

“Seated in God’s Temple”: Explicating 2 Thess 2:4 from Epigraphic and Archaeological Sources Connected to Roman Imperial Divine Honors*

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Between 138 and 133 BCE, the Pergamene king Attalus III undertook a successful military campaign against an enemy whose identity has been lost to history. The inhabitants of Pergamum interpreted this victory as a benefaction for their city, for which the civic council and citizen-body met to decide how to demonstrate their appreciation. After deliberation, Pergamum’s government determined to honor Attalus in five ways and to engrave their decision on a marble inscription over sixty-two lines long.¹ The council and the citizen-body voted: (1) to crown Attalus with a golden crown; (2) to erect a cultic and an (3) honorary statue of the monarch; (4) to sacrifice daily to Zeus on behalf of the king; and (5) to commemorate the day of Attalus’s triumphant entry into Pergamum after his

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military victory with a yearly procession.² It is the second of these honors that concerns me, the decision to erect a cultic statue of Attalus. The Pergamene government decreed that a five-cubit tall cultic statue of the monarch depicting him standing atop the spoils of war was to be dedicated (καθιερῶσαι; *kathierōsai*) in Asclepius's temple "so that he might be a temple sharer with the god" (ἵνα ἦ[ι] σύνναος τῷ θεῷ; *hina ē[i] sunnaos tōi theōi*) (OGIS 332 = *IPerg* 246.8-9). The council and citizen-body of Pergamum further decreed that Attalus's temple sharing image should have an epigraph inscribed on its base with the following words: "The people (honor) king Attalus, son of the god Eumenes the savior, the one who loves his mother, benefactor, conqueror of his enemies, because of his valor and bravery in every battle" (OGIS 332 = *IPerg* 246.21-23).

This historical episode and the inscription commemorating it both introduce and illustrate the Greco-Roman practice of royal and imperial temple sharing (σύνναος; *sunnaos*), which was a politico-religious honor that Greek cities bestowed, of their own volition, on their rulers to demonstrate appreciation for benefaction of some kind. In the above example, the munificent act in question was Attalus's military victory and the Pergamene government met and determined, under no compulsion, to honor the king with temple sharing to show the city's gratitude for it. The fullness of the epigraph highlights this fact as part of it calls the honors that the Pergamene council and citizen-body decreed, including temple sharing, "worthy gifts" (τὰς καταξίας χάριτας; *tas kataxias charitas*), "repaying (the king)" (ἀποδιδόντες; *apodidontes*) and the inscription on Attalus's temple sharing image calls the monarch a "benefactor" (εὐεργέτην; *euergetēn*).

In addition to being an honor that cities willingly bestowed on autocrats for benefactions, royal and imperial temple sharing acknowledged, in a literal manner, divine approval of the monarchs' regime. The statue of Attalus standing atop the spoils of war was set up near Asclepius's cultic image in the cella of the god's temple showcasing that the deity was ultimately responsible for the king's victory. One portion of the epigraph notes that Asclepius's treasury funded the sacrifices accompanying the yearly procession commemorating the king's triumphant entry into Pergamum after his military campaign. Another part of the inscription indicates that when Attalus enters the city during this procession, the priests are to open the temples of the gods and to pray and sacrifice to them for the king's "safety, victory, and military might both on land and sea" (ὕγιειαν σωτηρίαν νίκη|κράτος καὶ [ἐπὶ γῆ]ς καὶ κατὰ θά[λατταν]; *hyieian sōtērian nikēnkratos kai [epi gē]s kai kata tha[lattan]* [OGIS 332 = *IPerg* 246.30-31]).³

In this article, I argue that Attalus's temple sharing and other cases of royal and imperial temple sharing from the Hellenistic and Roman periods shed light on the apocalyptic scenario concerning the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thess 2:3-12. More specifically, archaeological and epigraphic data related to royal and imperial temple sharing indicate that 2 Thess 2:4's reference to the Man of Lawlessness "seated in God's temple" refers to this practice. Given that there are no records of honorific or metaphoric temple sharing in the early Roman Empire and virtually all human temple sharers in the early Principate are Roman *principes*, the Man of Lawlessness is a Roman *princeps* who would erect a statue of himself in God's literal temple in Jerusalem. While there is evidence for Julio-Claudian and Nerva-Antonine imperial temple sharing, to date there is none for the Flavian period. The

import of these findings suggests that 2 Thess 2:4 was probably written while the Jerusalem temple still stood during the Julio-Claudian period. While this by no means proves the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, it suggests that the document pre-dates the temple of Yahweh's destruction in 70 CE, making Pauline authorship more probable.

1. Seated in God's Temple

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy address the timing of Christ's parousia and the signs that herald it.⁴ It appears that the church in Thessalonica has received a prophetic utterance, a message, or a letter—the authors themselves are unsure—indicating that the Day of the Lord has already arrived (2 Thess 2:2).⁵ To convince their converts otherwise, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy remind them that certain events must occur in the eschatological time-table before the Day of the Lord and their gathering to him (2 Thess 2:1b-2).⁶ A rebellion must happen first, during which time an apocalyptic figure known as the Man of Lawlessness, Son of Destruction, and the Lawless One will be revealed (2 Thess 2:3, 8). The authors describe this figure as one who “opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of devotion so that he is seated in the temple of God, thereby showing publicly that he is (a) god.”⁷ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy remind the Thessalonian Christ-confessors that they are aware of this event and even who or what currently restrains the Man of Lawlessness's appearance (2 Thess 2:5-11).⁸ The part of this apocalyptic scenario that concerns me is the meaning of the Man of Lawlessness's session in God's temple, which Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy describe as the Man of Lawlessness “seated” in it (ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι; *hōste auton eis ton naon tou*

theou kathisai). In the process, I address the identity of the temple, how the Man of Lawlessness is seated in it, who the Man of Lawlessness is, and the meaning of his session.

