

The invisible women of early Christianity

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The complexities

1. Valued

Gavia/Tavia, Alce, the widow of Epitropus

Written by Ignatius of Antioch (35-108 AD), early Christian writer & bishop of Antioch, in letters to the church in Smyrna and to Polycarp (the bishop of Smyrna); written sometime between 105-115AD.

“I greet the households of my brothers with their **wives** and children, and the **virgins who are called widows**. I bid you farewell in the power of the Father. Philo, who is with me, greets you. I greet the household of **Gavia/Tavia, and pray that she may be firmly grounded in faith and love both physically and spiritually**. I greet **Alce, a name very dear to me**, and the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutecnus and everyone else individually. Farewell in the grace of God.” (*Smyrna* 13:1-2)

“I greet everyone by name, including the **widow of Epitropus** together with the whole household belonging to her and the children. I greet Attalus, my dear friend. I greet the one who is about to be commissioned to go to Syria. Grace will be with him always, and with Polycarp, who sends him. I bid you farewell always in our God Jesus Christ; may you remain in him, in the unity and care of God. I greet **Alce, a name very dear to me**. Farewell in the Lord.” (*Polycarp* 8:2-3)

(tr. Michael W. Holmes, from Accordance, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd edition; Greek texts and English translations; also found in Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>)

Sister of Crescens

Written by Polycarp (69-156 AD), bishop of Smyrna & martyr (martyred around 156); written to the Philippians, sometime between 110-140AD

“I am writing these things to you via **Crescens**, whom I recently commended to you and now commend again, for his conduct while with us has been blameless, and I believe that it will be likewise with you. And you will consider **his sister to be commended** when she comes to you. Farewell in the Lord Jesus Christ in grace, you and all those with you. Amen.”

(*The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* 14:1)

(tr. Michael W. Holmes, from Accordance, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd edition; Greek texts and English translations; also found in Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>)

2. Active

Written by Tertullian (155-240AD), Christian author & apologist from Carthage, Egypt; in a letter to his wife

“For who would suffer his wife, for the sake of visiting the brethren, to go round from street to street to other men’s, and indeed to all the poorer, cottages? ...Who will suffer her to creep into prison to kiss a martyr’s bonds? nay, truly, to meet any one of the brethren to exchange the kiss? to offer water for the saints’ feet? to snatch (somewhat for them) from her food, from her cup? to yearn (after them)? to have (them) in her mind? If a pilgrim brother arrive, what hospitality for him in an alien home? If bounty is to be distributed to any, the granaries, the storehouses, are foreclosed.” (*To his Wife* 2.4)

(Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 4. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf04.html>)

3. Leading

Grapte

Found in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, probably written in late 1st century, first half of 2nd century, in or near Rome.

“You will write therefore two books, and you will send the one to Clemens and the other to **Grapte**. And Clemens will send his to foreign countries, for permission has been granted to him to do so. And **Grapte will admonish the widows and the orphans**. But you will read the words in this city, along with the presbyters who preside over the Church.”
(*Shepherd of Hermas Vision* 2.4.3)

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/shepherd.html>

Two female slaves who were called deaconesses

Written by Pliny the Younger, Roman governor of Bithynia & Pontus, in letters to the Roman Emperor Trajan, probably written in 112 AD

“But they declared that the sum of their guilt or their error only amounted to this, that on a stated day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak and to recite a hymn among themselves to Christ, as though he were a god, and that so far from binding themselves by oath to commit any crime, their oath was to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and from breach of faith, and not to deny trust money placed in their keeping when called upon to deliver it....I thought it the more necessary, therefore, to find out what truth there was in these statements by **submitting two women (*female slaves*), who were called deaconesses, to the torture**, but I found nothing but a debased superstition carried to great lengths. So I postponed my examination, and immediately consulted you. The matter seems to me worthy of your consideration, especially as there are so many people involved in the danger. Many persons of all ages, and of both sexes alike, are being brought into peril of their lives by their accusers, and the process will go on. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only through the free cities, but into the villages and the rural districts.”
(*Letters of Pliny: Epistle to Trajan*, 10.96)

