35-63.

481 See the examples she gives in Cantarella, “Fathers and Sons in Rome,” 297-98.

482 Proba, *De Laudibus Christi*. The author is mainly Virgil.

483 Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household*, 67.
He began to prepare to obey his great Father's authority, pressing on with the work and the kingdom to come. Alas for piety! Alas for old-fashioned faith! [Heu pietas, heu prisca fides]

What thanks am I to begin to speak, if I may compare small things with great?

Here we see obedience, piety and faith combined; Christianity here works to reinforce existing social norms of what is expected of a son. Similarly, Epictetus argues that so long as humans place weight in their will rather than their self-interest, it is possible to be a true son and father:

So if I am there, where my will is, only like this shall I be a friend as I ought to be, and son, and father [καὶ υἱός καὶ πατήρ]. For this will be profitable to me: to keep faithfulness, modesty, patience, abstinence, working together, keeping guard over relationships [τηρεῖν τὸν πιστόν, τὸν αἰδήμονα, τὸν ἀνεκτικόν, τὸν ἀφεκτικόν καὶ συνεργητικόν, φυλάσσειν τὰς σχέσεις].

Here, it is noteworthy that the first characteristic that Epictetus picks out is that of faithfulness or fidelity (πιστός), as befitting and appropriate for both father and son within their relationship. Therefore, just as concerns about the disloyalty of slaves make their faithfulness more noteworthy and important, so concerns about tensions between sons and fathers may have led to a greater emphasis on filial loyalty. This can be seen, for example, in Appian’s accounts of the civil war, with pointed examples of sons who showed both great loyalty and treachery to their fathers.

Legal documents also bear traces of this concern. A petition to allow an uncle to act as guardian to a girl commends him as being kind, faithful and with family ties (εὐνοίᾳ καὶ πίστις καὶ τῇ τοῦ γένους οἰκειότητι). Thus the wife, arguing that someone should stand in place of the deceased husband and father, emphasises the quality of πίστις as being appropriate.

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487 *p.tebt.2.326 = HGV P.Tebt. 2 326 = Trismegistos 13485 = Berkeley.Apis.298*. Provenance is Fayum, Egypt. The papyrus is dated AD 264-70.
To summarise this section: socially, relationships between the father and son were expected to show *pietas*, with the son showing the father appropriate *obsequium*. Economically and legally adult sons needed to take this seriously, as they were still under the authority of their fathers. This added a tension to the relationship, such that concerns about murder (parricide) strike a chord; and that therefore the loyalty of sons to fathers and fathers to sons becomes more significant.

**The faith of Christ – the dog that didn’t bark**

Given this background, one might think that the relationship was tailor-made for Christianity to exploit. Close to the heart of doctrine (as expressed in mainstream fourth century Christianity) was that Jesus was the son of God. We might therefore expect that the faithfulness of Jesus would be used as a model for the faithfulness expected of Christians to their heavenly father. However, this is not what we find – it is the dog that doesn’t bark.488 To explain why this is, I first examine why the question has been recently studied; look at the tradition within Christianity of using this analogy; and demonstrate Chrysostom’s approach to key passages where we might otherwise expect this analogy to be used.

The issue of the faithfulness of Christ is one that has become a controversial area of Pauline studies since a landmark study by Richard Hays published in 1983.489 The

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488 “‘Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?’
‘To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.’
‘The dog did nothing in the night-time.’

controversy arises over the best way to interpret those New Testament passages (in particular the Pauline ones) that refer to πίστις Χριστοῦ or close variants. The phrase could be interpreted in two main ways, either to mean ‘faith in Christ’ (the objective genitive version, and the traditional interpretation) or ‘faith(fulness) belonging to Christ’ (the subjective genitive version). A flurry of publications has addressed these issues. The controversy intersects with Chrysostom, because the interpretation of the passages by early church figures has become one of the elements of evidence used by both sides.

Initially Roy Harrisville mined the early church record. He claimed that in every case either it was unclear how the passage had been interpreted, or that it had been interpreted as an objective genitive (ie faith in Christ). However, Ian Wallis in a much more extended study found an interest in the faith of Jesus Christ up unto the end of the third century. This at least allowed for the possibility that some of the ambiguous interpretations found by Harrisville might have been interpreted in a subjective genitive manner.

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490 Hence the controversy is sometimes referred to as the ‘Pistis Christou’ or ‘Faith of Christ’ debate. The passages usually debated include: Romans 3:22 [διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] & 3:26 [ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ]; Galatians 2:16 [διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] & 3:22 [ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ]; Philippians 3:9 [διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ]. Also often cited are Ephesians 3:11-12 and Romans 1:17. There are also references in Acts, Hebrews and Revelation.

491 These are not the only two options. The faith of Christ could mean the faithfulness of Christ to God (shown in his obedience to death); or the trust of Christ in God (trusting him even on the cross); or the faithful- ness of Christ to us (shown again on the cross). Also, some scholars believe that ambiguity was deliberate on Paul’s part, and therefore some combination of the objective and subjective should be used. See in particular Morna D. Hooker, From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Downing, “Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith,” 139-62.

492 A full recent bibliography can be found in Bird and Sprinkle, eds., The Faith of Jesus Christ.


More recently, Michael Bird and Michael Whitenton have revisited the evidence from the early church.\textsuperscript{495} They note that the Apostolic Fathers often (though not unambiguously) refer to the faith of Christ, and that some later writers (for example Origen) seem to retain both options deliberately. They also produce an explicit example of a reference in Hippolytus to the ‘faith of Christ’ taken to mean Christ’s faithfulness.\textsuperscript{496}

This leaves us to consider Chrysostom’s approach to interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ passages: did Chrysostom use this to mean Christ’s faithfulness to the father? Harrisville addressed this issue in his article. He found that in many cases, the evidence was ambiguous.\textsuperscript{497} He found no cases where the subjective genitive was used for faith when referring to Christ. He also found one case (Chrysostom is commenting on Phil. 3:9) where:

It seems quite clear that the preacher has understood the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase as an objective genitive when he describes the faith in question as human with the resurrected Christ as the object.\textsuperscript{498}

Harrisville relates this back to what Paul intended by πίστις Χριστοῦ, but it is striking when considering Chrysostom’s context. Why was the subjective genitive so little favoured? Wallis explains this as a by-product of the fourth century debates regarding the status of Christ. He argues that from the time of Athanasius the pro-Nicene tradition avoided attributing faith or faithfulness to Christ as being equivalent to human faith. Wallis notes how debate centred in part around Hebrews

\textsuperscript{495} Bird and Whitenton, “The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Hippolytus's De Christo et Antichristo,” 552-62.
\textsuperscript{496} Bird and Whitenton, “The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Hippolytus's De Christo et Antichristo,” 558-61. Note that this example was not an interpretation of one of the Pauline passages.
\textsuperscript{497} Harrisville, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers,” 236. He cites: John Chrysostom, Hom. Jo. 59 (PG 59:323); John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:444); John Chrysostom, Homiliae in epistulam ad Galatas Commentarius 3 (PG 61:655); John Chrysostom, Hom. Phil. 11 (PG 62:263); John Chrysostom, In Illud: In Faciem Ei Restiti (PG 51:386). In every case, Chrysostom is quoting a passage of scripture without indicating his own interpretation.
3:1-2 (‘consider that Jesus... ...was faithful to the one who appointed him [πιστὸν ὅν τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν’], and whether this indicated that the Son of God was in some way different from or inferior to God the Father."499

Athanasius argued that ‘faithful’ here meant faithful in the same sense as God is faithful, thus reinforcing the full divinity of the son and acting as an effective polemic against those who argued that the son was in some sense a creation of God. Wallis explains thus:

From Athanasius’ perspective... ...it was impossible for the incarnate Son to have faith in God and, in this way, to share in the human predicament; in his eyes this would imply the Son’s creatureliness and thus a diminishment of his divinity.500

Wallis argues that those who followed Athanasius in the pro-Nicene tradition also avoided attributing a human-like faith to Christ in interpretation. He finds the silence of Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus and Augustine striking, leading him to conclude:

It seems, therefore, that the paradigmatic significance of Jesus’ faith – of the way in which his life and passion inform the practice of faith – was a casualty of the movement towards establishing Christ’s divinity.501

Nathan comes to a similar conclusion, in his study of the family in late antiquity:

Christian models of paternal behavior in regard to sons were surprisingly half-formed. The obvious archetype between father and son might as first seem to be Father and Son. ...But the use of this exemplar was minimal, mostly due to its complicated and occasionally contradictory nature.502

However, Wallis nowhere examines Chrysostom’s interpretation of these or similar verses. In fact, Chrysostom does not quite follow Athanasius, and has no qualms in attributing ‘faithful’ to Christ as regards the incarnation. He appears to use the

502 Nathan, The Family in Late Antiquity, 146.
phrase in two ways, both to mean a faithfulness like God’s, and also a human-like faithfulness. This is shown in three separate passages within his homily covering this verse. In this first passage, he explains that ‘faithfulness’ refers to Christ being able to deliver humanity from sins:

What does ‘faithful’ mean? Being true, being able to do it [τί ἐστι, Πιστός; Ἀληθῆς, δυνάμενος]. For the son is the only faithful high priest [ἀρχιερέως γὰρ ἐστι μόνος πιστὸς ὁ Υἱός], being able to deliver from sins those whose high priest he is.\(^{503}\)

However, later in the same homily, he seems to refer to faithful as belonging to the incarnate nature:

‘Being faithful’, he says, ‘to the one who made him’. What did he make him? Apostle and high priest. He isn’t speaking at all about the [divine] substance, neither about the godhead but up to now about human dignity [Πιστὸν ὄντα, φησὶ, τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν. Τί ποιήσαντι; Ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα. Οὐδὲν ἐνταῦθα περὶ οὐσίας φησίν, οὐδὲ περὶ τῆς θεότητος, ἀλλὰ τέως περὶ ἀξιωμάτων ἀνθρωπίνων].\(^{504}\)

This seems to be confirmed in a third passage where in Chrysostom’s explanation Christ now does seem to act as being faithful to God:

What does ‘being faithful to the one who made him’ mean? It means this: being caring, guarding those belonging to him, and not letting them be blown away [Τί ἐστι, Πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν; Τούτεστι, προνοικόν, προϊστάμενον τῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐὼντα φέρεσθαι ἀπλῶς].\(^{505}\)

Thus here we do have a passage in which Christ’s faithfulness to God is demonstrated in his caring for Christians.

Further on, Heb. 5:8 (‘although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered’) leads Chrysostom to tackle the issue of Christ’s obedience. He deals with this passage by attributing such obedience to the incarnate nature rather than the divine:

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\(^{503}\) John Chrysostom, Hom. Heb. 5 (PG 63:47). Chrysostom is discussing Hebrews 2:17 at this point.

\(^{504}\) John Chrysostom, Hom. Heb. 5 (PG 63:49).

What obedience did he learn? The one who before this had been obedient even to death, as a son to a father, how after that did he learn? Do you see that this is said about the flesh [Ποίαν ὑπακοὴν ἐμαθεν; ὁ μέχρι θανάτου πρὸ τοῦτον ὑπακούσας, ως πατρὶ υἱός, πῶς δὲ καὶ ὑστερον ἐμαθεν; Ὄραξ ὅτι περὶ τῆς σαρκὸς εἴρηται;]?  

However, although Chrysostom therefore on occasion is prepared to attribute qualities like obedience or faithfulness to Christ (with the proviso that they refer to the incarnate nature), it is nevertheless true that this is infrequent in his preaching, and qualified when it appears. Wallis appears to be on the right lines with his reasoning: Chrysostom has a continual awareness that any interpretation which implies that the son is less in some way than the father would be seized upon by those he considered heretical.

This can be seen clearly in his comments on 1 Cor. 11:3, which includes the phrase ‘God is the head of Christ’. Chrysostom is keen to rule out any possibility of thinking that the Son is inferior to the Father. He explains that if Paul had been thinking of ‘rule and subjection [ἀρχὴν ... καὶ ὑποταγὴν]’ then he would have used the analogy of ‘a slave and master [δοῦλον ... καὶ δεσπότην]’ rather than husbands and wives, as a wife is both free and equal in honour to her husband. Chrysostom allows that the Son is obedient, but emphasises the difference from the human comparison:

And also the Son, if also he became obedient to the Father, it was as the Son of God, it was as God [Καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς δὲ, ἐι καὶ ὑπηκοος γέγονε τῷ Πατρὶ, ἀλλ’ ως Υἱὸς Θεοῦ, ἀλλ’ ως Θεός]. For just as the willing

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509 John Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Cor. 26 (PG 61:214).
obedience of the Son \( \text{ἡ πειθὼ τῷ Ὑἱῷ} \) is greater to the Father than by humans to those who give birth to them, likewise also the freedom is greater.⁵¹⁰

Later, he explains that analogies with God cannot be pushed too far without absurdities arising. Only some things are relevant; others are not the same when applied to the divine. He explains in what ways ‘son’ should, and shouldn’t, be understood:

Again, you have heard ‘Son’. But neither should you in this case accept everything, nor should you reject everything. But it is best if you accept as much as belongs to God: that he is of the same substance; that he is from him \( \text{ὅτι ὁμοούσιος, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ} \). The things that don’t fit and come from human weakness, leave on the earth.⁵¹¹

Given this reticence on Chrysostom’s part, it is understandable that he does not use the relationship between God the Father and Son as an example of \( \piστὶς \) that Christians ought to show their heavenly father. Instead, Chrysostom uses the father–son relationship to illustrate different points. In particular, he emphasises the adoptive son-ship of Christians to draw out points about the honour that God gives to those who follow him, or to make points about future benefits, as being an inheritance. An example from his homily on Romans 8:14-17 illustrates this. Chrysostom’s first statement on these verses emphasises the honour (in this case, a better crown \( \text{στέφανος} \)) of being called sons of God.⁵¹² This emphasis is then repeated at various points throughout the homily.⁵¹³ Chrysostom also engages in a long comparison between the Jews and Christians, arguing that the Jews will fail to inherit in comparison to Christians who are joint-heirs with Christ.⁵¹⁴ The pattern, here driven in part by the biblical text, is also repeated elsewhere.⁵¹⁵

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⁵¹³ For example, comparing the declaration with a declaration by the emperor showing honour. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom. 14* (PG 60:527).
⁵¹⁵ See John Chrysostom, *Catech. Illum. 2.27* (SC 50:148-49). See also John Chrysostom, *Catech. Illum. 3.5* (SC 50:153). Also, Chrysostom talks of those being baptised as
To recap; Chrysostom, along with other pro-Nicenes of the period, made limited use of the analogy between God the Father and Son, and human father-son relationships. Where the analogy was used, it was kept to the sphere of honour and inheritance, and kept apart from issues of faithfulness or obedience lest these imply a diminishment in the honour or equality of God the Son.\textsuperscript{516}

However, Chrysostom does on occasion make use of the metaphor of God as heavenly father and Christians as his children in the context of faith. When he does this, in addition to the inheritance and honour already discussed, it can also be used to emphasise again the importance of obedience.