While there are no scholarly consensuses about these issues, there are four reigning hypotheses about the identity of the temple, some of which are connected to issues of Pauline (or non-Pauline) authorship of 2 Thessalonians. The first proposal is that the temple is the church. This argument, which was popular among some Church Fathers and Catholic and Reformation era Reformers, has only a few followers today. The evidence for this position is the use of ναός (*naos*, temple) for the church local (1 Cor 6:19-20) and universal (Eph 2:21; 4:16) in the Pauline corpus. Based on this usage they identify 2 Thess 2:4's temple as the church. Charles H. Giblin proposes that in addition to the identification of ναός (*naos*) in Paul's letters the verb describing the Man of Lawlessness's session, καθίζω (*kathizō*, to sit), has lost its locative sense in 2 Thess 2:4. Therefore, this figure's enthronement in the temple/church is not literal, but functional, showcasing that the Man of Lawlessness exercises his authority vis-à-vis the church and making the figure a Christian teacher or judge of some kind.⁹

The second hypothesis is that the temple is God's heavenly abode. The evidence for this position are the Man of Lawlessness's supposed connection to the so-called Antichrist tradition similar to what is found in Revelation 12, purported lack of analogies to the enthronement of someone in God's temple in biblical and Second Temple Jewish documents, and references to God's celestial temple in the Hebrew Bible (Ps 11:4; 18:7; Mic 1:2; Hab 2:20; Isa 66:1). Scholars following this interpretation tend to identify the Man of Lawlessness as a supra-human evil entity. James Everett Frame posits that 2 Thess 2:4's temple refers

unconsciously to the ancient tradition about the Dragon storming heaven (later reflected in Revelation 12) at the end of the age.¹⁰

The third proposal is that the temple of 2 Thess 2:4 is metaphoric and that the Man of Lawlessness's session in it stresses extreme rebellion. Scholars who hold this position tend to argue that 2 Thess 2:4 draws on the depiction of arrogant sovereigns in biblical and Second Temple tradition such as the kings of Babylon (Isa 14:3-21) and Tyre (Ezek 28:11-19), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan 11:36-39; 1 Macc 1:41-61; 6:7), Pompey the Great (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.72), and Gaius (Caligula) (Philo, *Legat.* esp. 188, 203, 207, 254, 337, 346; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.257-304; *J.W.* 2.184-203; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9) to showcase that the Man of Lawlessness is the culmination of these hubristic monarchs. The focus of 2 Thess 2:4 is not on the figure's identity and his literal enthronement in God's temple, but on his arrogance and attempted *coup d'état* of the divine realm. For instance, Abraham J. Malherbe argues that Antiochus IV Epiphanes is behind Paul's apocalyptic language here and that the Man of Lawlessness's "usurpation of the temple of God as the locus for claiming himself to be God symbolizes the gravest act of defiance imaginable."¹¹

The final hypothesis overlaps with the previous one in that some scholars interpret the Man of Lawlessness's session as both metaphoric and literally occurring in the Jerusalem temple. The evidence for this proposal are the literal meaning of ναός (*naos*, temple) in Greek sources, which are legion,¹² and the repetition of the definite article in 2 Thess 2:4, τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (*ton naon tou theou*), "the temple of the God."¹³ Scholars who hold this position disagree about the Man of Lawlessness's identity. Some, particularly those of the early twentieth century, reject any

notion that this figure is royal. Wilhelm Bousset concludes that the Man of Lawlessness has “nothing whatever to do with the Roman Empire.”¹⁴ Wilhelm Wrede argues that “the entire portrait does not have any political character whatsoever, and an earthly ruler has not been described here.”¹⁵ And, Ernest Best proposes that there are no “‘royal’ characteristics” of the Man of Lawlessness and “no reason to think of him as ‘royal.’”¹⁶ Instead, Bousset, Wrede, and Best posit that the figure in question is a supra-human figure of some kind.

More recent exegetes posit that the Man of Lawlessness is a Roman *princeps*. Bruce Winter argues that the language of 2 Thess 2:4 resembles terminology used in inscriptions in the Greek East describing “the divinity of the emperors,” thereby identifying the Man of Lawlessness as a Roman *princeps*.¹⁷ James R. Harrison proposes that Gaius’s attempt to erect his statue in God’s temple in Jerusalem is “a precursor of the final Satan-inspired Antichrist” who would be like Gaius.¹⁸ Douglas Campbell believes that the Gaian affair is the background for the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians and he uses this datum as a linchpin to date Paul’s time in Thessalonica, either during or immediately after the crisis in question in the early 40s CE.¹⁹

One difficulty common to the above hypotheses is their datasets, which consist almost exclusively of literary evidence, whether it be the Hebrew Bible, Paul’s letters, and/or Second Temple literature.²⁰ Since one’s dataset determines in large part one’s outcome and conclusions, this reliance on literary texts results in an interpretative impasse. In fact, one of the reasons that Wolfgang Trilling notes that the Man of Lawlessness’s session “is hard to interpret” (*es schwer zu deuten ist*) is the lack of analogies to it in Jewish literature of the period.²¹ Therefore, this is

one of the strongest arguments against interpreting God's temple in 2 Thess 2:4 as literal. For example, Frame comments:

The difficulty with the reference to the temple in Jerusalem is that the evidence adduced for this interpretation is not convincing. Neither Antiochus who erected a heathen altar on the altar of burnt-offering, and presumably placed thereon a statue of Zeus Olympios . . . nor Caligula who ordered Petronius to set up his statue in the temple . . . is conceived as sitting or attempting to sit in the sanctuary of God.²²

Even those scholars who identify the temple as the one in Jerusalem point out that a drawback to their interpretation is the lack of historical and philological parallels to 2 Thess 2:4. Leon Morris admits:

Most commentators draw attention to the attempt by Caligula to set up an image of himself in the temple of Jerusalem . . . It may well be that Paul has this incident in mind in writing these words, but we should bear in mind that what he says goes beyond anything Caligula attempted. The Man of Lawlessness is not pictured as setting up a statue of himself but as taking his seat in person.²³

There is, however, a historical analogy that explicates partly the Man of Lawlessness's session in God's literal temple in Jerusalem, royal and imperial temple sharing. The reason why scholars have overlooked this as a background to the Man of Lawlessness's enthronement in God's temple in 2 Thess 2:4 is that almost all the evidence for the practice is non-literary, i.e., archaeological, epi-

graphic, and numismatic.²⁴ When these data are brought to bear on the problem of the temple in 2 Thess 2:4, it is clear that the Man of Lawlessness is a Roman *princeps* who sets up his statue in God's literal temple.