<http://www.attalus.org/old/pliny10b.html#96> Translated by J.B.Firth, 1900)

Order of Widows

Written in *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a Christian manual of church order, written sometime around 230AD

“Appoint as a widow one that is **not under fifty years old** [1 Tim 5.9], who in some sort, by reason of her years, shall be remote from the suspicion of taking a second husband.”
Didascalia 14.3.1

“Every widow therefore ought to be **meek and quiet and gentle**. And let her also be without malice and without anger; and let her not be talkative or clamorous, or forward in tongue, or quarrelsome....For a widow should have no other care save to be **praying for those who give, and for the whole Church**. And when she is asked a question by anyone, let her not straightaway give an answer, except only concerning righteousness and faith in God; but let her send them that desire to be instructed to the rulers.” *Didascalia* 15.3.5

“It is **neither right nor necessary therefore that women should be teachers**, and especially concerning the name of Christ and the redemption of His passion. For you have not been appointed to this, O women, and especially widows, that you should teach, but that you should **pray and entreat the Lord God**....But let a widow know that she is the **altar of God**; and let her sit ever at home, and not stray or run about among the houses of the faithful to receive. For the altar of God never strays or runs about anywhere, but is fixed in one place...”
Didascalia 15.3.6

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didascalia.html>

Written in *Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ*, a Christian manual of church order, written sometime in the late 4th century or 5th century.

“Let her instruct those women who do not obey; let her teach those [women] who have not learnt; let her convert those who are foolish; let her instruct them to be grave;...To those who hear let her patiently counsel those things which are proper...Let her privately shut the mouth of those who talk much and idly; but if they do not hear, let her take with her an aged woman, or let her take [it] up to the hearing of the bishop. But in the church let her be silent. In prayer let her be persistent. Let her visit those [women] who are sick...If she have any possession let her give it for the poor and the faithful...” *Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 40.

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924029296170/page/n115>

Found in the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, a Christian manual of church order, written in the 5th century AD

“In the Church let twelve presbyters, seven deacons, fourteen subdeacons, **thirteen widows who sit in front**, be known.” *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* 1.34

<https://ia800204.us.archive.org/11/items/cu31924029296170/cu31924029296170.pdf>

Deaconesses

Found in *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a Christian manual of church order, written sometime around 230AD

“Wherefore, O bishop, appoint thee **workers of righteousness as helpers who may cooperate with thee unto salvation**. Those that please thee out of all the people thou shalt choose and appoint as deacons: a man for the performance of the most things that are required, but **a woman for the ministry of women. For there are houses wither thou canst not send a deacon to the women, on account of the heathen, but mayst send a deaconess**. Also, because in many other matters the office of a woman deacon is required. In the first place, when **women go down into the water**, those who go down into the water ought to be anointed by a deaconess with the oil of anointing... - whether thou thyself baptize, or thou command the deacons or presbyters to baptize – let a woman deacon, as we have already said, anoint the women. But let a man pronounce over them the invocation of the divine Names the water. And when she who is being baptized has come up from the water, let the deaconess receive her, and teach and instruct her how the seal of baptism ought to be (kept) unbroken in purity and holiness. For this cause we say that the ministry of **a woman deacon is especially needful and important. For our Lord and Saviour also was ministered unto by women ministers, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the daughter of James and mother of Jose, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee** [Mt 27.56], with other women beside. And thou also **hast need of the ministry of a deaconess** for many things; for a deaconess is required to **go into the houses of the heathen where there are believing women, and to visit those who are sick, and to minister to them in that of which they have need, and to bathe those who have begun to recover from sickness.**” *Didascalia* 16.3.12

(<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didascalia.html>)

Theoprepeia

Inscription on gravestone, from the late 4th century, from Bonitsa in Macedonia.