This can be seen in Chrysostom’s preaching on Romans 4:17, discussing Abraham being described as the father of all who have faith:

\begin{quote}
For what does he say? ‘...in the presence of God in whom he trusted \(\text{Κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσε Θεοῦ}\). He means something like this. Just as God is not God of just a part, but father of everyone \(\text{ἄλλα πάντων πατήρ}\), so also is \(\text{[Abraham]}\). And again, just as God is father not according to a natural relationship \(\text{οὐ κατὰ τὴν φυσικὴν συγγένειαν}\), but according to the affinity of faith \(\text{κατ’ οἰκείωσιν πίστεως}\), so also is he. For obedience makes him father of us all \(\text{ἡ γὰρ ὑπακοὴ ποιεῖ πατέρα πάντων ἡμῶν}\).\textsuperscript{517}
\end{quote}

Here, the relationship with both God and Abraham is not through physical descent, but through faith (\(\text{πίστις}\)). However, note how naturally Chrysostom links this with obedience, and how closely linked obedience is with the father-children relationship. Thus Chrysostom is content to make the link between \(\text{πίστις}\), obedience and son-ship, so long as it steers clear of the relationship between Christ and God the Father.\textsuperscript{518}

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\textsuperscript{516} Intriguingly, McGuckin argues that the doctrine of the equality of the Son with the Father undermined the whole notion of \textit{patria potestas} (seen in how Gregory of Nazianzen conceived of his relationship with his own father). See McGuckin, \textit{St Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography}, 19, 281.

\textsuperscript{517} John Chrysostom, \textit{Hom. Rom. 8} (PG 60:460).

\textsuperscript{518} This can also be seen in his willingness to praise biblical characters for their obedience to their fathers. For example, he praises Joseph, proclaiming his
Master and slave

We now come to the master-slave relationship. I shall outline the concept of slavery: the power dynamics at work; perceptions of slaves by the elite; the ideology of slavery; and how this ideology might be in transition at this period.

This then allows us to turn to Chrysostom, and see how he both deals with and uses the relationship between masters (and mistresses) and slaves. In particular, what is the effect of him using this metaphor for the Christian’s relationship with God? Chrysostom’s comments on Paul’s letter to Philemon provide a backdrop for this, which in turn will illuminate his preaching on Romans, πίστις and the household context.

Within the section I also compare Chrysostom with some contemporaries both western and eastern, such as Gregory of Nyssa, to show what was common to all, and also to highlight some distinctive features of Chrysostom’s approach.

The issue of slavery also raises some methodological issues in recognising the importance of underlying assumptions in how the evidence is read. What was it like to be a slave in antiquity? Were masters considerate, with the relationship more one of benevolent master and cared-for, secure servant, with mutual affection? Or was it for the slave ‘social death’, with constant fear of beating, sexual abuse, permanent separation from loved ones, and ultimately the threat of death? Niall McKeown highlights differences in interpretation over time (for example, some

obedience as a young man to his father as one of his many virtues. John Chrysostom, Hom. Gen. 61 (PG 54:525).

519 In the broader sense of fourth century.

520 ‘Social death’ is considered especially by Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 1.120.

521 Niall McKeown, The Invention of Ancient Slavery? ed. Thomas Harrison, Classical Essays (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2007), 7. Finley also covers the same area, but goes further back in time: M. I. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology (Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), 11-66. Finley makes the point that, given the embeddedness of slavery in the ancient world, the interpretation of ancient slavery is the interpretation of the history of the period. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, 66.
interpretations from the 1930s would strike many today as racist and place. Scholars such as Kudlien have focussed on less elite evidence (such as astrological handbooks and dream interpretations) to highlight that there was sometimes a pleasant side to master–slave relationships, with mutual affection and loyalty, though McKeown notes how Kudlien downplays or ignores contrary evidence. In contrast, scholars such as Garrido-Hory from the Besançon school (using material such as Martial and Juvenal) emphasise fear and tension. This is an area for which the limitations of the sources are unusually problematic. This is in part because the literate elite – in other words the owners – were probably poor judges of what slaves were really thinking, and also because what owners say about their treatment of slaves may be far removed from their actual practice.

McKeown’s work is a necessary reminder that the reality of slave life is elusive. Even the question of how slaves would have responded to their situation – to what extent was there slave resistance? – is almost impossible to answer. This is in part because the response of slaves was probably diverse: some would have resisted outwardly; many would have resisted in small ways; some may have accepted their state without question.

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523 McKeown, The Invention of Ancient Slavery?, 30-36.
524 McKeown, The Invention of Ancient Slavery?, 41-51.
525 This can be seen in an episode from the American South period of slavery. In 1833 Charles Colcock Jones, a Methodist minister and slave-owner, preached from Philemon to a large slave gathering. He used the text to emphasise the importance of loyalty and obedience, and condemning running away. To his surprise (there were few runaways in the particular district), he received an extremely negative reaction, with some walking out and others pretending to sleep or looking away. Some even confronted him angrily after the service. Clarke notes that ‘Jones was apparently stunned’. The incident is reported in Erskine Clarke, Dwelling Place – a Plantation Epic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 138-39. See also Byron, who also recounts the episode: John Byron, Recent Research on Paul and Slavery (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 38.
The concept of slavery in late antiquity

I turn now to the concept of slavery itself. Fundamentally, a slave was a property belonging to someone. It is this that distinguishes it from other forms of labour (such as serfdom, debt bondage). As Finley notes:

As a commodity, the slave is property. ...When Roman lawyers defined a slave as someone who was in the *dominium* of another, they used the quintessential property-term *dominium*. They were not dissuaded by the slave’s human quality (not even when they used the word *homo* to refer to a slave, as they did frequently). Nor were the millions of slave-owners who bought and sold slaves, overworked them, beat and tortured them, and sometimes put them to death, precisely as millions of horse-owners have done throughout history.\(^526\)

As property, slaves were completely under the control of the master, legally having no family of their own and so always vulnerable to separation from parents, partners or children.\(^527\) Finley continues by noting three distinct ways in which slaves could be treated. First, while individual masters or mistresses could be benevolent, there was nothing in law to prevent physical punishment. Slaves could be beaten for any reason.\(^528\) More commonly, slaves could be branded on the head or shackled.\(^529\) Physical abuse, then, was the first distinction between slaves and their masters and mistresses.

Secondly, if required to give evidence, slaves were tortured; there was a legal assumption that only under torture could slaves reliably give information.\(^530\) This can be seen in asides in the romances that gained popularity in the late antique period. For example, in *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Chaereas thinks that he has caught his new wife *in flagrante delicto* with another man. He kicks her leaving her seemingly dead, and then tries to find out what happens:

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\(^{526}\) Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 73.

\(^{527}\) Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 74-77.

\(^{528}\) For example, being slow in bringing hot water bringing 300 lashes. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist. 28.4.16*. See also the example of the slave of Vedius Pollio, nearly thrown to the fishes for breaking a cup. Seneca, *De Ira 3.40*.


\(^{530}\) See Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 94-96.
Chaereas, whose heart was still seething, shut himself up all night, trying to extort information from the maids, especially Callirhoe’s own maid. It was while they were undergoing fire and torture [’Ἔτι δὲ καομένων καὶ τεμνομένων αὐτῶν] that he learned the truth.531

What is noteworthy is the matter-of-fact way the torture is mentioned; it is not a main part of the plot, and doesn’t appear to reflect badly on the hero. It was just what would normally happen. The novel, then, provides just one example of the normality of slave torture for information.532

Thirdly, slaves could be sexually abused.533 Martial’s satires are full of epigrams referring to the sexual use of slaves.534 Marchal provides a useful discussion of the sexual availability of slaves before going on to speculate whether this was part of the ‘usefulness’ of Onesimus to Philemon.535 And again, the story of Chaeræas and Callirhoe depends upon the drama of the heroine being sold for sex.536

Given these trinities of disadvantage (being property; being controlled; no family) and abuse (beatings; torture; sexual abuse), it might be assumed that slaves had no power at all. However, this would be to misread the situation. The oppressed always have some strategies available, however limited.

The most extreme, and dangerous strategy, was of course outright, violent resistance. As Bradley notes, this could take either the form of communal revolt, or

531 Chariton, *De Chaerea et Callirhoe* 1.5. Translation from B. P. Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 27.
532 Bradley provides more evidence, citing an inscription from Puteoli which details the duties of the *manceps*, including torturing and killing slaves. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire*, 122. Also in Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 95.
534 For example, ‘I prefer a lady; but if such is denied me, my next choice would be a freed-woman. A slave is the last resource; but if her beauty indemnifies the want of birth, I shall prefer her to either.’ Martial, *Epigrammaton* 3.33.
536 Chariton, *Chaer*. 1.12.
individual acts of violence. Large scale slave revolts were rare, and had not occurred for hundreds of years by the time of Chrysostom. It is possible that memories of the brutal Roman put-down by Crassus of the last slave rebellion under Spartacus in 71 BC still lingered as a deterrent. However, smaller scale slave riots did take place in the late antique period.

Individual violent acts by slaves against owners did occur. A notorious example is the murder of Pedanius Secundus by one of his slaves. The punishment (based upon the joint responsibility of all slaves under the same roof) was brutal: all four hundred of the household slaves (men, women and children) were executed, despite protests and riots.

A more common strategy was to seek to escape the situation by fleeing. This was both a common concern for owners and also a reality that has left its archaeological traces. Finley describes the concern as ‘almost an obsession in the sources’, with chains, collars, notices of rewards, the involvement of the authorities, and (at least in some periods of the empire) paid slave-catchers as examples of this obsession. The obsession perhaps indicates an underlying reality that this was an option for at least some slaves.

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537 Bradley, Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire, 31-32. Finley also discusses the issue, and like Bradley also notes the many barriers to revolt. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, 114-15.

538 Appian records that Crassus crucified six thousand survivors of the slave revolt along the road between Capua and Rome. Appian, Bellum civile 1.120.

539 See Nathan, The Family in Late Antiquity, 181.

540 See Tacitus, Annals 14.42-45. The incident is discussed in Bradley, Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire, 24. Also in Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, 102-03.

However, the slave could also exercise some (limited) power within the household itself. As already noted above, the household was a stage for social performance by the householder, a performance that included all those connected with the householder. The actions of the slaves thus reflected on the householder; the power lay in their ability to help polish the owner’s reputation or tarnish it through ‘incompetence’ or lack of respect. Did slaves use this? The sources give no way of assessing definitively whether this was the case, as Finley notes.\footnote{Finley, 
Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology, 111.} However, Bradley notes that ‘the frequency with which servile idleness is referred to must be taken as a firm indication of its prevalence’.\footnote{Bradley, 
Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire, 32.} Hopkins engages in an empathetic reading of the novella The Life of Aesop to find similar tensions.\footnote{Keith Hopkins, “Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,” Past & Present 138, no. 1 (1993): 3-27.} The slave Aesop and his master Xanthus have a tense relationship, where Aesop has leverage over Xanthus through over-literal interpretation of commands, or in other ways outwitting his master. In later episodes he saves his master’s reputation. Hopkins claims that his approach of ‘evocative history’ can be revealing of the possibilities for relationships between masters and slaves; how much ‘freedom of manoeuvre’ each had.\footnote{Hopkins, “Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery,” 26.} In a separate article Hopkins also compares the accounts in the sources with the stereotyping of black slaves in America, noting the similarities arising from a joint perspective of powerlessness.\footnote{Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves, 121.}

The honour-shame culture that gave some power to the slave also gave some protection against some abuse by the owner. Kate Cooper has noted how the principle of aequitas created some limits to the cruelty perpetrated on slaves through their ability to complain to an external authority, and the resultant shame for the owner.\footnote{Cooper, 
The Fall of the Roman Household, 115.}

Two tropes emerge from the period: the disloyal, lazy slave; and the loyal, obedient slave. For example, Bradley compares the ‘criminous’ slave and the ‘loyal’ slave in
the literature.\textsuperscript{548} Fitzgerald, in his study of the Roman literary imagination, notes the views of slaves as suspicious (inherently untrustworthy and needing force to be made to work) and benevolent (content and faithful to a good master).\textsuperscript{549}

Parker traces these tropes in \textit{exemplum} literature.\textsuperscript{550} He argues that societies justify their treatment of excluded groups by attributing vices to them, and so justifying the lack of a natural right to food, drink or sex, or a family life. Thus, the trope of the disloyal slave also stereotypes the slave as:

‘gluttonous, bibulous and libidinous... morally incapable of social relations. They were seen as ignorant of \textit{pietas} (devotion, duty), lacking in \textit{fides} (faithfulness), and imbued with treachery, imperiling their master’s very life.’\textsuperscript{551}

Given this underlying background, it might be strange to find the trope of the loyal slave. Parker explains the phenomenon through noting that the trope serves both to reassure masters that their own slaves might be loyal, and also to act as an example to their slaves, to encourage their loyalty. He notes Seneca’s three-fold division of \textit{beneficia} (benefits), \textit{officia} (duties) and \textit{ministria} (service). The obedience of a slave falls under \textit{ministria}, so under normal circumstances a slave cannot offer \textit{beneficia}. The \textit{exempla}, in contrast, are full of stories where the slave goes above and beyond, for example going into exile with a master, or demanding to be tortured in order to testify for a master, or even committing suicide after the master’s death.\textsuperscript{552}

By going beyond what is required, the slaves can offer \textit{beneficia} to their master through their faithfulness. But this faithfulness itself confers honour on the master – it is the master’s character that inspires the slave’s response, and it is the master whose name is recorded in the \textit{exempla}.

\textsuperscript{548} Bradley, \textit{Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire}, 21-45.


\textsuperscript{552} Parker, “Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives,” 159-61.
Thus the *exempla* serve to buttress masters’ sense of identity and honour. Additionally, they serve as paradigms for other slaves. The only way for a slave to achieve honour is through outstanding faithfulness to the master.