II. Seated in God's Temple: My Proposal

Temple sharing is defined as the placement of a statue of a being (human or divine) for cultic purposes inside of an existing temple near or next to the cultic statue base of the temple's main deity.²⁵ Most often this practice appears explicitly in ancient Greek literary, inscriptional, and papyrological sources with the Greek term σύνναος (*sunnaos*), literally "with temple," but also it is found implicitly with some form of the καθ- (*kath-*) root (meaning to dedicate) in conjunction with the dative of place. Turning to the example that opened this article, Attalus III of Pergamum became a "temple sharer with the god (Asclepius)" (σύνναος τῷ θεῷ; *sunnaos tōi theōi*) when the king's temple sharing statue was "dedicated" (καθιερόω; *kathieroō*) "in the temple" (ἐν τῷ ναῷ; *en tōi naōi*). In addition to written sources, the material record attests to implicit cases of temple sharing. The discovery of statue bases inside cellae of Greek temples next to the cultic images of main deities can but does not always imply the sharing of temples. Often times, the main gods' statue bases have been altered or modified to accommodate for another statue and the temple sharer's image is smaller than that of the main deity's. For instance, Arrian describes in the second century CE work *Periplus ponti Euxini* the process by which he made a local deity or hero, Philesius, a temple sharer of Hermes in Trapezous (in modern-day Turkey). He notes that Philesius's statue is one foot smaller than Hermes's (Arrian, *Periplus ponti Euxini* 2.1-2).²⁶

While gods shared temples with each other since the Greeks adopted them, Greek cities began to make autocrats temple sharers as early as the Hellenistic period, like the example that opened this article, in a practice that I term royal and imperial temple sharing. Royal and imperial temple sharing was practiced widely in the eastern Mediterranean in Greece, Asia Minor, and even the Levant, albeit with local nuances. Zooming in on the Roman Empire, imperial temple sharing was common during the Julio-Claudian period (31 BCE- 68 CE). Every Julio-Claudian *princeps* and some of their wives shared at least one temple of a god in the Greek East during their lifetime.²⁷ Direct sources attesting to Flavians (70-96 CE) as temple sharers appear to be non-existent. During the Nerva-Antonine dynasty (96-192 CE), however, imperial figures sharing temples are attested in the ancient sources. This lack of evidence for Flavian temple sharing may be due to one of two factors. The Flavians were the first imperial dynasty to deviate from the Julio-Claudian precedent of establishing provincial temples and cults to the *princeps* and a god, most often Roma.²⁸ The practice of having a joint cult in a provincial imperial temple is something to which Trajan, early in the Nerva-Antonine dynasty, returned.²⁹ Given that the Roman *princeps* and senate in Rome oversaw provincial temples and their cults, cities in the empire may have emulated these temples and cults and established civic imperial temples and cults to Flavians without any divine companion. The other factor to consider is that evidence for Flavian imperial temple sharing has not survived. Once again, it is clear that imperial temple sharing is attested during the Nerva-Antonine dynasty until the 190s CE, however. Consequently, it appears that the first option is the most probable.

To provide an example of imperial temple sharing, the *princeps* Nero remitted taxes for Greece and declared it autonomous in 67 CE.³⁰ To show appreciation for these benefactions, the local government of a city in Greece, Acraephia, voted to honor the *princeps* and his wife Statilia Messalina with temple sharing. According to the decree that Acraephia's council and citizen-body passed:

Since the Lord of the entire world, Nero . . . repaid and revered our gods who stood by him always for his care and safety . . . He returned and freely gave back our native and indigenous freedom that we had from long ago and which was taken formerly from the Hellenes. He restored the pristine state of our autonomy and freedom. He added to this great and unexpected gift, tax exemption, which none of the former Augusti have quite completely given. For all these reasons, it was decreed by the *archons*, the councilors, and the citizen-body . . . to dedicate a cultic statue of Nero Zeus the Deliverer and a cultic statue of the goddess Augusta Messalina in the temple of Apollo Ptous beside all our ancestral gods so that when these things are thus accomplished, our city might appear to have fulfilled completely every act of honor and piety towards the house of our Lord Augustus Nero.³¹

Acraephia's grant of temple sharing resembles Pergamum's bestowal of the honor on Attalus III in three ways. First, it was a local decision on the part of Acraephia's government. Second, the granting of temple sharing to Nero was to show appreciation for benefactions, specifically autonomy and tax exemption. Third, the imperial couple's temple sharing

showed divine approval of their reign. Acraephia concluded that by placing Nero's and Messalina's cultic statues beside the images of Apollo and their ancestral gods they showcased that their "gods stood by him" (θεοὺς ἡμῶν παριστανομένους; *theous hēmōn paristanomenous*).

I contend that royal and imperial temple sharing is the most appropriate historical analogy for the Man of Lawlessness's session in 2 Thess 2:4. Conceptually, the practice best fits with the evidence. Some of the inscriptions that refer to royal and imperial temple sharing describe the enthronement of the monarch's statue as if it were the ruler literally seated in the temple. The island polity of Aigina made Attalus I a temple sharer of the god Aiacus by setting up his statue in the god's temple. The inscription commemorating this act says, "They will make him a temple sharer . . . with Aiacus" (ποιήσουσιν δὲ καὶ σύνναον καὶ . . . [Αἰακῶ]; *poiēsousin de kai sunnaon kai... [Aiakō]*).³² The island-city of Calymnus near Cos made Gaius (Caligula) a temple sharer of Apollo in 37 CE and the epigraph on the base of his statue speaks as if Gaius himself is sharing the god's temple. "The citizen-body of Calymnians dedicated Gaius Caesar [G]e[rma]nicus beside Apoll[o] [De]lian the Guardian of Calymnus because of his piety . . ." (Ὁ δᾶμος ὁ Καλυμν[ί]ων συνκαθιέρωσε| Ἀπόλλ[ω]νι [Δ]αλίῳ Καλύμ[ν]ας μεδέοντι| Γάϊον Καίσαρα Γερ[μα]νικὸν εὐσεβ[ε]ίας ἔνε||κεν ; *Ho damos ho Kalumn[i]ōn sunkathierōse Apoll[ō]ni [D]aliō Kalum[n]as medeonti Gaion Kaisara Ger[ma]nikon euseb[e]ias hene|ken...*).³³ Finally, use of the accusative case in epigraphs on statue bases to denote the identity of the person or deity depicted in the image is commonplace in Greek epigraphy, as in the case of the previous inscription where Gaius's statue is called by the *princeps*'s name in the accusative case, Γάϊον Καίσαρα Γερ[μα]νικὸν (*Gaion*

Kaisara Ger[ma]nikon). Art historian Peter Stewart even notes, “Greek dedications . . . routinely identify the subject in the accusative, ‘labeling’ the image that has been created.”³⁴ This epigraphic convention resembles the language of 2 Thess 2:4, where Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, using the accusative case, describe the Man of Lawlessness’s session as if he were to be seated literally in God’s temple: “so that he (αὐτόν; *auton*) is seated in the temple of God.” Therefore, the masculine accusative pronoun, αὐτόν (*auton*), probably refers to the Man of Lawlessness’s statue that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy say will be erected in God’s temple.