“Here lies the slave of the Lord, **Theoprepeia**, perpetual virgin and **deacon[ess?] of Christ**, who has completed a life ascetic, zealous, and distinguished in the Lord God.”

Madigan, Kevin & Osiek, Carolyn (ed). *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A documentary history*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005; p93.

Amproukla:

Written by John Chyrostom, bishop of Constantinople, in exile, between 404-407.

Letter 191: “To Amproukla deacon”

Letters 96 and 103: “To Amproukla deacon and those [fem.] with her”

Letter 103: calls her “my most honored and revered lady”

Madigan, Kevin & Osiek, Carolyn (ed). *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A documentary history*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005; p27.

Ammia a prophet

Written by Eusebius Pamphili (ca 260-340), Christian historian, bishop of Caesarea; written sometime around 313, in his history of the early church.

“In this work he mentions a writer, Miltiades, stating that he also wrote a certain book against the above-mentioned heresy....A little further on in the same work he gives a list of those who **prophesied** under the new covenant, among whom he enumerates a certain **Ammia** and Quadratus...They cannot show that one of the old or one of the new **prophets** was thus carried away in spirit. Neither can they boast of Agabus, or Judas, or Silas, or the daughters of Philip, or **Ammia in Philadelphia**, or Quadratus, or any others not belonging to them.”
The Church History of Eusebius 5.17.

(Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Volume 1. Philip Schaff. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.html>)

Leta the Presbyteria

Burial inscription from Tropea, Calabria, Italy, in 4th or 5th century.

“Sacred to her good memory. **Leta the presbyter[ess]**
lived forty years, eight months and nine days.
Her husband made [this tombstone].
She preceded him in peace on the day before
the ides of May”

Flavia Vitalia, Presbyteria.

Inscription dated 425, found in Solin, in modern-day Croatia, then Salona in the Roman colonial province of Dalmatia on the Adriatic.

“Under our Lord Theodosius, consul for the eleventh time, and Valentinian, most noble man of Caesar, I, Theodosius, bought ‘a burial tomb’ from the matron **Flavia Vitalia, the holy presbyter[a]** for three golden solids.”

Madigan, Kevin & Osiek, Carolyn (ed). *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A documentary history*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005; p193-194; 196.

Council of Laodicea Canon 11

Probably late 4th century, early 5th century

“Concerning those who are called **presbytides or female presbyters, it is not permitted to appoint them in the Church.**”

Madigan, Kevin & Osiek, Carolyn (ed). *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A documentary history*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2005; p164.

4. Necessary

5. Prayerful

Order of Widows

Written by Polycarp (69-156 AD), bishop of Smyrna & martyr (martyred around 156); written to the Philippians, sometime between 110-140AD

“The widows must think **soberly about the faith of the Lord** and **pray unceasingly** for everyone and stay far away from all malicious talk, slander, false testimony, love of money, and any kind of evil, knowing that they are **God’s altar**, and that all sacrifices are carefully inspected and nothing escapes him, whether thoughts or intentions or secrets of the heart.”
(*The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians* 4:3)

(tr. Michael W. Holmes, from Accordance, *Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd edition; Greek texts and English translations; also found in Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>)

Written in *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a Christian manual of church order, written sometime around 230AD

“But a widow who wishes to please God sits at home and **meditates upon the Lord day and night**, and without ceasing at all times **offers intercession and prays with purity before the Lord**...For such a widow, not loving money or filthy lucre, and not avaricious nor greedy, but constant in prayer, and meek and unperterbed, and modest and reverent, sits at home and **works at (her) wool**, that she may **provide somewhat for those who are in distress**, or that she may **make a return to others**, so that she receives nothing from them.” *Didascalia* 15.3.6

“...And let widows keep themselves from cursing, for they have been **appointed to bless**.”
Didascalia 15.3.10

(<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didascalia.html>)