A similar point is made by Rose, in her study of mistress-slave relationships in late antique art.\(^{553}\) She examines visual representations of mistresses being helped by female slave in two caskets and a floor mosaic of the fourth to fifth century. The scenes show a harmonious, hierarchical relationship, with the mistress sitting and being made beautiful (implicitly for the master, who may well have commissioned the pieces) by standing slaves. Rose speculates that:

‘...seeing themselves in these pictures enhanced the slaves’ sense of superiority within the household staff and fostered their loyalty, while reinforcing their subservient position in relation to the family.’\(^{554}\)

Thus in various ways the culture encouraged the trope of the loyal slave, strengthened the concept of the honourable master, pushed the idea that only through extreme loyalty was honour possible for a slave, whilst simultaneously stereotyping slaves as being disloyal and idle.

In contrast, it is also plausible that slaves may have taken a much more jaundiced view of their masters and mistresses, fearing beating, torture, separation from family, sexual abuse or even death. However, the trope of the good master might also resonate, albeit for some as a utopian ideal.

Within this general pattern of ideology, it is also necessary to note the changes that were taking place in the fourth century, and to consider their effect on power dynamics between slaves and masters. As already indicated above, one of the changes that Christianity introduced was a rationale for challenging existing hierarchies within the household. Obedience to God trumped obedience to any human, even a husband or father.


\(^{554}\) Rose, “The Construction of Mistress and Slave Relationships in Late Antique Art,” 47.
The attempt to control this anarchic edge to Christianity thus led, as has already been noted, to concerns about wives. Given some of the striking statements within the New Testament, it would be feasible to imagine that it could have provided a rhetoric to encourage slaves to disobey their masters, or to seek equality in other ways. Paul’s statement in Galatians is used today as a slogan for equality; could it have been seen in this way then?

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.\footnote{Galatians 3:28. NRSV.}

Kate Cooper has addressed this issue in examining \textit{ad Gregoriam in palatio}, a fifth or early sixth century household manual ascribed to a bishop John written for Gregoria, a \textit{domina}. Cooper points out that the manual reminds Gregoria that entering church is like entering a royal audience-chamber, where her slaves are now her spiritual relatives: ‘The second birth has made this person, whom the human condition has made your slave, to be your sibling...’\footnote{See Cooper, \textit{The Fall of the Roman Household}, 125. \textit{Ad Gregoriam in Palatio Constitutam 19} (CCSL 25A: 229).} However, this does not lead to a call for freedom. Instead, a move is made in the spiritual status of the slave that still leaves intact the hierarchical structure of the household. The slave is seen as a child of the master or mistress. They remain part of the \textit{familia}, but are now spiritually children in terms of the owner’s responsibility. The \textit{domina} becomes \textit{mater} to the slaves, shown in responsibility shifting from being merely \textit{aequitas} to encompass \textit{iustitia} and \textit{pietas}.\footnote{See the developing argument in Cooper, \textit{The Fall of the Roman Household}, 122-28.}

The household manual, therefore, demonstrates how a potentially troubling thread of equality within the Bible could be addressed through a shift in emphasis from master–slave to father/mother–child, thus maintaining the existing hierarchical structure (including of course slavery itself) whilst acknowledging the spiritual relationship between all Christians.

This demonstrates one possible approach to the potential cognitive dissonance of a person being the property of another whilst simultaneously being equal before God.
and spiritually brother or sister. The issue was addressed in a variety of ways by preachers, as the next section outlines.

**Responses to slavery by Christian preachers in late antiquity**

The various responses of Christians in the Roman Empire to the institution of slavery have been traced by Kimberley Flint-Hamilton.\(^{558}\) Her approach is structured into examining three responses: that slaves should accept their lot in life; uncritical acceptance of slave stereotypes; and (occasionally) arguments against slavery. Evidence that she draws on includes writings and council edicts.

Flint-Hamilton notes that even in early documents such as the Didache slaves are urged to be obedient to their earthly masters as being an image (τύπος) of God:

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And you slaves, submit to your masters as an image of God in respect and fear [ὑμεῖς δὲ οἱ δοῦλοι ὑποταγήσεσθε τοῖς κυρίοις ὑμῶν ὡς τύπῳ θεοῦ ἐν αἰσχύνῃ καὶ φόβῳ].\(^{559}\)
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She argues that:

‘When [slaves] are in the presence of the master, they are to consider themselves in the physical presence of God. When they look at the master, they are to think of God.’\(^{560}\)

Similarly, canons from councils do not show any great desire for equality, often drawing distinctions between how slaves were to be treated from how free persons were to be treated. As an example, slaves were not eligible for ordination. Flint-Hamilton then discusses Augustine, noting that he argues that slavery is a just punishment of God, however one fell into slavery, and that slavery is a kindness because it allows a less burdensome route to salvation through discouraging pride.\(^{561}\) So Christian slaves should be content with their lot in life. Augustine also recommends beating slaves who disobey, for their own good. On the other hand,


\(^{559}\) *The Didache* 4:11.


Augustine did seek to free those enslaved by pirates. Flint-Hamilton traces similar negative attitudes in writers from Ignatius and Tertullian to Gregory the Great.

Flint-Hamilton finds traces of challenges to the status quo in documents from the Shepherd of Hermas, through the Apostolic Constitutions, both of which advocate buying slaves to free them. Finally, she comes to the fourth century, and notes Gregory of Nyssa’s unique, and ‘largely ignored’ condemnation of slavery.562 Gregory argued:

‘…is there any difference in any respect between slave and master? …Do they not both preserve their nature by eating the same food? Is there not the same structure of internal organs? Do not both become the same dust after death? Do they not have the same judgment? Do they not go to the same heaven or the same hell? You who are equal in all respects, why should you be superior such that while you are only a man you think you can be the owner of a man?’563

Flint-Hamilton finishes her survey by turning to examine Chrysostom and his attitudes. I continue this examination in the next section.

**Chrysostom and the household slave**

Flint-Hamilton notes that Chrysostom offers both negative stereotypes of slaves but also a more radical trajectory. The particular example of negative stereotyping she give is misleading, but still sheds light on some of his attitudes and approach.564 Chrysostom (preaching on 1 Tim. 6:1-2) claims that masters give more to slaves than vice versa, arguing that slaves ought to honour their masters. This leads to a comparison of the service the human masters give God (the ultimate faithful master) with the service the slaves offer, to the detriment of the masters. Chrysostom sweeps aside any objections about devious household slaves [μὴ γάρ μοι τοὺς μοχθηροὺς εἴπης τῶν οἰκετῶν], thus showing both his knowledge of the stereotype and his rejection of it. Chrysostom goes on to point out that slavery is

not intrinsic to human nature (as Roman law also held)\textsuperscript{565}, quoting Genesis 1 to support his statement.\textsuperscript{566}

The other examples that Flint-Hamilton gives of Chrysostom’s stereotyping are also flawed; she produces one example of Chrysostom where he uses the masters’ expectation that they will sort out disputes between slaves to argue that we too ought to leave judgment to God.\textsuperscript{567} However, Chrysostom does not seem to imply here that this is a repeated or regular character trait, and again is using it as an illustration to change the masters’ behaviour.

Flint-Hamilton finds a more positive trajectory in Chrysostom’s preaching on 1 Corinthians, where ‘he encourages Christian masters to free their slaves’.\textsuperscript{568} Here, Chrysostom argues that slavery came in as result of sin; that the coming of Christ has ended this period; and that masters don’t need slaves. As a concession, Chrysostom allows them at most a couple, while the remaining slaves should be taught trades and then freed.

\textsuperscript{565} ‘Slavery is an institution of the \textit{ius Gentium}, in which a person is subject to the ownership of another, contrary to nature \textit{[seruitus est constitutio iuris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subicitur].}’ Digest Justinianus 1.5.4.

\textsuperscript{566} John Chrysostom, \textit{Hom. 1 Tim. 16} (PG 62:589-90). The appeal to Genesis 1 and dominion seems to have been common in reminding congregations that slavery was not natural. See Chris de Wet, “Sin as Slavery and/or Slavery as Sin? On the Relationship between Slavery and Christian Hamartiology in Late Ancient Christianity,” \textit{Religion & Theology} 17 (2010): 26-39. See also G. Kontoulis, \textit{Zum Problem Der Sklaverei (ΔΟΥΛΕΙΑ) Bei Den Kappadokischen Kirchenvätern Und Johannes Chryosostomus} (Bonn: Habelts Dissertationsdrucke, 1993). Antique attitudes to slavery are traced by Peter Garnsey, from Aristotle through to late antique Christians. He argues that the natural slave theory of Aristotle provided ideological backing for owners. Garnsey also questions the wide assumption that Stoics were against this theory, although they did emphasise the universality (but not necessarily the equality) of humankind. The Stoic emphasis on the kinship of all humans is part of the background to Chrysostom’s reminder. Peter Garnsey, \textit{Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine}, The W.B. Stanford Memorial Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).


Flint-Hamilton is right in noting that this comes close to a condemnation of slavery. However, it is also worth noting that the main motivation appears to be to prevent self-indulgence on the part of the master (hence the accommodation of allowing a couple of slaves). Thus although there is concern for the welfare of the slave, and a theology which suggests that logically it should end, in practice the concern is for the masters.

The same passage has also been commented on by Chris de Wet, who also looks at Chrysostom’s views, arguing that they were ‘ahead of the times’.

De Wet notes the concern for the master avoiding excess (he names it ‘social gluttony’), and places this as belonging with Chrysostom’s other arguments about the dangers of wealth rather than concern for freedom. However, the call for masters to train up their slaves prior to manumission is genuinely progressive. However, de Wet also points out that Chrysostom elsewhere doesn’t encourage Christian slaves to seek freedom.

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570 See de Wet, “John Chrysostom on Slavery.” De Wet also points out the same tactic in Chrysostom’s preaching on Hebrews. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb. 28* (*PG* 63:197). However, this passage also seems to allow having a couple of slaves, whether in the house or to accompany the *domina* when in public. Note also that elsewhere Chrysostom seems to defend priests having a slave. See John Chrysostom, *Hom. Phil. 9* (*PG* 62:251).

571 De Wet compares this with the experience in the American South, where manumitted slaves had no means of support and ended up in poverty: de Wet, “John Chrysostom on Slavery.” Note the alternative view of Kurbatov, who considers that Chrysostom is only interested in the liberation of unproductive slaves so that they might be productive, in an article which argues within a Marxist framework that Chrysostom was only supporting the interests of the ruling class (in Antioch’s case, the medium landowners). G. L. Kurbatov, “Klassovaja Suscnost Ucenija Ioanna Zlatausta,” *Ezegodnik muzeja istorii i religii i ateiznoz* 2 (1958): 80-106.

572 John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor. 19* (*PG* 61:156). Chrysostom is commenting on 1 Cor. 7:21, noting that some explain the verse as meaning slaves should seek freedom, but then explaining why he differs.
Chrysostom’s views are also revealed in his homilies on Philemon and Titus. I shall deal with Philemon first. In the Argumentum, Chrysostom draws four lessons from Paul’s intervention on the slave Onesimus’ behalf. First, we ought to be similarly concerned about such matters. Secondly, that even extremely bad slaves ought not to be abandoned. Thirdly, that slaves should be left in their master’s service. His last, fourth point is that masters shouldn’t be ashamed of their virtuous slaves:

May I add one more thing? He teaches us not to be ashamed of household slaves if they are virtuous [Διδάσκει ἡμᾶς μὴ ἐπαισχύνεσθαι τοὺς οἰκέτας, εἰ ἐνάρετοι εἶν].

In the first homily, Chrysostom argues that Paul writes ‘and to the church in your household’ (Phlm. 2) expressly to include Philemon’s slaves in a way acceptable to a master. His reasoning is worth noting:

Because the name ‘church’ does not leave the masters [τοὺς δεσπότας] irritated, if they are counted with the household slaves [οἰκέταις]. For the church does not know of a distinction between master and slave, but distinguishes one person from another by good actions or sins. So when in church, don’t be irritated when your slave [δοῦλος] is greeted with you.

He goes on to quote Gal. 3:28 in support of this. The passage is illuminating because it demonstrates both sides of Chrysostom. Within the church, and in the eyes of God, all are (or should be) treated equally. This is the radical side of Chrysostom. However, the implication is also that this behaviour is unique to the church,
without a suggestion that society should fundamentally reform: this is the conservative side of Chrysostom.\textsuperscript{577} The same homily again demonstrates both sides of Chrysostom later on, where he castigates masters for compelling slaves to do various immoral acts or marrying against their will.\textsuperscript{578} There is a concern for slaves to be treated well, but the condemnation is in forcing the slaves to do wrong rather than in the possession of slaves itself.

While homilies on Philemon are a natural hunting ground for discerning attitudes to slavery, Chrysostom’s preaching on Titus 2:9-10 is also telling. As this passage is important for understanding Chrysostom’s comments, I cite it here. ‘Paul’ writes:

\begin{quote}
Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to answer back, not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Saviour.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
dούλους ἰδίοις δεσπόταις ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἐν πᾶσιν, εὐαρέστους εἶναι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας, μὴ νοσφιζομένους, ἀλλὰ πάσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθὴν, ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.\textsuperscript{579}
\end{quote}

Chrysostom’s first reaction is to focus on ἰδίοις δεσπόταις: he takes the opportunity to argue against anyone who might try to separate slaves from their master for any reason:

\begin{quote}
He is therefore deserving of condemnation [καταγνώσεως]... ...who by this pretext robs slaves from their masters [καὶ ὁ δούλους δεσποτῶν ἀποστερῶν τῷ αὐτῷ δὴ τοῦτο προσχήματι].\textsuperscript{580}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{577} There are some similarities here with \textit{Ad Gregoriam}, discussed earlier. Equality in church doesn’t mean equality in society.


\textsuperscript{579} Titus 2:9-10. English translation NRSV. The actual authorship of this letter is doubted by many scholars to be Pauline. See, for example, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, \textit{The First Paul} (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009), 29-58. Borg and Crossan label the author of Titus the ‘reactionary Paul’ and ‘anti-Paul’, so far from the genuine Paul do they consider the author of Titus (the same applies to the letters to Timothy). Chrysostom gives no hint of any doubts about the authorship of Titus or 1 & 2 Timothy.

Thus the first point that Chrysostom makes is to affirm the rights of property ownership over slaves. Whatever claims about Chrysostom’s radical nature may be made, here is a deeply conservative approach reinforcing the existing social fabric of the empire. He goes on to explain that his concern is what everyone will think of Christians – which suggests that Christianity was being blamed for separating slaves from masters (Chrysostom does not elaborate further on this point – presumably it was clear to his congregation).

His second point is to affirm that slaves who serve their masters well, motivated by the fear of God, are effective witnesses to the gospel. He claims that this will influence pagans as they will judge beliefs based on behaviour, being impressed that slaves behave better than philosophers.