There are two specific philological reasons supporting my proposal that 2 Thess 2:4 refers to royal and imperial temple sharing. The first is the choice of term for the location of the Man of Lawlessness’s session, ναός (*naos*, temple). Royal and imperial temple sharing always occurs in a deity’s ναός (*naos*), not in the larger sanctuary, ἱερόν (*hieron*), in which the ναός (*naos*) is located.³⁵ In fact, there are only two occurrences of the Greek term συνἱερός (*synieros*), literally “with sanctuary,” in the historical record and they do not refer to a royal figure sharing a sanctuary of a god.³⁶ Royal and imperial temple sharing always occurs in the temple proper and there is no indication that temple sharing was honorific or metaphorical until the third century CE when, in Greece and Asia Minor, it began to be used to honor noteworthy civic and provincial officials.³⁷ Therefore, Paul’s, Silvanus’s, Timothy’s use of ναός (*naos*) in 2 Thess 2:4 to describe the location of the Man of Lawlessness’s co-enthronement is deliberate and refers to God’s literal temple.

The second philological reason why 2 Thess 2:4 refers to royal and imperial temple sharing is the verb that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy use to denote the Man of

Lawlessness's session, καθίζω (*kathizō*, to sit). The καθ- (*kath-*) root appears in inscriptions associated with royal and imperial temple sharing, describing the setting up of the monarch's statue in the cella of the temple. For example, the inscription relaying Attalus III's temple sharing that opened this article uses καθιερόω (*kathieroō*) to describe the erection of the king's image in Asclepius's temple (*OGIS* 332 = *IPerg* 246.8-9). When the city of Sardis set up a statue of Gaius Caesar in the temple of his adoptive father, making him a temple sharer of Augustus, the city used the verb συνκαθιερόω (*sunkathieroō*; *IGR* IV 1756 = *Sardis* VII,1.8.13). An epigraph referring to Livia's, Augustus's wife, temple sharing with Athena Polias in Cyzicus indicates that the empress's image was "dedicated" (συνκαθιερόω; *sugkathieroō*) beside that of the goddess's (*IGR* IV 144.4-5). The inscription on the image base of Gaius's temple sharing statue that was set up in the temple of Delian Apollo on Calymnus employs the verb συνκαθιερόω (*sugkathieroō*) to describe its dedication.³⁸ The same root, συνκαθειδρύω (*sunkatheidruō*), is used in the dedication of Nero's and Messalina's temple sharing images beside Apollo Ptous and all Acraephia's ancestral gods in the above example (*IG* VII 2713 = *ILS* 8794 = *Syll*³ 814.50-51). And, Josephus uses the καθ- (*kath-*) root three times to describe Gaius's attempt to erect his image in God's temple, indicating that he (or his sources) interpreted the event as attempted temple sharing.³⁹ In sum, contrary to scholarly protestations that there are no philological analogies to the Man of Lawlessness being "seated in God's temple," epigraphic evidence testifies that 2 Thess 2:4 refers to the erection of a statue of a *princeps* in God's literal temple.⁴⁰

Not only are the authors of 2 Thessalonians referring to the Man of Lawlessness sharing the temple of

Yahweh, but also the members of the Christ-group in Thessalonica probably interpreted his session in that way. To date, six epigraphic dedications that refer to “temple sharing gods” (σύνναοι θεοί; *sunnaoi theoi*) have been discovered in Thessalonica, all of which date from the second century BCE to the second century CE.⁴¹ These inscriptions do not refer to royal or imperial temple sharing, but there is archaeological evidence that *principes* may have shared temples of the gods in Thessalonica. In 1936, archaeologists discovered a temple on the western side of modern-day Thessaloniki that was dubbed the Archaic temple because it was made of older building material. Inside the temple, they found marble statues of Hadrian and Roma, identifying the temple as a site of imperial cultic activity. In 2000, archaeologists re-excavated the Archaic temple and found two more marble statues, one of Zeus Aigochus, which dates to Hadrian's reign, and another image identified as Nero.⁴² Provided that the temple was dedicated to Roma or Zeus and these three statues were set up in the Archaic temple during Hadrian's reign, the *princeps* may have shared the temple with Zeus and Roma. It is even possible that the Archaic temple was a place of imperial temple sharing during Nero's reign. Given that the identification of the statue of Nero is correct and that the temple was dedicated to Roma or Zeus even in the mid-first century CE, then Nero may have shared the temple. In short, the members of the Christ-group in Thessalonica were aware of the practice of temple sharing and also may have been cognizant of imperial temple sharing. Therefore, they probably interpreted 2 Thess 2:4 to refer to the practice occurring in the Jerusalem temple.⁴³

Paul's, Silvanus's, and Timothy's presentation of the Man of Lawlessness's enthronement in God's temple deviates from royal and imperial temple sharing in one

major way, however. As noted above, the practice is the reward that cities bestowed on beneficent monarchs to show appreciation and to demonstrate that the gods approved of their regime. In 2 Thessalonians, the Man of Lawlessness takes the initiative and enthrones himself in God's temple. The focus on the Man of Lawlessness's agency in his co-exaltation in God's temple possibly results from our authors' most immediate contact with royal and imperial temple sharing, Gaius's attempt to erect his statue in God's temple.⁴⁴ It is also possible that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are aware of the processes that lay behind grants of imperial temple sharing. Either of these possibilities explain why they highlight the Man of Lawlessness's extreme arrogance: "he opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god and object of devotion... thereby proclaiming publicly that he *himself* is a god" (2 Thess 2:4).⁴⁵ Given that the *princeps* is not Satan, but his servant, it is unclear if the authors intend that the Man of Lawlessness knows his role in the eschatological drama. Like Gaius who tried to set up his statue in God's temple, he may not comprehend fully the implications of his actions.⁴⁶ This conclusion notwithstanding, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy indicate that the Man of Lawlessness's temple sharing with Yahweh is the sign *par excellence* of the apostasy's beginning.