6. Transformed

Unnamed wealthy woman with unbelieving husband

Written by Justin Martyr (100-165 AD), Christian apologist, in about 150-157 AD

“A certain woman lived with an intemperate husband; she herself, too, having formerly been intemperate. But when she **came to the knowledge of the teachings of Christ she became sober-minded, and endeavoured to persuade her husband likewise to be temperate, citing the teaching of Christ, and assuring him that there shall be punishment in eternal fire inflicted upon those who do not live temperately and comformably to right reason**. But he, continuing in the same excesses, alienated his wife from him by his actions....But when her husband had gone into Alexandria, and was reported to be conducting himself worse than ever, she – that she might not, by continuing in matrimonial connection with him, and by sharing his table and his bed, become a partaker also in his wickedness and impieties – gave him what you call a bill of divorce, and was separated from him. But this noble husband of hers, - while he ought to have been rejoicing that those actions which formerly she

unhesitatingly committed with the servants and hirelings, when she delighted in drunkenness and every vice, she had now given up, and desired that he too should give up the same, - when she had gone from him without his desire, brought an accusation against her, affirming that she was a Christian. And she presented a paper to thee, the Emperor, requesting that first she be permitted to arrange her affairs, and afterwards to make her defence against the accusation, when her affairs were in order. And this you granted. And her quondam husband, since he was now no longer able to prosecute her, directed his assaults against a man, Ptolemaeus, whom Urbicus punished, and who had been her teacher in the Christian doctrines." *The Second Apology 2.*

(Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 1. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>)

Written by Minucius Felix (? , died 250 AD), Latin Christian apologist, sometime around 197 AD; in *Octavius*, his dialogue on Christianity between a pagan and Christian

"But we maintain our modesty not in appearance, but **in our heart we gladly abide by the bond of a single marriage; in the desire of procreating, we know either one wife, or none at all.** We practise sharing in banquets, which are not only modest, but also sober: for we do not indulge in entertainments nor prolong our feasts with wine; but we temper our joyousness with gravity, with chaste discourse, and with body even more chaste (divers of us unviolated) enjoy rather than make a boast of a perpetual virginity of a body. So far, in fact, are they from indulging an incestuous desire, that with some even the (idea of a modest intercourse of the sexes causes a blush..... And that day by day the number of us is increased, is not a ground for a charge of error, but is a testimony which claims praise; for, in a fair mode of life, our actual number both continues and abides undiminished, and strangers increase it....Thus we love one another, to your regret, with a mutual love, because we do not know how to hate. **Thus we call one another, to your envy, brethren: as being men born of one God and Parent, and companions in faith, and as fellow-heirs in hope.**" *Octavius 31.*

(Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 4. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf04.html>)

7. Courageous & Committed to Christ before everything else

Perpetua and Felicitas

The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, March 7, 203AD, during the reign of Septimius Severus, celebrating birthday of Septimius' younger son; written by Perpetua herself, as well as an editor who was eyewitness to the martyrs' suffering and deaths

1.1 "The young catechumens, Revocatus and his fellow-servant Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, were apprehended. Among them also was Vivia Perpetua, respectably born, liberally educated, a married matron, having a father and mother and two brothers, one of whom, like herself, was a catechumen, and a son an infant at the breast. She herself was about twenty-two years of age. From this point onward she shall herself narrate the whole course of her martyrdom, as she left it described by her own hand and with her own mind...

1.2 “While” says she, “we were still with the persecutors, and my father, for the sake of his affection for me, was persisting in seeking to turn me away, and to cast me down from the faith, - ‘Father,’ said I, ‘do you see, let us say, this vessel lying here to be a little pitcher, or something else?’ And he said, ‘I see it to be so.’ And I replied to him, ‘Can it be called by any other name than what it is?’ And he said, ‘No.’ ‘Neither can I call myself anything else than what I am, a Christian.’ Then my father, provoked at this saying, threw himself upon me, as if he would tear my eyes out. But he only distressed me, and went away overcome by the devil’s arguments...

