

Markus McDowell examines how the literature of the Second Temple period portrays women at prayer through an examination of the literary context and character of those prayers. The goal of this work is a greater understanding of how women were portrayed in literary sources and an offering of some fresh insights for the study of women's religious and social roles in the ancient world. The texts are analyzed and categorized within five areas: social location, content, form, occasion, and gender perspective. The prayers are also compared and contrasted with men's prayers in the same sources. The analysis includes locating (as much as possible) the historical, literary, and cultic context of each document in which these prayers appear. By examining all prayers in these texts uttered by women (not just prayers of named or prominent women), and then comparing them with all the prayers of men in those same texts, certain patterns appear. This study adds to our knowledge of women and religion in Second Temple Judaism by primarily exploring patterns that appear among the prayers in the literature of the Second Temple period. While there are fewer prayers by women than men in this literature, the prayers of women are not portrayed as significantly different from those of men in terms of social location, content, form, or occasion. At the same time, the prayers of women exhibit other patterns of language - and in a minor way, form and occasion - that differ from the prayers of men.

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