Finally, provided that 2 Thess 2:4's reference to the Man of Lawlessness's session in the Jerusalem temple is imperial temple sharing, my proposal sheds light on the dating of 2 Thessalonians. In 1903, William Wrede demonstrated, to the satisfaction of many, that 2 Thessalonians is literally dependent on 1 Thessalonians and thus probably a pseudepigraphic document written at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century CE.⁴⁷ However, he acknowledged that if 2 Thess

2:4 refers to the literal temple in Jerusalem, this was a problem for his theory. To address it, Wrede proposed that the author of 2 Thessalonian either envisaged the rebuilding of the temple or that his description of the Man of Lawlessness's session in the temple relied on a document written while the temple still stood. He opted for the second option: "[I]t appears to me that the most likely assumption would be that the writer wrote the words about the Temple simply because his document contained them (i.e., without at all thinking about the destruction of the Temple)."⁴⁸ This conclusion strains credibility. It is hard to imagine that an author composing a pseudepigraphic letter would uncritically use a written source, especially if he knew that the temple mentioned in it no longer existed. In addition, I have shown that all recorded instances of royal and imperial temple sharing relate to the literal erection of a statue of a monarch in a literal temple. In short, to temple share, there must be a temple.

This conclusion notwithstanding, it cannot be taken to the extreme. My proposal neither proves that Paul (and Silvanus and Timothy) composed 2 Thessalonians. Nor, given how prevalent imperial temple sharing was in the Julio-Claudian period, does 2 Thess 2:4 provide a linchpin for dating Paul's tenure in Thessalonica.⁴⁹ Rather, provided that the Man of Lawlessness's session refers to imperial temple sharing, the letter must have been written before the temple's destruction; otherwise the reference to the temple would have made no sense to readers and auditors. Therefore, my hypothesis provides a narrower window for the composition of 2 Thessalonians: after the writing of 1 Thessalonians, which probably occurred around 49 CE, but before 70 CE. While my proposal by no means settles the complex matter of Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians, it

provides a bit of overlooked evidence that can be used for making the case of the letter's authenticity more probable.

III. Conclusion

To summarize, for conceptual and philological reasons, 2 Thess 2:4's enigmatic reference to the Man of Lawlessness's enthronement in God's temple refers to the Greco-Roman practice of royal and imperial temple sharing, which consists of the erection of statues of Hellenistic kings and Roman *principes* in temples of the gods. Most cases of royal and imperial temple sharing follow a similar pattern. The autocrat benefits the city. The city in turn demonstrates appreciation for the munificent act and that its gods stand by and approve of the monarch's reign by erecting a statue of the sovereign in a temple next to or near the temple's main cultic image. Therefore, 2 Thess 2:4 envisages that the great rebellion begins when a Roman *princeps* commands that his statue be set up in God's temple. Consequently, the authors allow that pagan rulers can share temples of the gods, but the beginning of the end occurs when one attempts to share the temple of *the* one and only God in Jerusalem. Finally, since imperial temple sharing was always in a literal temple, 2 Thess 2:4's reference to the practice means that the temple must be standing when the letter was composed, making Pauline authorship more probable.

Endnotes

¹ “[B]ecause no one surpasses the king's benevolent acts fitting honors were decided for him so that the citizens may acknowledge the king's abundant good things and repay him for the worthy gifts of military successes and benefactions: for good success. It seemed good to the council and the citizen-body . . .” (οὐδενὸς τὸμ

βασιλέα εὐνοίαι ὑπερτιθεμ[ένου εἰς ἑαυτόν, ψηφίζεσ[θ]α[ι] τὰς πρεπούσας αὐτῷ τιμάς, ὅπως ἐπὶ τοῖς γεγενημένοις ἀγαθοῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐκτενεῖς οἱ πολῖται φαίνονται καὶ ἀποδιδόντες αὐτῷ τὰς καταξίας χά[ρι]τας τῶν εὐημερημάτων καὶ τῶν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς εὐεργεσιῶν ἀγαθῆι τύχῃ δεδόχθαι τῆι βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ) (OGIS 332 = IPerg 246.1-6). All translations, including those of inscriptions, are my own unless otherwise noted.

² “It seemed good to the council and the citizen-body: to crown the king with a gold crown of valor, to dedicate an armored cultic statue to him that is five cubits tall standing atop the spoils of war in the temple of Asclepius the Savior so that he might be a temple sharer with the god, and to set up a golden equestrian honorary statue of him on a marble plinth beside the altar of Zeus the Savior so that the honorary statue might be in the most distinguished place in the agora. Every day let the bearer of the crown, the priest of the king, and the president of the games offer frankincense on the altar of Zeus the Savior for the king. Now on the eighth day [of the month], (that is the day) on which he entered Pergamum is to be holy for all time. On it every year the best solemn procession is to be arranged by the priest of Asclepius from the town hall to the sanctuary of Asclepius and the king with the accustomed persons taking part in the procession. Let the *archons* gather in the temple after the offering has been presented and sacrificed. Now for the offering and their assembly fifty silver drachmas are to be given by the treasurer of the funds that cannot be secularized from the provisions of Asclepius. Let the temple wardens manage the offering and the reception . . .” (δεδόχθαι τῆι βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ στεφανῶσαι τὸν βασιλέα χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ ἀριστεῖω, καθιερῶσαι δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄγαλμα πεντάπηχον τεθωρακισμένον καὶ βεβηκὸς ἐπὶ σκύλων ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Σωτῆρος Ἀσκληπιοῦ, ἵνα ἦ[ι] σύνναος τῷ θεῷ, στήσαι δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰκόνα χρυσῆν ἐπιππον ἐπὶ στυλίδος μαρμαρίνης παρὰ τὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Σωτῆρος βωμόν, ὅπως ὑπάρχη ἢ εἰκὼν ἐν τῷ ἐπιφανεστάτῳ τόπῳ τῆς ἀγορᾶς, ἐκάστης τε ἡμέρας ὁ στεφανηφόρος καὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ ἀγωνοθέτης ἐπιθυέτωσαν λιβανωτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ τ[ο]ῦ Διὸς τοῦ Σωτῆρος τῷ βασιλεῖ. τὴν δὲ ὀγδόην, ἐν ἣι παρεγένετο εἰς Πέργαμον, ἱεράν τε εἶναι εἰς ἅπαντα τὸν χρόνον καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐπιτελεῖσθαι κατ’ ἐνὶ αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱερέως τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ πομπὴν ὡς καλλίστην ἐκ τοῦ πρυτανε[ί]ου εἰς τὸ τέμενος τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως συμπομπευόντων τῶν εἰθισμένων. καὶ παρασταθείσης θυσίας καὶ καλλιερηθείσης συναγέσθωσαν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ οἱ ἄρχοντες, δίδοσθαι δὲ εἷς τε τὴν θυσίαν