1.2 After a few days we are taken into the dungeon, and I was very much afraid, because I have never felt such darkness. O terrible day! O the fierce heat of the shock of the soldiery, because of the crowds! I was very unusually distressed by my anxiety for my infant. There were present there Tertius and Pomponius, the blessed deacons who ministered to us, and had arranged by means of a gratuity that we might be refreshed by being sent out for a few hours into a pleasanter part of the prison. Then going out of the dungeon, all attended to their own wants. I suckled my child, which now enfeebled with hunger. In my anxiety for it, I addressed my mother and comforted my brother, and commended to their care for my son...I obtained for my infant to remain in the dungeon with me; and forthwith I grew strong and was relieved from distress and anxiety about my infant; and the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so that I preferred being there to being elsewhere...

2.1 “...my father came to me from the city, worn out with anxiety. He came up to me, that he might cast me down, saying, ‘Have pity my daughter, on my grey hairs. Have pity on your father, if I am worthy to be called a father by you. If with these hands I have brought you up to this flower of your age, if I have preferred you to all your brothers, do not deliver me up to the scorn of men. Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your aunt, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you. Lay aside your courage, and do not bring us all to destruction; for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything.’ These things said my father in his affection, kissing my hands, and throwing himself at my feet; and with tears he called me not Daughter, but Lady. And I grieved over the grey hairs of my father, that he alone of all my family would not rejoice over my passion. And I comforted him, saying, ‘Oh that scaffold whatever wills shall happen. For know that we are not placed in our power, but in that of God.’ And he departed from me in sorrow.

2.2 “Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly taken away to be heard, and we arrived at the town-hall. At once the rumour spread through the neighbourhood of the public place, and an immense number of people were gathered together. We mount the platform. The rest were interrogated, and confessed. Then they came to me, and my father immediately appeared with my boy, and withdrew me from the step, and said in a supplicating tone, ‘Have pity on your babe.’ And Hilarianus the procurator, who had just received the power of life and death in the place of the proconsul Minucius Timinianus, who was deceased, said, ‘Spare the grey hairs of your father, spare the infancy of your boy, offer sacrifice for the well-being of the emperors.’ And I replied, ‘I will not do so.’ Hilarianus said, ‘Are you a Christian?’ And I replied, ‘I am a Christian.’ And as my father stood there to cast me down from the faith, he was ordered by Hilarianus to be thrown down, and was beaten with rods. And my father’s misfortune grieved me as if I myself had been beaten, I so grieved for his wretched old age. The procurator then delivers judgment on all of us, and condemns us to the wild beasts, and we went down cheerfully to the dungeon. Then, because my child had been used to receive

suck from me, and to stay with me in prison, I send Pomponius the deacon to my father to ask for the infant, but my father would not give it him...

3.1 “Again, after a few days, Pudens, a soldier, an assistant overseer of the prison, who began to regard us in great esteem, perceiving that the great power of God was in us, admitted many brethren to see us, that both we and they might be mutually refreshed. And when the day of the exhibition drew near, my father, worn with suffering, came in to me, and began to tear out his beard, and to throw himself on the earth, and to cast himself down on his face, and to reproach his years, and to utter such words as might move all creation. I grieved for his unhappy old age...

5.2 But respecting Felicitas (for to her also the Lord’s favour approached in the same way), when she had already gone eight months with child (for she had been pregnant when she was apprehended), as the day of the exhibition was drawing near, she was in great grief lest on account of her pregnancy she should be delayed, - because pregnant women are not allowed to be publicly punished, - and lest she should shed her sacred and guiltless blood among some who had been wicked subsequently. Moreover, also, her fellow-martyrs were painfully saddened lest they should leave so excellent a friend, and as it were companion, alone in the path of the same hope. Therefore, joining together their united cry, they poured forth their prayer to the Lord three days before the exhibition. Immediately after their prayer her pains came upon her, and when, with the difficulty natural to an eight months’ delivery, in the labour of bringing forth she was sorrowing, some one of the servants of the *Catatractarii* said to her, “You who are in such suffering now, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts, which you despised when you refused to sacrifice?” And she replied, “Now it is I that suffer what I suffer; but then there will be another in me, who will suffer for me, because I also am about to suffer for Him.” Thus she brought forth a little girl, which a certain sister brought up as her daughter...