Chrysostom now appears to descend into the stereotyping of slaves already noted as being endemic in late antiquity:

> For even among themselves, and everywhere, this is conceded: how the race of slaves [τὸ τῶν δούλων γένος] is reckless, hard to change, stubborn, not very much suited to teaching in virtue...

However, what follows suggests that, even if succumbing to the stereotype, Chrysostom is aware that it is the environment which creates such behaviour, rather than it being intrinsic to the slaves themselves:

> ...not because of nature, God forbid, but because of upbringing [ἀνατροφήν], and negligence [ἀμέλειαν] from their masters.

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581 This also comes out in his discussion on Philemon, where Chrysostom appears to assume that Onesimus will remain Philemon’s slave upon his return. John Chrysostom, Hom. Phlm. 2 (PG 62:711).

582 Perhaps some were encouraged to run away to the desert to be monks. The Council of Gangra (AD 359) condemned Eustathius, an Armenian bishop for encouraging this practice. See Socrates, Historia ecclesiastica 2.43. The rule of Pachomius refers to ensuring that those wanting to join a monastery were not runaway slaves. Pachomius, Praecepta 49. Note the same concern about the reputation of Christianity and separating slaves from masters in the argumentum of Philemon (see above).


Chrysostom continues, explaining that masters only bother worrying about the morality of their slaves when it affects them directly (for example, theft or drunkenness). Slaves therefore have no-one to guide them. Chrysostom concludes:

For all these reasons it is a difficult and surprising thing that there should ever be a useful slave [χρήσιμον οἰκέτην γενέσθαι ποτέ].

Chrysostom comments that because good slaves are rare they make effective witnesses. Having done this, he then addresses the slaves directly in the rest of the homily (λοιπὸν γάρ μοι πρὸς τοὺς οἰκέτας ὁ λόγος), encouraging them through the example of Joseph.

This homily, then, gives us a picture of Chrysostom’s attitude to slaves and slavery. He protects the institution of slavery in practice, and combines both the stereotypical tropes. Chrysostom does reinforce the stereotype of the lazy, bad slave, but he lays the blame for this at the feet of the masters for not bringing slaves up correctly and instructing them. He also reinforces the trope of the good slave, encouraging slaves to be faithful and diligent to their masters. As Garnsey points out, this encouragement to slaves again demonstrates a socially conservative attitude:

There was no need to bring force into play against slaves, if they could be persuaded that virtue was of greater value than legal status and was within their grasp.

Having established Chrysostom’s general views on masters and slaves, we can now examine the specific roles that πίστις and the slavery metaphor play within his preaching.

**Chrysostom, πίστις and the slavery metaphor**

As already noted, one of the main concerns for masters would be the loyalty of their slaves. The term repeatedly used for this quality was πίστις and related words. This

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586 John Chrysostom, *Hom. Tit. 4* (PG 62: 686). This suggests a sizeable part of his congregation consisted of slaves, even if Chrysostom addressed them far less frequently than masters.

applies to both tropes of slaves. As a negative example, here is Chrysostom preaching against wealth, and comparing it to a faithless slave (note in passing how the negative stereotype is appropriated for his purpose):

For nothing is so faithless \[\text{ἄπιστον}\] as wealth, as I have often said, and never stop saying, for it is a senseless runaway slave, a house-slaprave\[\text{δραπέτης}\] with no loyalty \[\text{ὀ̣ηκέτης πίστιν οὐ̣κ ἔχων}\]. ⁵⁸⁸

On the positive side, he quotes Matthew 24:45 (‘Who then is the faithful and wise slave \[\text{Τίς ἄρα ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος}\]...’) in a number of different contexts, exploiting the image of the faithful slave. ⁵⁸⁹

The slave–master relationship is reciprocal (though clearly unequal); Chrysostom also shows how the master is faithfui to his slaves. This comes out in his discussions on 1 Timothy 6:1-2 (already discussed above), where he claims that masters do more for slaves than vice versa. The biblical text urges slaves to ‘regard their masters as worthy of all honour’, in particular because ‘those who benefit by their service are \[\text{πιστοί}\] and beloved’. Modern translations suggest ‘believers’, linking it expressly to the masters being Christians. ⁵⁹⁰ However, Chrysostom links it also to the masters’ treatment of the slaves:

Therefore the masters are giving a greater service to them \[\text{Ὥστε μείζονα αὐτοῖς δουλείαν εἰσάγουσιν οἱ δεσπόται}\]. This is even hinted at here: They are faithful and beloved, who devote themselves to good deeds \[\text{Πιστοί εἰσι καὶ ἀγαπητοὶ οἱ τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι}\]. They are being worn out and enduring hardship for your relaxation; aren’t they owed the benefit of great honour from the household slaves? ⁵⁹¹

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⁵⁸⁹ See for example John Chrysostom, Sac. 2. Chrysostom uses it throughout this chapter in discussing the priesthood here. See also John Chrysostom, Hom. Matt. 77 (PG 58:705), John Chrysostom, Hom. Phil. 13 (PG 62:280), and with a slight variant John Chrysostom, De Mutatione Nominum (PG 51:124).
⁵⁹⁰ So NRSV, NIV, GNB and NASB.
⁵⁹¹ John Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Tim. 16 (PG 62:589).
By treating this as a description of faithful masters, Chrysostom is easily able to move into a consideration of the Christian’s relationship with God, who is the ultimate faithful master, and therefore deserving of all honour.

As this example shows, Chrysostom uses the slave–master metaphor for the Christian’s relationship with God. It is, of course, a metaphor with strong scriptural roots. However, it is also striking that one of Chrysostom’s favourite terms for Christ is ‘Master’ - ὁ Δεσπότης. Chrysostom uses this for Christ over sixty times in his homilies on Romans alone.\(^592\) The metaphor is endemic and natural. For example, Chrysostom refers to the example of Joseph, waiting patiently in gaol after the false accusation by Potiphar’s wife. He explains that God could have acted, but chose not to straight away:

For God certainly was able to fulfil these things that same day, but so that he might show his power, and the faith of his slaves [καὶ τὴν πίστιν τῶν αὐτοῦ δούλων], he allowed a long time to pass, and many obstacles to arise, so that you might learn his strength...\(^593\)

Joseph has been designated a slave of God, but as befits the positive trope, he is a slave who demonstrates πίστις, here combining the ideas of trust, obedience and loyalty to God as a slave should show their master.

The same easy use of the metaphor in connection with faith can be found in Chrysostom’s preaching on Romans 1:5. This verse, with its talk of the ‘obedience of faith’ [ὑπακοὴν πίστεως], has seen much discussion amongst commentators.\(^594\) For our purposes, what is of note is the easy way in which Chrysostom links this to a household metaphor including slave and master:

Notice the politeness of the household slave. He wants nothing to be of himself, but everything to belong to the Master [Ὅρα

\(^{592}\) The term Δεσπότης occurs 85 times in Chrysostom’s homilies on Romans, on 63 of these occasions as a title for Christ.


\(^{594}\) See, for example, the discussion in C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 66. It has also become one small part of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. See for example Bird and Sprinkle, eds., The Faith of Jesus Christ, xvii, 18, 30, 79, 131, 32, 38, 70.
εὐγνωμοσύνην οἰκέτου· οὐδὲν ἕαυτῷ εἶναι βούλεται, ἀλλὰ πάντα τοῦ Δεσπότου. 595

Chrysostom doesn’t just use it for Paul; he also uses it for his hearers. So for example in commenting on Romans 2:16, he compares his congregation to unfeeling, ungrateful domestic slaves. 596 Chrysostom can similarly berate masters who gain more honour from their slaves than they give to God, who is their master. 597 He can also compare any laxity in the Christian life with a lazy or thoughtless slave. 598 Similarly, enquiries into the plans of God can be compared to bad slave behaviour:

For we are doing just the same thing as if some household slave [τίς οἰκέτης], having given offence, were to meddle in the administration of the household. 599

Chrysostom compares this with the positive example of Abraham, who features here and elsewhere (along with Sarah) as one who voluntarily took on the role of domestic servant to the three angel visitors. 600 Chrysostom can also use the slave metaphor to encourage giving to the poor by reframing the person considering whether to give as the slave of the master who forgives all offences, who even kisses his betrayer. 601 Thus in a variety of ways Chrysostom uses the slave–master relationship as a metaphor for the Christian’s relationship with God. 602

598 For example, he compares lax Christians with thoughtless slaves who get distracted at the market. John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 4 (PG 60:420).
600 See also John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 21 (PG 60:606) and 30 (PG 60:666). The idea of the congregation as being household slaves is also present in John Chrysostom, Hom. Rom. 7 (PG 60:448).
602 That this was a common metaphor during the period can be seen in an inscription in the Western Church at Mamshit. The church (built early fifth century) has a large floor mosaic in which the person responsible for the building of the church, Nilus, describes himself as the slave of the Lord and asks for his protection over his household: Κ(ύρι)ε, σώσον τὸν δοῦλόν σου Νῖλον τὸν φιλόχριστον τὸν
We are now in a position to speculate how this preaching might have been received by different groups within the congregation, specifically slaves and masters.

Slaves might have felt to some degree affirmed. Chrysostom goes beyond the common view that by nature all humans are equal and asserts that this is also true in the eyes of the church and God. They might also have been reassured through the pressure that Chrysostom places on owners to be good, caring, faithful masters. In a world where you could be flogged on a whim, such a picture may well have struck a strong chord. Additionally there was the tantalising prospect of freedom through Chrysostom’s injunctions to masters to have fewer slaves.

However, with this affirmation comes a challenge to be good, faithful slaves no matter how bad their master may be. This challenge both comes in a direct form (Chrysostom expressly tells them this) but also indirectly. Slaves may have felt disappointment or resentment at being told not to seek freedom actively, at perpetuation of some stereotypes and demeaning language, and on hearing that masters do more for them than vice versa.\(^{603}\) Beyond this, because it is so easy to move between slave–master relationships and Christian–God relationships, injunctions to obey God faithfully without question also imply that masters on earth should receive the same treatment. Any emphasis on religious faith reinforces loyal obedience to masters.

Masters might similarly have had mixed reactions. Again, they might have felt affirmed because Chrysostom vigorously maintains their property rights. They might also have been reassured that Chrysostom so strongly encourages slaves to be loyal and obedient. There may also have been another type of indirect affirmation. Often, Chrysostom assumes the masters’ viewpoint; his preaching implies that his

\[\text{κτίσαντα τὰ δὲ καὶ Κ(ύριος) φυλ(άξει) τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. SEG 31:1415. It would be fortuitous if this was the contemporary of Chrysostom at Constantinople who defended him to Arcadius. Nilus of Ancyra, Epistulae 2.265. However, such links remain purely speculative. See also the Cretan fourth century inscription describing Olympias as the faithful (πιστῆς) slave of Jesus Christ. Bandy 101.}\]

\(^{603}\) De Wet also points out that should a master divest himself of most of the slaves, the ones left behind would have a heavier, nastier and more shameful workload. Chris de Wet, “John Chrysostom’s Advice to Slaveholders” (paper presented at the 16th International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford, 2011).
hearers have estates, wealth and slaves. Having this as a default position in the preaching may have reassured masters that their situation in life was normal (even if in fact they were an elite minority).

Like the slaves, however, the masters may also have felt challenged. First, there is the challenge to do without most of their slaves, seen by Chrysostom as being a form of conspicuous consumption. With fewer slaves comes the implication of potentially losing status in the eyes of others. Secondly, there is the challenge to be a good, faithful master who cares properly for his slaves. This challenge again comes both directly and implicitly through the picture of God or Christ as the master of all.

However, there is another aspect that affects both slaves and masters. As far as the church is concerned, after baptism slave and master are spiritually siblings. For the slave, this might have produced mixed emotions. A person who legally couldn’t have their own family was now part of one. A person who had no right to inherit was now told that they would jointly inherit the best gifts of all. A person with no honour status was now equal to their master. Yet their day to day life would remain mostly unchanged. It might have felt bittersweet. For the master, the thought that their slave was now their brother or sister might have been psychologically challenging.

De Wet points out how closely linked honour and kinship were in this period. He examines Chrysostom’s homilies on Philemon, noting how Chrysostom emphasises the equality of honour (ἰσοτιμία) that Onesimus is given through Paul claiming him as his son. As de Wet remarks, Chrysostom understands Paul to be deliberately giving Onesimus honour through this fictive kinship:

He didn’t say ‘take him back’, he didn’t say ‘don’t be angry’, but ‘receive him’. This is, he is not only worthy of leniency [συγγνώμης],

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604 See for example Chrysostom’s comments on many people surrounding themselves with herds of slaves [ἀνδραπόδων ἀγέλας] to impress others. John Chrysostom, Hom. Jo. 28 (PG 59:166).

but also honour [τιμής]. Why? He has become a child [Τέκνον] of Paul.606

Chrysostom emphasises this alongside Paul saying that Philemon will receive Onesimus back as a brother, again stressing the equality of honour. He then goes on to address the masters. Chrysostom points out the fictive kinship that ties the masters and slaves together in the eyes of God:

The master of Paul is not ashamed to call our slaves his brothers. Yet we are ashamed? Look how he is honouring us. He calls our slaves his own brothers, and friends and fellow-heirs [ὁ Παύλου Δεσπότης οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται τοὺς ἁμετέρους δούλους ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ καλεῖ, καὶ ἥμεις ἐπαισχυνούμεθα; Ὑγὶς, πῶς ἡμᾶς τιμᾶ ἀδελφοὺς ἀντικοι καλεῖ τοὺς ἁμετέρους δούλους, καὶ φίλους, καὶ συγκληρονόμους].607

However, the lesson for masters is limited: the fictive kinship should encourage them to treat their slaves better, to be more forgiving. De Wet rhetorically asks, ‘What could be worse than being a slave?’ The answer: ‘Being a Christian slave!’608 He gives this seemingly paradoxical answer precisely because the Christian slave had to bear with the tension of alternating between communities that recognised the kinship (within defined social spaces) and communities that didn’t.

The same tensions can be seen when Chrysostom addresses female owners and their slaves. In commenting on Ephesians 4:31, he gives practical advice to avoid anger: never shout. He then gives the example of female owners shouting so loudly that those outside can hear them beating their slaves, describing it as shameful. The passage then provides similar tensions as above. He allows that slaves sometimes need to be beaten (though not too harshly).609 He also agrees that his congregation might truthfully argue that slaves are difficult to deal with:

‘But it is a good-for-nothing race’, you say, ‘and headstrong, and shameless and not open to correction.’ And I know it. But there are different ways to correct [ῥυθμισαι]: by fear; by threats; by words;

which are able to sting that person more powerfully. And you free yourself from shame...