καὶ τὴν σύνοδον αὐτῶν| ὑπὸ τοῦ ταμίου τῶν ἀμετοίστων προσόδων ἀπὸ τοῦ πόρου τοῦ Ἀσκληπιείου ἀρ|γυρίου δραχμὰς πενήκοντα, τὴν δὲ θυσίαν [ἐπ]ὶ τῆς ὑποδοχῆς ἐπιμελείσθωσαν| οἱ ἱερονόμοι) (OGIS 332 = *IPerg* 246.5-21).

³ One of Pergamum's motivations for inscribing of this decree was theological, to keep the king's victories and generosity present before the gods for eternity: "Now so that the [su]ccess[e]s of the ki[n]g in the struggles of battle might be declared for [all] t[i]m[e] and [hi]s [ge]nerosity might be pre[sent] before all [our] gods" (ἴνα δὲ τὰ γε|γενημένα [ἐπιτ]εύγμα[τα] τῶι βασι[λ]εῖ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ πόλεμον ἀγῶσιν ἐκφανῆ| δι' αἰ[ῶ]ν[ος] πᾶσιν| ὑπάρχ[η]ι καὶ ἡ [διὰ αὐτ]οῦ [μεγ]αλομέρεια προ[σοῦσα] ὑπὸ πάντων θεῶν [ἡμῖν], ἀναγρ[άψαι] τὸ ψήφισμα εἰς στήλην μαρμαρίνην καὶ στήσαι| ἐν τῶι το[ῦ] Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἱερῶι πρὸ τοῦ ναοῦ) (OGIS 332 = *IPerg* 246.56-60).

⁴ I consider 2 Thessalonians as authentically Pauline and for a defense of Pauline authorship see Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 349-75. I interpret 1-2 Thessalonians to be the product of Paul with Timothy and Silvanus as his co-authors. For a discussion of co-authorship of 1-2 Thessalonians see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 16-20, 33-34; Karl P. Donfried, "Issues of Authorship in the Pauline Corpus: Rethinking the Relationship between 1 and 2 Thessalonians," in *2 Thessalonians and Pauline Eschatology: For Petr Pokorny for his 80th Birthday*, ed. C.M. Tuckett (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 81-113.

⁵ For discussions of the uncertainty of how the Thessalonians received the message that the Day of the Lord had already arrived see George Milligan, *St Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908), 96-97; B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul les épîtres aux Thessaloniciens* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 649-52; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, WBC 45 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 163-64; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 415-17.

⁶ "The parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to him" (τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν) is probably a reference to the Second Coming described in 1 Thess 4:13-18 and specifically the fact that resurrected Christians are "snatched up" (ἀρπάζω) on the clouds to "meet"

(ἀπάντησις) the Lord Jesus and so to always be with the him (οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα) (1 Thess 4:17). See Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 647; Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 415.

⁷ ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσει ἀποδεικνύοντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν θεός.

⁸ For a recent discussion of the enigmatic “restrainer” in 2 Thess 2:6 see Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BNCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 525-33, 567-77.

⁹ Charles H. Giblin, *The Threat to Faith: An Exegetical and Theological Re-Examination of 2 Thessalonians 2*, AnBib 31 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 76-80. For some exegetes, the Man of Lawlessness is the leader of the church in Rome (whenever they are writing). John Calvin argues that the figure is Pope Paul III and that the temple is the Roman Catholic Church over which the former “bears rule.” John Calvin, *Commentary on Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, trans. J. Pringle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 297-301. For a discussion of the history of interpretation of the Lawless One see Anthony C. Thiselton, *1 & 2 Thessalonians Through the Centuries* (Malden, MA: Wiley & Blackwell, 2011), 213-31. For an excellent refutation of the ecclesiastical interpretation of God’s temple see Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 519-22.

¹⁰ James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 253-57; William Neil, *The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians*, MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 161-64; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Int (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1998), 112.

¹¹ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 420-21. See also Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 168-69; Maarten J.J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, New Testament Readings (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 103-07; Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, SP 11 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 328-29, 348-52; Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 518-23; Janusz Kucicki, *Eschatology of the Thessalonians Correspondence: A Comparative Study of 1 Thess 4, 13-5, 11 and 2 Thess 2, 1-12 to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, *Das Alte Testament Im Dialog* 7 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), 118-26.

¹² LSJ, 1160; BDAG, 665-66; Franco Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1378.

¹³ Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend: A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore*, trans. A.H. Keane (London: Hutchinson, 1896), 22; Wilhelm Wrede, *The Authenticity of the Second Letter to the Thessalonians*, trans. Robert Rhea (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017 [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1903]), 94-109; Ernst von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), 273-78; Milligan, *Thessalonians*, 99-100; Rigaux, *Thessaloniques*, 658-61, 681; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 223-24; idem, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT, rev ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 220-24; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 286-87; Wolfgang Trilling, *Der Zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKK 14 (Zürich: Neukirchner, 1980), 85-87; John C. Townsend, "II Thessalonians 2:3-12," SBLSP (1980): 235-36; Charles Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 246-48; Gregory C. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth*, BNZW 59 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 219-20; Christina M. Kreinecker, 2. *Thessaloniker*, PKNT 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 165-66; Marlene Crüsemann, *Die pseudepigraphen Briefe an die Gemeinde in Thessaloniki: Studien zu ihrer Abfassung und zur jüdisch-christlichen Sozialgeschichte*, BWA(N)T 191 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010), 272-76.