6.1 The day of their victory shone forth, and they proceeded from the prison into the amphitheatre, as if to an assembly, joyous and of brilliant countenances; if perchance shrinking, it was with joy, and not with fear. Perpetua followed with placid look, and with step and gait as a matron of Christ, beloved of God; casting down the luster of her eyes from the gaze of all. **Moreover, Felicitas, rejoicing that she had safely brought forth, so that she might fight with the wild beasts; from the blood and from the midwife to the gladiator, to wash after childbirth with a second baptism...**

6.2...Perpetua sang psalms, already treading under foot the head of the Egyptian [*referring to a dream*]; Revocatus, and Saturninus, and Satorius uttered threatenings against the gazing people about this martyrdom. When they came within sight of Hilarianus, by gesture and nod, they began to say to Hilarianus, “Thou judgest us,” say they, “but God will judge thee.” At this the people, exasperated, demanded that they should be tormented with scourges as they passed along the rank of the *venatores*. **And they indeed rejoiced that they should have incurred any one of their Lord’s passions...**

6.2 But He who had said, “Ask, and ye shall receive,” gave to them when they asked, that death which each one had wished for...

6.3 Moreover, for the young women the devil prepared a very fierce cow, provided especially for that purpose contrary to custom, rivalling their sex also in that of the beasts. And so, stripped and clothed with nets, they were led forth. The populace shuddered as they saw one young woman of delicate frame, and another with breasts still dropping from her recent childbirth. So, being recalled, they are unbound. Perpetua is first led in. She was tossed, and fell on her loins; and when she saw her tunic torn from her side, she drew it over her as a veil for her middle, rather mindful of her modesty than her suffering. Then she was called for again; and bound up her dishevelled hair; for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with dishevelled hair, lest she should appear to be mourning in her glory. So she rose up; and when she saw Felicitas crushed, she approached and gave her her hand, and lifted her up. And both of them stood together...Then Perpetua was received by a certain one who was still a catechumen, Rusticus by name, who kept close to her..., she addressed them, saying, "Stand fast in the faith, and love one another, all of you, and be not offended at my sufferings..."

6.4 And when the populace called for them into the midst, that as the sword penetrated into their body they might make their eyes partners in the murder, they rose up of their own accord, and transferred themselves wither the people wished; **but they first kissed one another, that they might consummate their martyrdom with the kiss of peace.** The rest indeed, immoveable and in silence, received the sword-thrust; much more Saturus, who also had first ascended the ladder [*reference to a dream*], and first gave up his spirit, for he also was waiting for Perpetua. But Perpetua, that she might taste some pain, being pierced between the ribs, cried out loudly, and she herself placed the wavering right hand of the youthful gladiator to her throat. Possibly such a woman could not have been slain unless she herself had willed it, because she was feared by the impure spirit...

6.4 O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! whom whoever magnifies, and honours, and adores, assuredly ought to read these examples for the edification of the Church, not less than the ancient ones, so that new virtues also may testify that one and the same Holy Spirit is always operating even until now, and God the Father Omnipotent, and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, whose is the glory and infinite power for ever and ever. Amen."

(Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. 3. Philip Schaff <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.html>)

Conclusions

Further reading

For an overview of women in Christian history: *Feminine Threads: women in the tapestry of Christian history*, by Diana Lynn Severance (2001).

For the history of women in the 1st century AD: *Women in the world of the earliest Christians: illuminating ancient ways of life*, by Lynn H. Cohick (2009).

For the history of women in the 2nd – 5th centuries AD: *Christian women in the patristic world: their influence, authority and legacy in the second through fifth centuries*, by Lynn H. Cohick and Amy Brown Hughes (2017).