... ‘But the slave race is unbearable’, you say, ‘if given licence’. And I know it. But as I was saying, put them right in a different way, not only with the whip or fear, but also by flattery and by being kind. \(^{610}\)

Here we see a move to changing the view of the female owners: he accepts the problems and the stereotype, but asks them to consider different methods of discipline. He then introduces the idea of fictive kinship:

She has become your sister, so far as faith is concerned \([\Lambda \delta \epsilon \lambda \rho \acute{h} \varsigma \nu\, \gamma \epsilon \gamma \omicron \omicron \omicron \nu, \delta \nu \ \tilde{\eta} \ \pi \iota \sigma \tau \iota \tilde{\eta}]\).\(^ {611}\)

Thus in a single passage Chrysostom can reinforce the negative stereotypes, allow for beatings, yet also urge (for its day) a considerate approach and put slaves and owners as siblings.\(^ {612}\)

**Slaves and sons**

We are now in a position to see how fictive kinships for slaves led to only a slight adjustment in the status quo. Slaves were required to obey their masters, and expected to show faithfulness and loyalty (\(\pi \iota \sigma \iota \varsigma\)). The preaching of those like Chrysostom and others encouraged masters to see slaves as their kin, at least within the church building. Within the household, though, the move wasn’t to treat slaves as brothers and sisters, but as sons and daughters, but only in certain regards. This move was relatively painless for masters to make. Children, like slaves, were part of the *familia*. Children, like slaves, were under the *patria potestas* of the master. Children, like slaves, were expected to show obedience and loyalty to the *paterfamilias*. The main change required of masters (and mistresses) was to treat slaves better, not only with *aequitas* but also with *pietas* and *iustitia*. Angry owners were urged to find different ways to correct (\(\rho \upsilon \theta \mu \iota \sigma \omicron \alpha\)) their slaves – the same word

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\(^{612}\) See also John Chrysostom, *Hom. Eph. 22* (PG 62:155). Here Chrysostom acknowledges the paradox of the slave being a brother in the eyes of God yet called to obey their human master.
that Chrysostom also uses in discussing how to bring up sons.613 In the changing world of the late fourth century, with the power dynamics of traditional relationships changing, this was a relatively comforting message for the elite.

However, owners were not expected to treat slaves like sons in other, important respects. While the analogy from Son of God to Christian was limited to honour and inheritance, the analogy for slaves becoming fictive family members missed out these elements entirely. In this sense, fictive kinship remained precisely that: fiction. Thus the potentially challenging part of such analogies was never pressed by Chrysostom or others, ensuring that the elite in Constantinople and Antioch would not find him too threatening (at least on this score). Chrysostom’s main revolution is a quiet encouragement for masters not to treat their slaves quite so badly.

The household context: conclusion

Chrysostom was a preacher with pastoral aims. As someone looking to transform society, the household naturally figures largely in his preaching. Chrysostom faced a delicate task. The household itself was under pressure from changing power dynamics brought about by economic and social shifts. The elite male paterfamilias might be concerned about a wife who could leave him, taking her wealth; a son who might be out of his control through work in the imperial civil service elsewhere in the empire (and perhaps morbidly waiting for an inheritance); and slaves whom he might perceive as lazy, thieving would-be runaways. Christianity had exacerbated these concerns through producing an ideology which could justify transferring obedience from husband, father or master to the heavenly groom, father and lord of all, combined with a message of equality and freedom for all in Christ. To be heard by an elite congregation involved neither denying the ultimate authority of God, nor frightening the horses too much. This delicate negotiation informs how Chrysostom uses household analogies in his preaching, and the role of πίστις within this.

613 See, for example, John Chrysostom, De Inani Gloria 245, 276, 349.
With regard to husband and wife, Chrysostom can adapt the conventional Roman view of marriage; the analogy of heavenly groom and bride works well. Within this analogy, πίστις plays its traditional role as a reciprocal term, whereby the wife is faithful to the husband in heart, mind and body, just as Christians are faithful to God (for example, by not worshipping other gods, or going off to heretical sects, or questioning him, or by showing appropriate respect). Similarly, the husband is faithful towards his wife, reliably looking after her. The analogy also implies bonds of lifelong affection and love between the two parties. Through this rhetoric, Chrysostom reinforces not only the relationship with God, but also the authority of the bishop as the church’s and God’s representative. However, the reinforcement works the other way as well. The Roman pattern of marriage is given a divine stamp, thus reinforcing the duty of the wife to be faithful to, to respect and to obey her husband. Thus the rhetoric buttresses the position of the elite husband; the church (and therefore God) is implying that not being faithful and obedient to your husband is not being faithful to God.

With regard to master and slave, things become more complex. The relationship in antiquity was fraught, with mutual suspicion and fear probable in many cases. Nevertheless, tropes of good masters and good slaves did exist, and Chrysostom leverages these in his analogy with a heavenly master and Christians as his earthly slaves. The ideal slave was loyal and obedient; the ideal master was faithful to his slaves, caring for them. Again, πίστις could act as a reciprocal term for the relationship, indicating that the Christian ought to be completely loyal, obedient to and unquestioning of the heavenly master, just as God in return showed his care. However, slavery also brought up the pressing issue of spiritual freedom in Christ compared with real-life subjection. Chrysostom here plays it relatively safe with his congregation; he reassures them that slaves shouldn’t be freed against the owners’ will, and his exhortations to do with fewer slaves (not none) are more to do with social gluttony than the rights or wrongs of slave-holding. The church as a whole seems to have dealt with this potentially revolutionary issue through fictive kinship; slaves, already part of the familia, become part of the family. However, this ensures little change; faithful obedience is still expected from slaves; inheritance and honour are sidelined. Masters are expected to be good masters. Masters hearing
this message could hope that their slaves would get the message about loyalty and faithfulness to them; slaves hearing Chrysostom might hope that their masters might treat them a little more kindly.

With regard to father and son, the economic and social pressures created potentially tense relationships when sons became adults and the father was still living. Here, the analogy to God and Christians became most troublesome. Chrysostom and others rejected the seemingly obvious analogy of πίστις, faithfulness from son to father reflecting that between God the Son and God the Father. The fear of giving ammunition to those attacking the full divinity of the Son ensured that the main focus of the analogy centred on honour and inheritance, two aspects which slaves, as spiritual ‘sons’, did not share in. There was still an expectation of obedience, seen when Christians are treated as spiritual children of God, which in turn leads to a similar dynamic to that of husband and wife: spiritual and physical relation-ship mutually reinforce the requirement of obedience, whether to God or physical father. However, the rejection of the analogy using Christ as son for obedience and faithfulness limits the power of this reinforcement: an elite paterfamilias would still face the economic and social tensions straining his relationship with his son; the son might still focus on the divine Son’s equality of honour and power with the heavenly Father, and the supremacy of God over family, to go his own way.

This demonstration of the link between πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching and the household context illustrates a number of key points. First, πίστις is a word that should be placed within a reciprocal relationship. Failure to recognise this will mean failure to recognise the allusions to these relationships in Chrysostom’s preaching, and a failure to understand what Chrysostom and his congregations understood by πίστις. Secondly, the common understanding of πίστις in everyday contexts such as the household illuminates how Chrysostom envisaged the relationship of the Christian and God. Thirdly, noting how Chrysostom uses πίστις in this way also enables us to see how he also used it implicitly and explicitly to seek to transform or to reinforce the power balance within existing reciprocal relationships.
How daring was Chrysostom in seeking to transform society? A potentially revolutionary and transformative message ended up as relatively safe exhortations to live more generously within the existing structures of society, rather than further threatening those structures already under pressure from elsewhere. Within this message, πίστις functioned to reinforce domestic and ecclesial fidelity, loyalty and obedience.
6. Conclusion

Look on every exit as being an entrance somewhere else.614

Scholarship of late antiquity has tended to bracket ‘faith’ as being about cognitive belief, safely confined to religious or spiritual language. I argue in this study that such an approach is wrong. Chrysostom, as a key figure to understand late antiquity, acts as a revealing case study. His preaching demonstrates a radically different concept of πίστις. As study of his use of πίστις shows (see chapter two), the word’s resonances are saturated by everyday relationships (military, economic and household), and should be appreciated with reference to these relationships.615 Only through seeing the full range of meaning of πίστις can we appreciate how Chrysostom was trying to effect transformation in his congregations. It enables us to see him leveraging this more comprehensive understanding of faith in his preaching to encourage change. This change covered relationships between masters and slaves, husbands and wives, parents and children, rich and poor, laity and clergy, and the relationship with God. This greater appreciation sheds new light not only on the world of late antiquity, but has ramifications that extend to contemporary approaches to the place of religion and faith in today’s context.

614 Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (Faber and Faber, 1973), act 1.
In this concluding chapter, I draw together the different threads of arguments that each previous chapter has contributed, to weave together the overall argument about πίστις. I then show how this affects different areas of scholarship, in particular Chrysostom studies and the study of late antiquity. I also consider the implications of Chrysostom’s interpretation of Paul’s letters for Pauline studies, specifically in the current ‘faith of Christ’ debate, and also in considering ‘justification by faith’. Finally, I provide some ways in which this study also speaks to today’s context, resonating with a contemporary world where understanding religious faith has become a priority.\(^6^{16}\) I end the study with a brief précis of my argument.

**Weaving the threads**

Chrysostom was a preacher with pastoral aims. As someone looking to transform society, he faced a delicate task. Late antiquity was a period of political, economic, social and religious shifts. Existing power dynamics were changing. An emperor might be concerned about the loyalty of troops or of a city; soldiers and citizens in turn might be concerned about the emperor’s loyalty to them. A lender might be concerned about the ability of his debtors to repay; those in debt (not just the poor but also potentially the *curiales*) might feel exploited by the more powerful and better connected. An elite male *paterfamilias* might be concerned about: a wife who could leave him, taking her wealth; a son who might be out of his control through work in the imperial civil service elsewhere in the empire (and perhaps morbidly waiting for an inheritance); and slaves whom he might perceive as lazy, thieving, would-be runaways. Christianity had the potential to exacerbate all these concerns through an ideology which could justify transferring obedience from emperor, creditor, husband, father or master to the heavenly king, creditor, bridegroom, father and lord of all. This was combined with a message of equality for all in Christ. Thus to be heard by an elite congregation involved neither denying the ultimate

authority of God, nor frightening the horses too much. This delicate balance informs how Chrysostom uses military, economic and household analogies in his preaching, and the role of πίστις within this. These three threads, the military, the economic and the household, are similar, complement each other and when combined produce a richer, more vibrant tapestry.

The first thread is that of relationships within the military context. Here, πίστις connoted the mutual faithfulness of soldier and general or emperor. More specifically, for the soldier it represented qualities of loyalty and unquestioning obedience. Chrysostom applies the metaphor to his congregations seeking to encourage the same type of relationship: loyalty and unquestioning obedience to a God who is in turn faithful. Lack of ‘faith’ – πίστις – means disloyalty evidenced by turning away from God or his teaching, for example by going off to a ‘heretical’ sect or, worse still, pagan gods or Judaism. Disloyalty could also be demonstrated through questioning God by enquiring too closely into matters beyond human comprehension. Therefore, a homily that on the face of it appears to be contrasting faith (understood as belief) and reason in the modern sense may actually be more about true faithfulness and obedience. In practice the obedience is demanded not only to God, but also to the church, and therefore by implication the bishops. Thus Chrysostom’s use of πίστις not only reinforces God’s authority, but also that of the bishop. The use of the analogy in turn helps legitimise the existing earthly pattern. Citizens and soldiers are expected to be obedient and loyal to the emperor. Here, the existing hierarchical power relationships of late antiquity are reinforced by the divine parallels.

The second thread is that of economic relationships. The economic context was one of growing inequality with money-lending leading to the breakdown of some existing societal relationships. Within this context, πίστις was both the term for the good faith of a contract, and also the term for the mutual relationship of trust between creditor and debtor. However, this was trust with something at stake: the context implied that you were not only trusting the other party, but also entrusting them with something of value. Chrysostom uses this setting to explain what πίστις means for both divine and human relationships. He can describe the verbal commitment to Christ at the heart of the baptism service by the baptisand as the
πίστις of a contract. He also plays the metaphor both ways. Sometimes he uses God as the debtor: our good deeds are banked in heaven, earning spiritual interest at a fantastic rate, and secure against any robbery. In particular, he can use this to talk about real money, suggesting to the rich that they invest with God by giving to the poor, where they get the best returns. Sometimes the metaphor is turned around (with more threatening consequences). God has entrusted various things to us, and, like the parable of the talents, expects a return. The return again is shown through what the Christian does, whether through prayer, teaching, or action (even violent action if defending the honour of God). Therefore again we see an interplay between the contextual reality and the human-divine relationship. Chrysostom uses relationships based on money to illuminate the issue of trust and entrusting. In turn, he then attempts to transform existing (and frequently oppressive) monetary relationships through attacking lending money at interest, attacking love of money, and in particular attacking the failure to see the poor as neighbours to be loved. Chrysostom offers therefore more challenge to his congregations than when invoking military analogies: he is not merely using existing relationships as metaphors; he is seeking to change existing oppressive relationships and to create new ones between rich and poor.

The third thread is that of relationships within the household. These are more complex owing to the variety of relationships embodied in the household: husband and wife; master and slave; father and son. Within husband and wife relationships, πίστις stood for mutual fidelity. Within this mutuality, there was a divergence in role: the husband was expected to care for, love and look after the wife; and the wife to show proper respect to the husband, for a harmonious relationship. There are similarities here to the military, but with perhaps a more emotional edge, as the relationship also implies mutual love and affection. Chrysostom is able to use the relationship as a picture of the Christian’s (as the bride) relationship with God. At times, he uses wedding imagery to suggest that πίστις is like a dowry – the only thing that the bride brings to the wedding. When making this type of comment, Chrysostom is clearly not implying a bare belief in God; πίστις here has to take on all the other aspects associated with it in the marriage relationship. As with the military context, the use of marriage as a metaphor for a divine-human relationship
in turn reinforces the existing hierarchical human institution. Just as the church is the obedient, respectful bride of Christ, so wives are to be obedient to and respectful of their husbands.