¹⁴ Bousset, *Antichrist Legend*, 21-22.

¹⁵ Wrede, *Authenticity*, 96.

¹⁶ Best, *Thessalonians*, 288.

¹⁷ Bruce W. Winter, *Divine Honours for Caesars: The First Christians' Responses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 260-65.

¹⁸ James R. Harrison, "'The Ultimate Sinner': Paul and the Anti-Christ in Political Context," in *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 71-95. Gene Green (*The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 310-13), arguing for a literal interpretation of ναός, proposes that God's temple may be a local Thessalonian imperial temple. Pointing to an inscription mentioning a temple of *Divus* Julius and Augustus, he suggests that God's temple in 2 Thess 2:4 might be the temple of the god, i.e., *Divus* Julius. He concludes, "The Thessalonians would have readily

understood the allusion in light of the presence of the imperial cult in the city.” This proposal is improbable mainly because the temple to which Green refers probably does not belong to *Divus* Julius, but Augustus. See D. Clint Burnett, “Imperial Divine Honors in Julio-Claudian Thessalonica: Reassessing Thessalonian Imperial Cultic Activity and Its Connections to the Thessalonian Correspondence,” forthcoming.

¹⁹ Douglas A. Campbell, *Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 220-29.

²⁰ Harrison’s (“The Ultimate Sinner,” 86-94) proposal that Paul bases the Man of Lawlessness on Gaius’s attempt to erect his statue in God’s temple relies on papyri and inscriptions, but he does not connect these with sources related to royal and imperial temple sharing. Instead, he focuses on the appearance of the Greek terms ἐπιράνεια and θεός in papyri and epigraphs related to Gaius and other *principes* as foils for their use in 2 Thessalonians.

²¹ Trilling, *Thessalonicher*, 86.

²² Frame, *Thessalonians*, 257. See also von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 276-78.

²³ Morris, *Thessalonians*, 22-24.

²⁴ See D. Clint Burnett, *Christ's Enthronement at God's Right Hand in Early Christianity and its Cultural Context*, forthcoming.

²⁵ See D. Clint Burnett, “Temple and Throne Sharing: A Reconsideration of Σύνναος and Σύνθρονος in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,” *HSCP* 111, forthcoming.

²⁶ “Now the temple (of Hermes) has been made of costly square stone. But Hermes’s cultic statue is neither worthy of the temple nor the place itself. Now if it seems good to you, send me a cultic statue of Hermes about five feet tall—for that seems to me to be an exact suitable size for the temple—and another four-foot tall cultic statue of Philesius. For it does not seem to me against the custom that he is a temple and altar sharer with his ancestor, and that one who comes (to the temple) sacrifices to Hermes and that another sacrifices to Philesius, and still another sacrifices to both. Rather, these modes of sacrifice will please both Hermes and Philesius. On the one hand, (it will please) Hermes because they honor his descendent. On the other hand, (it will please) Philesius because they honor his ancestor” (Πεποιήται δὲ καὶ ὁ νεῶς λίθου τετραγώνου οὐ φαύλωσ. ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ ἄγαλμα οὔτε τοῦ νεῶ ἄξιόν ἐστιν οὔτε αὐτοῦ τοῦ χωρίου. εἰ δὲ σοι δοκεῖ, πέμψον μοι πεντάπουν μάλιστα Ἑρμοῦ ἄγαλμα—τηλικούτον γάρ μοι δοκεῖ

ἔσεσθαι ὡς γε πρὸς τὸν νεὼν σύμμετρον—καὶ ἄλλο τοῦ Φιλησίου τετράπου. οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ τρόπου δοκεῖ μοι σύνναος καὶ σύμβωμος ἔσεσθαι τῷ προπάτορι, καὶ ὁ μὲν τις τῷ Ἑρμῇ, ὁ δὲ τῷ Φιλησίῳ, ὁ δὲ καὶ ἀμφοῖν θύσει παριών. χαριοῦνται δὲ καὶ οὗτοι κάκεινοι τῷ τε Ἑρμῇ καὶ τῷ Φιλησίῳ. τῷ μὲν Ἑρμῇ, ὅτι τὸν ἔγγονον αὐτοῦ τιμῶσιν, τῷ δὲ Φιλησίῳ, ὅτι τὸν αὐτοῦ προπάτορα). The context for Arrian’s comment is that Hadrian had sent him to inspect the Pontus *limes*. Arrian was writing the *princeps* to inform him of the status of a construction project that Hadrian had begun while in Trapezous. For an in-depth discussion of temple sharing see Burnett, *Christ’s Enthronement*.

²⁷ Julius Caesar, Livia, and Claudius shared the temple of Athena Polias in Priene; Augustus shared the temple of Apollo on Delos; Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero shared Dionysus’s temple in Teos; Livia shared Athena Polias’s temple in Cyzicus; Tiberius probably shared the temple of Bel in Palmyra; and Nero and Messalina shared Apollo Ptous’s temple in Acraephia. For discussion of these cases see Burnett, *Christ’s Enthronement*.

²⁸ For an excellent summary of the diversity and types of Roman imperial cults see Christian Habicht, “Die augusteische Zeit und das erste Jahrhundert nach Christi Geburt,” in *Le culte des souverains dans l’Empire romain*, ed. Willem den Boer (Paris: Fondation Hardt, 1973), 41-88; Ittai Gradel, “Roman Apotheosis,” *TheoCRA* II.186-99.

²⁹ Trajan permitted Pergamum to establish a provincial imperial temple to Zeus Philius and himself in the early second century CE. See Barbara Burrell, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 22-30; Daniel N. Schowalter, “Honoring Trajan in Pergamum: Imperial Temples in the ‘Second City,’” in *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, eds. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan Reed (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 99-110.

