

## Function and Purpose of Virginitv Among Early Christians

- I. Sexual Continence Removing Flesh from the Cycle of Birth, Decay, and Death
- II. With the End of the World Approaching, No Further Need for Reproduction
- III. Women Released from the Dangers of Childbirth
- IV. Emphasis on the Individual Alone, Separate from Familial, Tribal, or National Identities and Obligations
- V. Women Treated Equally with Men When Removed from the Subordinate Role of Wife and Mother

## Hagiography: Thecla, Perpetua, Radegund

- I. Selection of Virgin, Wife, Widow
- II. Saints' Lives as Enabling both the Representations of Women and Women Writing
- III. Useful as Models of Behavior or as Exceptions
- IV. Testifying to God's glory through actions of individuals
- V. Putting Principles of Discourse into Practice

### VI. Thecla

1. Acts of the Apostles
  - A. Continuing Christ's Mission on Earth
    - i. converting
    - ii. healing
    - iii. casting out demons
    - iv. raising the dead
  - B. Journeys and Travels
2. Conventions of Greek Romance -- Adventure Tales; Love Triangles
3. Refiguring the Family
  - A. Adoption
  - B. Maternity without Sexuality

### VII. Perpetua

1. Standing up to authority of father and of the devil makes her a man
2. Taking care of her family [Dinocrates]
3. Combat motif

### VIII. Radegund

1. Refashioning the Role of the family
  - a. housecleaning
  - b. washing
  - c. feeding
  - d. curing
2. Queen on earth through humiliations and mortifications becomes Queen in Heaven