Within master and slave relationships, πίστις stood for the loyalty and obedience expected of (or at least hoped for by the master) a good slave, and the care shown by (or longed for by the slave) a good master. The slave who lacks πίστις here is the one who runs away, deserting the master, or who disobeys the master. There are similarities with the military understanding; loyalty and obedience should be unquestioning. Chrysostom uses the metaphor to underscore the need to obey God. However, there are also implications for the master-slave relationships. The picture is complicated by the tension created through slaves being considered equal in dignity and honour in God’s eyes (and theoretically the Church’s), and a church that encouraged slaves to accept their lot and supported the status quo, with the proviso that masters should treat their slaves as their own children (except for the ‘minor’ details of inheritance and honour). Chrysostom demands that masters treat their slaves appropriately, even as he encourages slaves to be good in return. By modern standards, the demands for change in behaviour of slave-owners seem modest; however, Chrysostom’s preaching in this area may still have seemed radical to many.

This leads on to a consideration of father-son relationships. Here, Chrysostom appears not to have used the potential parallels between Christ as faithful son and God as faithful father, despite πίστις again being a key term between fathers and sons in that context. This appears to be a by-product of a reluctance to ascribe any quality to Christ which might give ammunition to those who wanted to attack the full divinity of the son.

We can now weave the three threads together. Overall, the relationships, whether military, economic or household, show that the term πίστις evoked a reciprocal (though often unequal) relationship. From the side of the more powerful partner, it implied care, protection, love, trust and trustworthiness, and faithfulness. From the side of the weaker partner, it implied faithfulness in body and mind, and so obedience, trust, and trustworthiness. The relationships could be used as pictures of
the Christian’s relationship with God; in turn, this relationship could be used to critique the human relationships. All of these qualities therefore need to be in mind whenever Chrysostom refers to πίστις or uses it in his preaching. The particular context evoked or referred to then nuances Chrysostom’s specific points in the ways outlined above. However, these relational dimensions should be considered even without specific contextual clues. Any bare reduction of the word πίστις to ‘belief’ misses important dimensions that would be apparent both to Chrysostom and his congregations. These dimensions relate both to the Christian’s relationship to God, but also to a consideration of whether Chrysostom was challenging or bolstering the patterns of existing human relationships.

Further threads

The study has focused in particular on Chrysostom’s homilies on Romans and his catechetical sermons. These are rich in references to πίστις and Romans itself is a key text in the history of Christianity. However, just as the evidence I have considered has ranged beyond these homilies, so too do the conclusions. Chrysostom’s approach is consistent throughout his corpus.

I should also reiterate what I am not claiming in this study: that the metaphors I have examined provide the totality of the ways in which Chrysostom understood πίστις. This study is not exhaustive (and, if Robbins is correct, could never be). Chrysostom uses language flexibly according to his rhetorical and pastoral needs. On occasion, he does use πίστις to mean something more akin to ‘belief’, or doctrine to be believed, or to stand in for Christianity as a whole. For example, in preaching on Romans 10:3, Chrysostom decries those who stayed with the law rather than the faith; here, πίστις stands as shorthand for Christianity, exemplified by a relationship with God based on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

But those who continually kept resisting [ἀντιπίπτοντες] the Holy Spirit, striving to be justified through the law, did not come over to faith [οὐ προσῆλθον τῇ πίστει].

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Sometimes, he can imply that πίστις is a belief in the unseen (partly influenced by Heb. 11:1). This can be seen in his teaching to catechumens:

This is faith [Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι πίστις]: to see the invisible as if it were visible... ...I say it in order that when you see the bath of water and the hand of the priest touching your head, you may not think that this is merely water, nor that only the hand of the Bishop lies upon your head... ...Was I not right in saying that we need the eyes of faith? With these we believe in the invisible; with these we take no notice of what can be seen [ὅτι τῶν τῆς πίστεως ὁφθαλμῶν ἡμῖν χρεία πρὸς τὴν πίστιν τῶν μὴ ὀρωμένων ἵνα μηδὲν αἰσθητὸν ύποπτεύωμεν].

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However, even here it is clear that ‘belief’ is most closely aligned to trust, fitting in with the other models used in this instruction (marriage, military and economic). 620 As has been shown, this trust can be seen as being related to the unquestioning obedience expected of a soldier or a slave.

There are also other areas that this study has not fully explored. One gap is that πίστις also occurs in late antique social contexts beyond those examined here. For example, πίστις is a word that can be used to express part of the relationship between host and guest. Here, it generally meant ‘not merely “keeping one’s word,” but “to act as honest persons do, to keep faith fairly and in accordance with custom”’. 621 Again, the word functions within a reciprocal relationship: the host has an obligation to provide food, shelter and gifts; the guest has an obligation to reciprocate service. At the heart of the relationship lies the complete trust and trustworthiness of each party, summed up in fides/πίστις.

Another setting for πίστις was that of friendship, and the trust shown between friends. Chrysostom does on occasion use the language of friendship for the relationship between Christian and God. 622 However, πίστις does not appear to play a major explicit part in his use of this metaphor, which is in itself used only

620 See previous chapters.
622 For example John Chrysostom, Catech. Illum. 2.29 (SC 50:150).
occasionally. Other potential settings for πίστις which have not been explored include: the relationship between patron and clients; the relationship between patron and freedmen and women; and the relationship between the Empire and its allies.  

These areas are worth future exploration. Future studies could investigate to what extent Chrysostom integrates these contexts into his teaching on and around πίστις. Within all these areas, however, πίστις is likely to function in a similar way to that already demonstrated in the major contexts of the military, the economy and the household: trust, care, trustworthiness and loyalty are wrapped up within a reciprocal, unequal relationship. Thus such explorations may provide additional confirmation of this study.

An area which might potentially add a new thread to the tapestry is to consider how Chrysostom’s conception of πίστις relates to that of late Neoplatonism. The role of faith in union with the divine is a clear parallel; further work would be needed to see both similarities and differences in Chrysostom’s approach from that of, for example, Proclus.

These are some immediate areas that call for future work. However, the study also has implications beyond the particular focus on πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching. In the next section I cover some of these.

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Implications for future research

This study touches on a number of different areas: Chrysostom, the late antique context, the interpretation of Paul, and the contemporary impact of understanding Chrysostom and πίστις in the way I have outlined. Within each of these areas there are implications for both current and future work. I shall briefly consider each area in turn.

Hearing Chrysostom anew

This study focuses on Chrysostom, showing how closely his theology and his context were integrated. It therefore raises implications for Chrysostom studies in general.

Wendy Mayer in 2004 noted how the maturing of late antiquity as a discipline ‘has shown us that there are more perspectives from which to examine Chrysostom and his works than has previously been imagined’.624

As outlined in the introduction, the past few years have seen several contextual studies of Chrysostom, examining his role in identity formation, his attempts to change the city, his strategy in communication, and his rhetoric in his attacks on spiritual marriages.625 His preaching has been studied, including place and provenance,626 as has his life, including comparisons with others.627 The impact of late antiquity as a discipline has been clear and helpful in all of these areas. There have also been a number of studies of his theology, for example his christology.628 However, there have been few attempts to contextualise fully what are sometimes considered as core ‘theological’ concepts, and some of his theology remains

625 Sandwell, Religious Identity in Late Antiquity; Hartney, John Chrysostom and the Transformation of the City; Maxwell, Christianization and Communication; Leyerle, Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives.
626 Mayer and Allen, John Chrysostom; Mayer, Provenance.
627 Kelly, Golden Mouth; Brändle, John Chrysostom. Bishop–Reformer–Martyr; Liebeschuetz, Ambrose and John Chrysostom.
unexamined. This study fills a gap in examining his understanding of πίστις within his context, showing the integration between the two.

On the one hand, it sheds a new perspective on many existing areas of social research using Chrysostom. For example, much has been written on Chrysostom’s approach to wealth. However, the links between πίστις and money-lending have not been fully considered previously. This study shows how Chrysostom used ‘faith’ as a lever to attempt to change behaviour in his congregation. Similarly, Chrysostom’s approach to identity formation has been outlined by Sandwell. This study builds on her work by noting the push for obedience and conformity to the bishop and the church that came with the concept of πίστις within various contexts, including the military and household. The study similarly informs understanding of Chrysostom’s preaching strategy, including his use of rhetoric, so building on the work of Mitchell and Maxwell. Additionally, the study sheds greater light on Chrysostom’s seemingly ambivalent approach to slavery, integrating with the work of de Wet. Thus in a number of diverse areas, considering the contextual heritage of πίστις opens up new perspectives in scholarship.

On the other hand, the study also offers a fresh approach to the theology of Chrysostom. In the introduction I set out the existing scholarship on Chrysostom and faith, highlighting how the few studies that have considered this aspect have assumed an understanding of ‘faith’ which remains unintegrated into the social context of the period. Thus Brändle’s approach sidelines ‘faith’, focusing more on grace and free will, whilst Papageorgiou notes the importance of trust and obedience, but leaves this as a general approach rather than seeking to anchor it in

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629 For example, Mayer, “Poverty and Generosity toward the Poor in the Time of John Chrysostom,” 140-58; Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money,” 29-47.
630 Sandwell, Religious Identity in Late Antiquity.
631 Mitchell, The Heavenly Trumpet; Maxwell, Christianization and Communication.
the specifics of late antique life.\textsuperscript{633} In contrast, I have sought to ground Chrysostom’s preaching in the day to day experiences and lives of his congregations, showing that his theology is deeply contextual. ‘Faith’ is not, for Chrysostom, a private matter of belief, but a description and a prescription for relationships not only human-divine, but also in the everyday contexts of the household, the economy and the military. Trying to understand Chrysostom’s theology without appreciating this perspective is severely limiting.

The study also therefore opens up a methodology that can be applied to other theological concepts. Further below, I shall outline one example; the concept of δικαιοσύνη (righteousness or justification) in Chrysostom needs studying, again seeking to earth it within his fourth century context. In short, I would argue that this study shows how viewing Chrysostom’s theology through the lens of the late antique context enriches our picture of both Chrysostom and the period.

**Developing Late Antique studies**

Moving beyond Chrysostom, the study raises a number of possibilities and new avenues for exploration for late antique studies in general. First, the specific findings about πίστις suggest that its evocation of a reciprocal, unequal relationship of trust, fidelity and obedience go beyond Chrysostom’s own preaching. Such connotations, fully situated in the fourth century contexts of the military, the economy and the household, are likely to be true not just of Chrysostom’s preaching, but of the entire period. I have already given examples throughout the study where Chrysostom’s approach is paralleled by others. Therefore any consideration of the theology of any eastern church father should take account of this understanding. I suggest that the same is likely to be true of fides and the Latin west.

It is not just the understanding of πίστις by Chrysostom that can be extended further, but also his use of it. Besides loyalty to God, it is also used to create identity and justify violence, to bolster the existing power dynamics within households, and to encourage charity from the rich to the poor. It therefore sheds a fresh light on

\textsuperscript{633} Brändle, “Zur Verhältnisbestimmung Von Glaube Und Werken,” 121-36; Papageorgiou, “Selected Themes”.

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the changing role of bishops within the fourth century, and how they navigated the
different social challenges facing them. Chrysostom helped to maintain the
traditional Roman view of marriage at a time of social change; similarly, he also
helped to maintain a master-slave economy, albeit seeking to transform its
operation. Economically, Chrysostom used the leverage offered by πίστις to
encourage giving to the poor, thus giving support to the thesis by Peter Brown
regarding the growth in power of bishops in the late fourth century through their
control of the poor.634 The study therefore shines new light on the social, economic
and religious life of late antiquity.

In addition to these areas, the methodology used in this study could also be
fruitfully applied to other aspects of the late antique period. Many studies of
theological concepts of this period only consider the context in terms of the politics
of the individuals or groups; in this approach, the history becomes one of
theological debate played out in sermons, letters and councils.635 Such an approach
is helpful, but it raises the danger of treating the theological concepts as being
unchanging universal values rather than as only conveying meaning within an
existing context. Paying close attention to the context within which Chrysostom
was preaching reveals new dimensions both to his rhetoric and to his theology.
Similar dividends may accrue with studies for other bishops and personalities.

One example is the understanding of liberum arbitrium (free will) in Augustine. The
concept has been part of theological debate since his time. Theological studies of
Augustine have tended to emphasise the philosophical roots of the word and
concept;636 little attention so far appears to have been paid to the social context
within which liberum arbitrium was generally understood as a power of a household

634 See for example Peter Brown, Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire, The

635 At its best, this type of approach is still illuminating, as for instance in the classic
G. L. Prestige, Fathers and Heretics: Six Studies in Dogmatic Faith with Prologue and

636 So, for example, John M. Rist, Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
paterfamilias, and the implications for understanding Augustine’s theology.\textsuperscript{637} Such an investigation might shed new light on both Augustine’s theology and his politics.\textsuperscript{638}

Therefore, both through its content and also through its methodology, this study invites fresh exploration of a number of different areas within late antique studies.

**Further perspectives on Paul**

Immediate implications for Pauline studies centre on the ‘faith of Christ’ debate. As noted in the previous chapter, this is a debate over whether various Pauline passages which refer to πίστις Χριστοῦ or similar should be translated as meaning ‘faith in Christ’ (the objective genitive view) or ‘faith(fulness) of Christ’ (the subjective genitive view). Both sides of the debate have used early Christian sources as part of the arsenal of arguments put forward.\textsuperscript{639} Within this debate, both sides agree that there is little evidence from the mid to late fourth century onwards of interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive. This study confirms that finding. Chrysostom does not appear to have given a subjective genitive interpretation, and where there is the possibility of attributing πίστις to Christ he either ignores the opportunity or deliberately denies it. This provides some ammunition for the objective genitive interpretation.

However, Chrysostom’s denials are often linked specifically to debates over the divinity of Christ. Wallis argued that the fourth century debates over the divinity of Christ (the ‘Arian’ controversy) was the cause of the rejection of the subjective

\textsuperscript{637} As an example, in an otherwise closely argued article, the political context for liberum arbitrium is not mentioned in Jesse Couenhoven, “Augustine’s Rejection of the Free-Will Defence: An Overview of the Late Augustine’s Theodicy,” *Religious Studies* 43, no. 3 (2007): 279-98. For more details on liberum arbitrium and its role within late antiquity, see Cooper, “Christianity, Private Power, and the Law,” 327-43. My attention was first drawn to the link in discussions with Julia Hillner.


genitive interpretation, lest this appear to undermine Christ’s full equality with God the Father. Therefore this study supports this aspect of Wallis’ thesis.\footnote{Wallis, \textit{The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions}, 200-12.}

Additionally, this study does reinforce the interpretation of \( \pi\acute{s}t\acute{i}c \) as incorporating faithfulness and obedience – at least within the fourth century context. It therefore also provides some ammunition for the subjective genitive interpretation.