³⁰ See Paul A. Gallivan, “Nero’s Liberation of Greece,” *Hermes* 101 (1973): 230-34; Massimiliano Pavan, “Nerone e la libertà ai Greci,” in *Neronia III: Actes du III^e Colloque International de Société Internationale d’Études Néroniennes (Varenna-Juin 1982)*, Atti 12 (Rome: L’erma, 1987), 149-66; Maria Kantiréa, *Les dieux et les dieux Augustes: le cult imperial en Grèce sous les Julio-claudiens et les Flaviens*, *Melethmata* 50 (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 2007), 81-84.

³¹ ἐπιδή ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων . . . ἀμειβόμενος δὲ καὶ εὐσεβῶν τοὺς θεοὺς ἡμῶν, παριστανομένους| αὐτῷ πάντοτε ἐπὶ προνοίᾳ καὶ σωτηρίᾳ . . . ἔδωκεν ἐχαρίσατο ἀποκατέστησεν εἰς τὴν

ἀρχαίο|τητα τῆς αὐτονομίας καὶ ἐλευθερίας, προσθεῖς| τῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ ἀπροσδοκίῳ δωρεᾷ καὶ ἀνεισφο||ρίαν, ἣν οὐδεὶς τῶν πρότερον Σεβαστῶν ὀλοτελῆ| ἔδωκεν. δι' ἃ δὴ πάντα δεδογμένον εἶναι τοῖς τε ἄρχουσι καὶ συνέδροις καὶ τῷ δήμῳ . . . καὶ ἀγάλμα|τα ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Πτωίου συνκαθειδρύνοντας τοῖς [ἡμῶν] πατρίοις θεοῖς [[Νέρωνος]] Διὸς| Ἐλευθερίου καὶ Θεᾶς Σεβαστῆς [[Μεσσαλίνης]]| ἵνα| τούτων οὕτως τελεσθέντων καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα πόλις| φαίνεται πᾶσαν τιμὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν ἐκπεληρω|κυῖα εἰς τὸν τοῦ κυρίου Σεβαστοῦ [[Νέρωνος οἶκον]] (IG VII 2713 = ILS 8794 = Syll³ 814.31-55).

³² IG II² 885 = Robert Allen, "Attalos I and Aigina," *ABSA* 66 (1971): 1-12 = Klaus Hallof, ed., *Inscriptones Argolidis II: Inscriptiones Aeginae Insulae* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), no. 747.

³³ *GIBM* II.301 = *IGR* IV 1022 = M. Segre, "Tituli Calymnii," *Annuario della scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni Italiane in oriente* 22-23, (1944-1945) [1952]: no. 109.

³⁴ Peter Stewart, *Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 167. See also the discussion of the use of the Greek accusative case by Jakob Munk Højte, *Roman Imperial Statue Bases from Augustus to Commodus* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2005), 19-27.

³⁵ See Burnett, *Christ's Enthronement*.

³⁶ The first attested use of συνίερος is metaphoric and found in Plutarch (*Amat.* 753 E-F): ἡ δὲ σύνναος μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ καὶ συνίερος τοῦ Ἐρωτος ἐν δὲ Δελφοῖς. The second use is from a Hellenistic inscription on a statue base from Pharai that reads, "The sanctuary sharers of the hero dedicated a statue of Thrason son of Xenophon" (οἱ συνίεροι τοῦ ἥρωος Θράσωνα Ξενοφῶντος). See A.D. Rizakēs, *Achaïe III: les cités achéennes: épigraphie et histoire* (Athens: Centre de Recherches de l'Antiquité Grecque et Romaine, 2008), no. 63.

³⁷ See Burnett, "Temple Sharing."

³⁸ *GIBM* II.301 = *IGR* IV 1022 = Segre, "Tituli Calymnii," no. 109.

³⁹ See D. Clint Burnett, "An Archaeological and Epigraphic Reevaluation of Gaius's (Caligula's) Attempt to Erect His Statue in the Jerusalem Temple," forthcoming.

⁴⁰ *Contra* Bousset (*Antichrist Legend*, 21-22) who suggests that Gaius's attempt to set up his statue in the temple "is not applicable" to 2 Thess 2:4. *Contra* Wrede (*Authenticity*, 96) who concludes of 2 Thess 2:4, "[T]he matter of erecting his statue in the Temple is at the start something rather different than that of seating

himself in it.” *Contra Trilling (Thessalonicher, 87)* who argues that Gaius’s attempt to erect his statue in God’s temple is not “comparable” (*vergleichbar*) to 2 Thess 2:4.

⁴¹ *IG X.2.1 77* (second/first century BCE), 78 (second/first century BCE), 80 (second/first century BCE), 85 (15/14 BCE), 88 (first century CE), 117 (first/second century CE).

⁴² For a discussion of this temple see Burnett, “Imperial Divine Honors.” For the identification of the statue as Nero see Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou, “Art in the Roman Period, 168 BC-337 AD,” in *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Macedon: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon, 650 BC-300 AD*, ed. Robin J. Lane-Fox (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 571.

⁴³ The two famous marble statues of Augustus and probably Claudius, both in the guise of Zeus, found north of Thessalonica’s Sarapeion are not necessarily temple sharing images. Some scholars have proposed that they were set up in “Caesar’s temple,” which existed in the city because an inscription mentions it (*IG X.2.1 31*). These statues, however, were not found inside a temple, which means that it is unclear if they were temple sharing images. For a discussion of these images see Burnett, “Imperial Divine Honors.”

⁴⁴ See Burnett, “Archaeological and Epigraphic Reevaluation.”

⁴⁵ The reference to the Man of Lawlessness as divine may be an allusion to Ezekiel who derides the king of Tyre for boasting that “I am a god (אֱלֹהִים),” which is translated in the OG (LXX) as Θεός εἰμι ἐγώ (Ezek 28:2).

⁴⁶ According to Philo, Gaius did not understand why Jews living under his *imperium* abstained from consuming pork (*Legat.* 361).

⁴⁷ For an informed discussion of the literary dependence of 2 Thessalonians on 1 Thessalonians and the problems with Wrede’s assessment see Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 364-75.

⁴⁸ Wrede, *Authenticity*, 101-09, quote from 108. Trilling (*Thessalonicher*, 86-87) dismisses the reference to the temple as problematic for the pseudepigraphic identification of 2 Thessalonians, appealing to the genre of early Jewish apocalypse and the locus of Yahweh’s temple as a symbol of God’s presence.

⁴⁹ *Contra* Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 220-29.