Perhaps frustratingly, then, both sides can claim support from Chrysostom’s use of \( \pi\acute{s}t\acute{i}c \). The debate will no doubt continue.\footnote{Hence I share Downing’s approach, which notes that a modern insistence on resolving the ambiguity may not be shared by the ancient mindset. Downing, “Ambiguity, Ancient Semantics, and Faith,” 139-62.}

The study also links into areas of Pauline studies beyond the ‘faith of Christ’ debate. The biggest sea-change within the study of Paul came with the emergence of the ‘new perspective’, usually dated from 1977 with the publication of \textit{Paul and Palestinian Judaism} by Sanders.\footnote{E. P. Sanders, \textit{Paul and Palestinian Judaism} (London: SCM Press, 1977). As with all ‘step-changes’, Sanders was building on the work of a number of scholars that had argued the traditional protestant interpretation was wrong, including Moore, Sandmel and Stendahl. But his work caught the attention of the academic community.} Sanders focused on understanding first century Palestinian Judaism, and comparing how it functioned with that of Paul’s Christianity. He looked at the overall pattern of the religions – how you get in, and how you stay in. Sanders argued that Judaism had wrongly been seen as being one based on works-righteousness – that you had to earn salvation. Instead, he argued that it functioned by grace. God graciously elects his people into a covenant with him. Keeping the Law (Torah) is the condition of staying in, but it is not what gets you in to begin with. Sanders termed this pattern of Palestinian Judaism ‘covenantal nomism’.

Sanders and other scholars then turned their attention to what Paul meant by ‘justification by faith’.\footnote{Other leading advocates of the new perspective include J. D. G. Dunn (who coined the phrase ‘new perspective’) and N. T. Wright.} Individual positions vary, but Paul is not seen as
contrasting faith with works. Instead, Paul is addressing the problem of how gentiles can be part of the people of God. What is needed is not adherence to the Law (Torah), but faith in Christ alone. The contrast is not faith and works, but faith and ‘works of the Law’, a technical term referring in particular to those parts of Torah observance that stood out as being significant culturally as identity markers for Jews (in particular Sabbath observance, dietary laws, and male circumcision). The contrast could be expressed in terms of faith in Christ versus faithfulness to the Torah.

Paul (on this view) isn’t concerned with how to find a gracious God, and doesn’t suffer from a troubled conscience, but arguing how gentiles can become the people of God without Torah observance. Within this argument, justification means to Paul, according to Sanders, a change or transfer from one realm to another:

Another way of putting all this is to say that ‘righteoused by faith’ [sic] means ‘being transferred from the group which will b destroyed to that which will be saved’. This transfer involves a change in the person, so that Christ lives in and through the believer.

The new perspective on Paul stands in contrast to a more traditional reformed or Lutheran perspective, which in turn stood against the mediaeval Roman Catholic understanding. Justification by faith was a powerful weapon for the reformers: it emphasised individual faith as being all important, thus de-emphasising the role of the church (and the Pope) in salvation.

The eastern churches have focused far less on ‘justification by faith’, having instead generally focused on theosis. Older protestant scholarship has tended to discount the interpretation of Paul by eastern church fathers, assuming that they failed to understand him on justification by faith and free will.

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646 For example, Eva Hoffman-Aleith, “Das Paulusverständnis Des Johannes Chrysostomus,” *Zeitschrift für die neuestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 38 (1939): 181-88. Within a generally appreciative article, she assumes that Chrysostom has misunderstood Paul when Chrysostom defends free will.
This neglect may mask some similarities in approach between Chrysostom’s understanding of justification by faith and that of the new perspective. The comparison needs investigating. This current study lays the foundation for such an investigation through providing a clear understanding of what ‘by faith’ might mean for Chrysostom, with its connotations of unquestioning trust, fidelity and obedience. Future studies would therefore focus on his understanding of justification (δικαιοσύνη). The new perspective emphasis on justification signifying transfer, identification and transformation has parallels with theosis which need examination.\(^\text{647}\)

If similarities emerge between the early eastern church understanding of justification by faith (exemplified by Chrysostom) and that of the new perspective, this has two repercussions. First, it strengthens the case for the new perspective, as those closer in time and context to Paul also understood him similarly. Secondly, it may also have implications for ecumenical dialogue. One of the dividing areas between eastern and western churches has been justification by faith; if western churches are moving towards an understanding more closely related to that of Chrysostom, then there emerges scope for agreement in this area. Justification has

\[^{647}\text{It is only recently that Chrysostom’s emphasis on theosis (without using that vocabulary) has become clearly sketched out in western academia. For example, Russell, in his survey on deification, devotes only a sentence to Chrysostom, and lumps him in with other antiochenes. Norman Russell, The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition, ed. Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 237. For a far more sympathetic account of Chrysostom’s approach, see Pak-Wah Lai, “John Chrysostom and the Hermeneutics of Exemplar Portraits” (PhD, Durham, 2010). In a similar vein see also Naidu, Transformed in Christ. See also Papageorgiou, “Selected Themes”. Fairbairn also notes Chrysostom’s approach along these lines, aligning him with the so-called ‘Alexandrian’ Christology. Donald Fairbairn, Grace and Christology in the Early Church, ed. Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 203-11. None of these seeks to locate Chrysostom’s theology within his particular context.}\]
not yet been examined formally in recent Anglican-Orthodox dialogue (although it has in Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue); when it is, then such a study may prove significant.648

This latter point shows that Chrysostom can illuminate areas of relevance to churches on a denominational and international level. However, there are other ways that Chrysostom’s understanding can be relevant to contemporary society, as the next section will suggest.

**Contemporary implications – the good, the bad and the ugly**

Chrysostom’s concerns are always intensely pastoral. His interpretation of πίστις, then, could prove helpful for modern day pastors. In particular, his approach leads to less of an emphasis on cognitive belief, and more of an emphasis on a relationship with God/Christ. I have tested out this approach in a variety of settings beyond the formally academic. In particular, it has been presented to groupings of Baptist, United Reformed and Congregational ministers.649 The feedback from the groups was positive, but with some reservations. The ministers much appreciated the setting of ‘faith’ within the context of a relationship. They also appreciated that emphasising fidelity removed the anxiety in some Christians of trying to ‘force’ themselves to believe some aspect of God, and becoming despondent by any failure in this area, seeing doubt as the antonym to faith.

However, some ministers pointed out that a relational view of faith can also lead to a type of pelagianism – seeking to be justified through works (which exhibit or prove one’s faithfulness). This in turn can lead to a different despondency when

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649 My thanks to all who took part: the Yorkshire Baptist Ministers’ Fellowship meeting of 2010; the Baptist Newly Accredited Ministers Conference of September 2010; and a group of URC and Congregational ministers at a workshop at St. Deiniol’s, Hawarden.
there is failure to live an obedient life. Here lies both the pastoral strength and weakness of Chrysostom’s approach.

The material has also been presented to an Anglican inner-city Manchester church. Here, feedback suggested that the pictures of faith which Chrysostom uses were helpful in leading participants to consider their own faith in new ways. In particular, participants noted as valuable the economic idea of faith as being entrusted by God, and trusting God with something valuable to yourself. Again, the close link between faith and relationship was appreciated.

The reception of the material by a variety of ministers and laity suggests that Chrysostom’s approach can still be helpful today pastorally.

There is, though, another side to Chrysostom’s understanding of πίστις. It is used as part of the creation of a communal identity, to delineate boundaries for the congregation to separate them from other spiritual offerings and groups, whether alternative Christian groupings (both schismatic and heretical), or Judaism, or pagan, or (in Chrysostom’s eyes) immoral (such as the games). In particular, the military-like focus on obedience and unquestioning loyalty ratchets up the stakes when Chrysostom calls on his congregation to behave in a certain way. Considering if the ‘Arians’ may have a point is not merely frowned upon; it becomes disloyalty to God, punishable in the severest terms:

You can find many other of these examples, through all of which we learn never to demand an account of the commands of God, but only to yield and obey [μηδέποτε τῶν ἐπιταγμάτων τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον ἀπαιτεῖν, ἀλλ’ εἰκεῖν καὶ πείθεσθαι μόνον]. For if being meddlesome [περιεργάζεσθαι] over some command is dangerous, yet an uttermost retribution awaits busybodies [τοῖς πολυπραγμονοῦσι]. The ones who

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650 My thanks and appreciation goes to Brunswick Parish Church in Manchester. The material was presented over a weekend in October 2012.

meddle in things far more forbidden and terrifying than these – that is, how the son was born, and in what manner, and what is the substance [τούτέστι πῶς ἐγέννησε τὸν Υἱόν, καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ, καὶ τίς ἡ οὐσία] – what excuse will they have? So knowing this, let us welcome wholeheartedly the mother of all that is good, faith [τὴν πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν μητέρα πίστιν].

Thus πίστις becomes, in Chrysostom's preaching, not only a call for a relationship with God based on trust and fidelity, but also a device to maintain his congregation's identity, shoring up barriers to other settings, approaches or groupings that he considers unhelpful.

This links in with the work of Thomas Sizgorich, who examined the role of militant Christianity in identity formation in late antiquity. He noted Chrysostom's concerns that his congregation were tempted by the Jewish festivals and holy places, and how fervent, militant piety was one of the strategies used by Chrysostom to create boundaries. Congregation members are encouraged to hunt down others in the congregation who stray, and then intervene and correct them. Sizgorich points out how Chrysostom approvingly gives the example of Phinehas, who commits double homicide to maintain group purity. Sizgorich links this as part of a broader late fourth century pattern, whereby a Christian identity is forged using violent martyr narratives, with boundaries created and patrolled by not only bishops but also ascetics. This context leads to the burning of synagogues and temples. A similar pattern is observed by Michael Gaddis, who also notes the link between a call to martyrdom and a call to violence in Chrysostom. As has been shown in the chapter on the economic context, Chrysostom encouraged his congregation to violence on the streets and in the marketplaces of Antioch against

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654 Sizgorich, Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity, 27.
655 Sizgorich cites the example of the burning of a synagogue in Callinicum in AD 388. Sizgorich, Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity, 81.
anyone perceived to have offended God, with an explicit aim of intimidation. Gaddis notes that Chrysostom’s call to violence against blasphemers is linked to martyrdom, commenting:

For John Chrysostom, meanwhile, one way to imitate the martyrs was by rebuking “blasphemers” – with one’s mouth, or with one’s fist. Here we have reached a definition of “martyrdom” whose meaning stretches all the way from suffering violence to inflicting it. Far from its original sense of resistance to persecuting authorities, martyrrial rhetoric here is used to justify the disciplinary, corrective violence carried out by Christian authorities willing to “persecute” for the sake of spreading the gospel.

This study builds on Sizgorich and Gaddis by showing how the language of πίστις itself could be used to bolster identity formation and with it violence against other identities. Economic resonances could lead Chrysostom to comparing such violence to repaying God what had been entrusted to the Christian; military and slave resonances would encourage unquestioning obedience. Sizgorich identified narrative as having a crucial role in identity formation and violence within that; Gaddis similarly picked up on martyr narratives as justifying violence; this study further identifies both metaphor and the language of faith itself as having a key part to play in this process.

The language of blasphemy and offence is still being used by groups to attack other groups. For example, in Pakistan accusations of blasphemy are made both between different Muslim groups, but also sometimes against the minority Christians. An accusation of offence against God or the Prophet can lead to mob violence against a

656 John Chrysostom, Stat. 1.32 (PG 49:32). Chrysostom may also have encouraged the burning of ‘pagan’ books. Dirk Rohmann, “Book Burning and the Culture of Censorship in Late Antiquity” (In preparation, University of Manchester).

657 Michael Gaddis, There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 175. See also his discussion on the same events later; Gaddis, There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ, 258-59.
whole community.\textsuperscript{658} The logic is similar to that of Chrysostom; offences against God require action.

On a lower key, a similar logic can also be found in the demand by some secularists or atheists for the removal of religious symbols as being offensive. For example, France has outlawed the wearing of hijabs in schools, and some are calling for it to be outlawed in any public place. The perceived offence here is not against God, but against secularist principles.\textsuperscript{659}

Examining Chrysostom’s links between faith and violence might help inform actions within these debates and clashes. In the late antique context, the logic led over the following two centuries to a decline of the \textit{saeculum}, leaving a world in which, as Robert Markus described:

\begin{quote}
\ldots the secular became marginalised, merged in or absorbed by the sacred, both in discourse and in the social structure and institutions.\textsuperscript{660}
\end{quote}

Time, place and community became ‘christianised’; everything was classed as either sacred or of the devil. Some appear to be trying to achieve a similar aim today, whether within parts of Islam in Pakistan (with a similar divide between sacred or evil), or a radically secularised state (with a divide between ‘secular’ and ‘offensive’) in France. Recognising parts of a repeating pattern may help critical analysis of the context today.

Chrysostom’s legacy therefore has the potential to continue to impact upon and transform the world today. How we use it, Chrysostom would no doubt say, is down to us and our own free will, whether for good, bad or ugly purposes.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[658] For example, the burning of a Christian neighbourhood in Lahore in 2013. A Muslim accused a Christian neighbour of saying offensive things against the Prophet. A mob burned about fifty homes in retaliation. A report can be found in The Independent, 9\textsuperscript{th} March 2013.
\item[659] See for example the news report ‘Islamic headscarf debate rekindled in France’, BBC News 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 2013.
\end{footnotes}
Last words

This study started through curiosity over what Chrysostom understood by ‘faith’ in his preaching on justification through faith, especially in his homilies on Romans. ‘Faith’ or πίστις is sometimes taken to mean intellectually believing that something is so; a cognitive effort. The findings make clear how narrow and limited such an approach is when looking at Chrysostom’s preaching and writings. For him (and for his period) πίστις was also a word that implied and belonged within a relationship. The relationship was not necessarily one of equals, but it was reciprocal. Πίστις evoked mutual trust, trustworthiness and fidelity. It promised care and faithfulness from the stronger party, and loyalty and obedience from the weaker. Its place within everyday life meant that Chrysostom could exploit military, economic and household relationships to inform and encourage his congregations in their relationships with God and with each other. It also allowed Chrysostom to exploit the link in reverse, giving a divine sheen on instructions on how to conduct oneself within these relationships. It thus helped him in his aim of transforming his congregations and their cities. His congregations were exhorted to be soldiers of Christ, debtors and creditors of Christ, brides of Christ and slaves of Christ. Whatever the metaphor used, one term stood at the centre of the relationship: πίστις.
The first thing I shall do, as soon as the money arrives, is to buy some Greek authors; after that, I shall buy clothes.  

Abbreviations and other notes

The following abbreviations are used:

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BDAG</td>
<td>Bauer, Walter, Frederick W. Danker, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna: Imperial Academy of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sciences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSJ</td>
<td>Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and Sir Henry Stuart Jones, eds. *A Greek-English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Titles of ancient texts (including their shortened forms) follow the conventions outlined in:


**Bible**

Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations in Greek are taken from:


Biblical quotations in English are taken from:

Primary sources


*Codex Bezae Cantabriensis.* University of Cambridge: Cambridge Digital Library.


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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Edition Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Secondary sources

*Armed Forces Act.*


“Finger Ring AN00122785.” A gold finger ring with the inscription FIDEM CONSTANTINO. London: British Museum.


——. *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.


Rohmann, Dirk. “Book Burning and the Culture of Censorship in Late Antiquity.” In preparation, University of Manchester.


—. “*Patria Potestas* and the Stereotype of the Roman Family.” *Continuity and Change* 1, no. 01 (1986): 7-22.


Appendix A

The occurrence of πίστις related language and its context in Chrysostom’s preaching
Introduction

To argue that the relationship aspect of πίστις is important in Chrysostom requires three foundation stones to be laid in place. First, I demonstrate that πίστις (and related words) is an important part of Chrysostom’s preaching. Secondly, I indicate evidence for the close link between πίστις and cognate words (such as πιστεύω). Thirdly, I show that the metaphorical context of military, finance or household is a significant, recurring feature within Chrysostom’s preaching on πίστις.

The importance of πίστις in Chrysostom’s works

To establish the first point, the following methodology was used. A search was made for the number of matches for πίστ~ related words in each of Chrysostom’s works in turn. The Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database was used for all searches. The search was constructed to pick up all words using the stem πιστ~. A manual count was then made in each work both of the total number of matches, and also the number of matches that were not quotations. The count was further subdivided into four categories for each work. The first category was that of the noun πίστις. The second category was that of verbal forms. This mainly comprised πιστεύω in various inflexions, but also included forms such as πιστόω and ἐμπιστεύω. The third category was that of adjectival forms such as πιστός, but also including variants such as ὀλιγόπιστος and ἀξιόπιστος. Finally, the fourth category covered all negative forms, such as ἀπιστέω, ἀπιστία, ἀπιστος, and διαπιστέω. Analysing each individual work by category enabled more detailed analysis to be performed on the data.

The results show the prevalence of πίστ~ related words throughout Chrysostom’s preaching. The average occurrence (excluding quotations) was 1.77/1,000 words. A

662 Those works marked ‘dubious’; ‘spurious’ and ‘catenae’ were excluded (including, where necessary and possible, parts of homilies or works). In total, 155 works were searched, covering 3,320,146 words.

663 Unrelated words that matched using this search were excluded (for example, ἑπιστολή).
typical homily of, say, 4,000 words would then have 6 or 7 occurrences. Relatively
few – 13 - of Chrysostom’s works have no references. In general, letters by
Chrysostom have low rates. The highest rate in a single work (as classified by TLG)
was 6.8/1,000 words.\footnote{John Chrysostom, \textit{Hom. 2 Cor. 4:13.}}

In comparison, in Libanius (Chrysostom’s pagan contemporary at Antioch) πίστις
occurs with a frequency of 0.08/1,000 words, rising to 0.12/1,000 for his orations.\footnote{This is just for the noun πίστις. However, the difference is of an order of
magnitude.}

The results demonstrate that πίστις and its cognates are practically ubiquitous in
Chrysostom’s preaching. Their use is not isolated to a particular series of homilies,
nor are they infrequent. This is evidence that πίστις is a recurring concept in
Chrysostom’s preaching, and so worth studying to illuminate our understanding of
Chrysostom and his context.

\textbf{The link between πίστ~ related words}

The results also reinforce the close link between various forms of πίστ~ related
words. The results demonstrate a statistically significant correlation between the
use of verbal forms of πιστεύω, and the use of noun forms of πίστις. This indicates a
relationship between the two.\footnote{Correlation coefficient for Noun (no quotes) and Verb (no quotes): Pearson’s R = 0.32 (significant at less than 1% level, n=155).}

Similarly, there is a significant correlation between
the noun form and the adjectival form, and the verb form and the adjectival form.\footnote{For both noun-adjectival and verb-adjectival, Pearson’s R = 0.22 (significant at
less than 1% level, n=155).}

Additionally, there is a significant correlation between the verbal forms and
negative forms, and adjectival forms and negative forms.\footnote{Verb-negative: Pearson’s R = 0.26 (significant at less than 1% level, n=155). Adrianal-negative: Pearson’s R = 0.17 (significant at less than 5% level, n=155).}

These significant correlations are what we would expect to find if Chrysostom
moved easily from one form based on πίστ~ (for example, πιστεύω) to a different

\footnote{Correlation coefficient for Noun (no quotes) and Verb (no quotes): Pearson’s R = 0.32 (significant at less than 1% level, n=155).}
form (for example, πίστος), providing objective evidence that the different forms are closely related conceptually.

Examples where Chrysostom does this explicitly can be found readily. For example, in preaching on Romans 1:5, Chrysostom argues:

...as to the rest, that we should trust [πιστεύσωμεν]. But that we should trust what? ‘Concerning his name’. Not that we should be meddling about his being, but that we should trust [πιστεύσωμεν] in his name. It was this which worked the miracles. Because ‘in the name of Jesus Christ,’ it says, ‘rise up and walk’. And this also requires faith [πίστεως]...

Here, Chrysostom is moving easily from the verbal form to the noun. The same concept is being addressed throughout. The statistics confirm what we would probably expect: all words using the πιστ~ stem are closely related.

There is an additional point revealed by the statistics, which again would be expected. Where quotations include the πιστ~ stem, Chrysostom uses more πιστ~ related language. Again, this is a statistically significant result. This makes sense. If a passage of scripture employs the language of πίστις, we would expect more often to find Chrysostom telling his congregations about the implications.

To sum up: the data confirms that πιστ~ related language was both a regular and frequent feature of Chrysostom’s preaching. The different forms are related to each other, and Chrysostom was more likely to use this language when the scripture that he was preaching on used it.

**The significance of the military, economic and household contexts**

This still leaves open the issue of the best way of understanding the resonances and meaning of such language. Is there evidence that certain contexts or meanings are more significant than others? In particular, why focus on the military, economic

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670 For the noun form, correlation between quotation frequency and non-quotation frequency: Pearson’s R = 0.58 (significant at less than 1% level, n=155).
and household contexts for understanding Chrysostom and πίστις? Why not focus on other possible contexts where πίστις may play a part, for example between patron and client, or between friends?

Three different forms of evidence converge to point to the military, economic and household contexts as being significant. The first is of a qualitative nature: that is the impression given through studying Chrysostom’s homilies. The initial reason for a focus on these three areas came through this impressionistic source. The original impetus for the research was noticing links between obedience and πίστις. Further investigation of Chrysostom’s homilies led to my view that particular contexts were significant for obedience, particularly the military and the household. At a similar time, I noticed the prevalence and importance of financial language and metaphors. Exploring these three areas yielded a rich harvest.

This qualitative type of evidence can, however, be backed up with a more structured approach. I sought to establish, within Chrysostom’s use of πίστις in his preaching, which were the significant meanings, metaphors or contexts deployed by Chrysostom.

The following methodology was used in analysing the meanings and context of πίστις and related words in homilies of Chrysostom.

Chrysostom’s corpus is so vast that a reasonable strategy is to choose a selection of his work to analyse as a representative sample. Studying the occurrence of πίστις-related words throughout his corpus showed that, whilst uncommon in his letters, they are prevalent throughout much of his preaching. Therefore three series of homilies were chosen: Chrysostom’s homilies on Genesis; on Matthew; and on Romans.671 These cover a series on the Old Testament, on a gospel, and on a Pauline letter. Additionally, each series is substantial (on Genesis – 67 homilies; on Matthew – 90 homilies; on Romans – 32 homilies). Between them, they cover over 750,000 words, and include 1,419 uses of πίστις-related language. The series also straddle a range of Chrysostom’s usage. On average, the frequency of πίστις-related language in

Chrysostom’s works is 1.77/1,000 words. The frequencies for the three series are: on Genesis – 0.86/1,000 words; on Matthew – 1.56/1,000 words; on Romans – 3.15/1,000 words. They therefore provide a broad basis on which to examine Chrysostom’s use of πίστις in preaching.

Each series of homilies was then searched using the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database. The search was constructed to pick up all words using the stem πιστ-. These were then put into four categories (noun, verb, adjective, negative), mirroring the methodology employed earlier when analysing the frequency of occurrence.

Each result was then individually examined within its immediate context (typically up to 30 lines either side of the result) for its meanings or associations, and categorised accordingly. Each result could be placed in more than one category. When a specific meaning was unclear or unstated, then the occurrence was categorised accordingly; some of these occurrences were also coded in other categories where appropriate (for example, Chrysostom may not have used an explicit meaning or association of πίστις, but the surrounding language might be richly suggestive of a particular context). Where an occurrence could be placed in a specific category, it would not also be placed in a similar more general category (for example, ‘Household slave – obedience’ would not also be counted under ‘obedience’).

Chrysostom often quotes scripture. To ensure that this did not distort the results, there was a separate category for quotations. Unless Chrysostom was clearly and explicitly using the quotation to make a point that belonged in an additional category, they did not have meanings categorised.
Inevitably, there is a degree of subjectivity in how a particular example might be categorised. However, the results are based on a large sample, which should increase the reliability of the results.

The results can usefully be summarised. The largest categories are those cases where the meaning is not specified or unclear, or Chrysostom is quoting scripture. This was expected. However, beyond these cases, certain meanings stand out. This can be seen in the accompanying figure 2.

As would be expected, some common meanings have a high occurrence. Thus meanings of trust, trusting, believing and belief are frequent. ‘The faithful’ or ‘believers’ are often used as identity terms, meaning those who are Christians and those who are not, giving rise to the high number of occurrences where the vocabulary is used to indicate this. Two other uses are also relatively common: obedience and trustworthiness. This in itself confirms my initial impressions that obedience was a significant element of the semantic field of πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching.

Figure 2: Occurrences of πιστ- related words in different contexts in Chrysostom’s homilies on Genesis, Matthew and Romans (excluding non-specific and quotations).
If we look for particular metaphorical contexts, three areas stand out. The military, the economic and the household contexts between them account for 342 occurrences (72, 134 and 136 respectively). These dwarf other contributions: the next most common metaphor is the ‘eyes of faith’, which has 17 occurrences. The household context can be broken down further. Within this corpus, marriage as a context and father-son as a context are both significant (20 and 17 occurrences respectively). However, the most frequent aspect of the household context used is that of the slave, accounting for 95 occurrences.

Other metaphors for faith are relatively uncommon. For example, Chrysostom does use the ‘friend’ and ‘patron’ context, but to nothing like the same degree that he uses the household context.

These results show that, in understanding πίστις related language in Chrysostom’s preaching, we need to go beyond relating it solely to belief, or even to belief and trust. These meanings are clearly present, but equally clearly do not represent the whole of Chrysostom’s approach. The issue is flagged up through the significant aspect that obedience plays in Chrysostom’s use, showing that any approach that emphasises the solely cognitive aspects of πίστις will at best fall short and potentially be misleading. By itself, this would be an important finding. However, this is reinforced through the evidence that Chrysostom regularly uses three particular contexts either explicitly or implicitly when deploying πίστις related vocabulary. The military, economic and household contexts frequently occur alongside such vocabulary. To appreciate Chrysostom’s understanding of πίστις therefore requires us to analyse each of these contexts and to see how Chrysostom can use them for rhetorical effect within his preaching.

These results, therefore, demonstrate the significance of these three metaphorical contexts for understanding and appreciating the meaning of Chrysostom’s preaching when he uses πίστις related language. The military, economic and household contexts are key in understanding Chrysostom and πίστις.

This conclusion can also be supported through another approach, based on Chrysostom’s baptismal homilies. These homilies are designed to teach a
catechumen the basics of the Christian faith. Within them, two features can be tested for. First, does the pattern of using military, economic and household concepts recur here? Secondly, independently of links directly to πίστις, does Chrysostom use these metaphors regularly to illuminate the relationship between the Christian and God?

Again, a search was made of the twelve homilies using the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database. Within the homilies, πιστ~ related language occurs 94 times. As figure 3 shows, the results confirm the importance of the military, financial and household contexts. These contexts dominate the results within these homilies, only rivalled by the metaphor of the ‘eyes of faith’. This parallels the findings of the investigation into Chrysostom’s homilies on scripture. When teaching the basics of the faith, Chrysostom linked faith to these three contexts.

There is a further way of considering the importance of these contexts. If they are key for understanding the relationship between Christian and God, we would expect to find them used throughout the baptismal homilies, irrespective of whether there

![Figure 3: Occurrences of πιστ~ related words in different contexts in Chrysostom’s baptismal homilies.](image-url)
is a direct link to πίστις related language. A search for the metaphors that Chrysostom used was conducted; the results are shown in Table 1.

As can be seen, Chrysostom uses a range of metaphors. However, at least one of the three contexts of military, economic and household occurs in every single baptismal homily.

To summarise: I am arguing that appreciating πίστις within the preaching of Chrysostom requires attention to its use in a variety of relationships, which are in turn used as metaphors for the relationship between Christians and God. In particular, the military, economic and household contexts are key (where the household includes marriage, parent-child and master-slave relationships).

To support my argument, I first established that πίστις was important to Chrysostom, demonstrating that it and cognates occur both regularly and frequently throughout his preaching. Secondly, I have shown that a detailed study of a large sample of Chrysostom’s scriptural preaching reveals the importance of the military, economic and household contexts. Thirdly, I have shown that in his teaching to catechumens, Chrysostom regularly and frequently uses these same three contexts in relation to πίστις and its cognates.

The cumulative weight of these three strands is strong evidence that these contexts are important in understanding πίστις in Chrysostom’s preaching.
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<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Metaphors</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marriage; military; household slave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Military; father-son; King-subjects; financial; friendship.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Military; brother; financial.</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Marriage; military; father-son; financial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Military; father-son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marriage.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Patient-doctor; financial.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Marriage; household slave; financial; athlete; wrestler.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Marriage; captured slave.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Marriage; military; financial; slave; friend; father-son; brother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Metaphors used for the Christian-God relationship in the baptismal homilies of Chrysostom.\(^{672}\)

\(^{672}\) Using the naming and numbering system from Harkins, *Baptismal Instructions*. 264