

# Pauline Christianity as a Stoic Interpretation of Judaism

By

Diotima Coad  
B.A. University of Victoria, 2011

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of Greek and Roman Studies

© Diotima Coad, 2013  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

## **Supervisory Committee**

Pauline Christianity as a Stoic Interpretation of Judaism

by

Diotima Coad  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2011

### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Greg Rowe, Department of Greek and Roman Studies  
**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Margaret Cameron, Department of Philosophy  
**Co-Supervisor**

## **Abstract**

### Supervisory Committee

Dr. Greg Rowe, Department of Greek and Roman Studies

**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Margaret Cameron, Department of Philosophy

**Co-Supervisor**

### Abstract

This thesis investigates the social context of the Apostle Paul and the communities to which he preached with the aim of showing that early Pauline Christianity was shaped by a social milieu that included: first, a Greco-Roman and particularly Stoic philosophy, second, a universalizing Jewish movement and third, an overarching Roman political framework. Paul's philosophy was built on a foundation of Judaism, interpreted with the tools of Stoic philosophy, and communicated to a largely Roman audience. Chapter One presents the figure of Paul as a Jew and Roman citizen with a Greek education, a product of three cultural worlds. Chapter Two argues that through allegory, Paul replaced Jewish nationalistic and ethnocentric aspects with symbolic ones, and communicated its ethical core with Stoic language and concepts to a primarily Roman audience. Chapter Three examines this audience and determines that they were largely Roman citizens who were both steeped in the prevalent philosophy of the time, Stoicism, as well as being associated with the Jewish community as sympathizers, God-fearers, or "Highest-God" worshippers, as a result of the popular Judaizing movement in the first century. Through the study of Paul, his letters, and his audience, this thesis argues that Pauline Christianity was, at its core, a Stoic interpretation of Judaism.

## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Paul in his Social Context.....	3
Chapter Two: Paul's Letters.....	23
Chapter Three: The Converts.....	53
Conclusion.....	71
Bibliography.....	81

## **Acknowledgments**

I am grateful to a great many people who played a role in the completion of this thesis. I owe the most to my supervisors, Dr. Greg Rowe and Dr. Margaret Cameron, who provided me with encouragement and invaluable feedback. I would also like to thank my external examiner Dr. Josh Wilburn and the entire faculty and staff of the Greek and Roman Studies Department at University of Victoria, who have guided both my undergraduate and graduate education and inspired me to complete this degree. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow graduate students, friends, and family, who have patiently endured both the trials and the successes of this thesis along with me.

## Introduction

This thesis investigates the nature of the interaction between the Apostle Paul and his audience in the first century CE. In three essays, we examine first the figure of Paul, next his message, and last his audience. The conclusion will bring together these three distinct strands of research and answer the question that drives this thesis; did Stoic philosophy play a significant role in the development of Pauline Christianity?

The glaring commonalities between Paul's writings and those of Stoic philosophers have long been a subject of debate. Ancient authors connected the two traditions, enough even to produce a forged letter correspondence between Paul and Seneca in the fourth century CE.<sup>1</sup> Although anti-Stoic sentiments have been expressed at various points throughout history, an effective nineteenth century anti-Stoic attitude was adopted by scholars in a religious effort to prove the uniqueness of Christian morality. But it is now time for a re-evaluation of the influence of Stoicism on Paul and his use of the philosophy. The new effort to examine Stoicism and Paul without bias has been led by such scholars as Thorsteinsson and Engberg-Pedersen, focusing mainly on the topic of ancient morality.

The value of this thesis lies in its particular approach, which blends literary analysis with cultural and social study. I not only posit that in his letters Paul employs Stoic literary techniques, vocabulary, and concepts, but also that a social study of Paul and his audience shows us how he did this and why. Paul was able to conceive of such a blending of Judaic and Greco-Roman philosophy because of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Jerome is the first to mention the letters in 393 CE in *De Viris Illustribus*.

particular social milieu among which he grew up and was educated. This same social milieu answers the question of why Paul would have been motivated to use Stoicism, because his audience was an educated group of Romans who were already sympathetic to Judaism.

If the overwhelming majority of Paul's communities were Romans (Stoics) who have embraced the ideas of Judaism (God-fearers) and Paul himself is a Jew who is living in a thoroughly Hellenized culture with a Greek education and an intimate knowledge of Stoic concepts, it follows that Pauline Christianity is a blend of those two traditions. I argue here that Pauline Christianity, a direct product of the shared intellectual discourse between Romans and Jews, was at its base a Stoic interpretation of Judaism.

My research uses as its starting point several primary texts for the investigation of Paul and his audience. *Acts of the Apostles* provides the basic social context from which to begin. Josephus' *Contra Apionem* and the philosophy of Philo will serve to illustrate the practice of interpreting Judaism as a philosophy using Stoic philosophic tools. Stoics contemporary with Paul: Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus, will be used as our source of Stoic concepts. The following examination of Pauline Christianity will employ the Pauline Epistles *Galatians* and *Romans*, discourse between Paul and his communities. The examination of Paul's audience utilizes recently discovered archeological evidence in the form of inscriptions, as well as Jewish and Roman literary references. These sources are employed with the aim of reinterpreting Pauline Christianity as -- set out in the letters -- a Stoic interpretation of Judaism.

## Chapter One

### **Introduction**

In order to examine Paul's thought, it is imperative to understand his cultural and social world. Thus, before we launch into a comparative analysis of Paul's text with Stoicism, this chapter will cover the social environment within which his conceptual frameworks were being formed. This section aims to bring together the current discussion on Greek philosophical thought in the Roman Empire, the Jewish Diaspora, and the Roman/Italian Diaspora in relation to the figure of Paul. First, Paul's own city will be examined in order to show how the three strands of Greek, Jewish, and Roman co-existed in a typical Hellenistic city in the East. Next, this chapter will discuss Greek language and learning in the Roman Empire, followed by a more narrow investigation of Paul's own Greek education. The Jewish aspect of Paul's world will be illuminated through its relations with Rome and with Greek communities, as well as through Jewish community education, then specifically profiling Paul's most likely Jewish educational experience. The final strand, the Italian Diaspora, will entail a description of the creation of the diaspora through Roman military colonization, the defining factor of the diaspora: Roman citizenship, and their special relationship to Rome. Lastly, Paul's role in the Italian Diaspora, through his own Roman citizenship and his residence and visitation to such colonies, will be assessed.

### **The City of Paul**

The obvious place to begin is the place of Paul's birth and upbringing. The Tarsus-Jerusalem debate concerning Paul's upbringing began as an argument over



whether Paul was essentially part of the Greco-Roman world (Tarsus) or the Jewish-Palestinian (Jerusalem). Bultmann placed his Paul firmly on Hellenic soil while Van Unnik argued for a strictly Jewish upbringing in Jerusalem. More recently, the Tarsus-Jerusalem debate has been softened by the recognition that the difference between the cities in terms of relative Hellenization was not as radical as previously thought.<sup>2</sup> Currently, the work of Hengel<sup>3</sup> and Du Toit provides the most persuasive argument for Paul's youth, placing him in Tarsus until adolescence. Du Toit's argument, briefly summarized, states first that the evidence from *Acts* does not exclude the possibility of Paul being raised in Tarsus, in fact the wording is vague, likely a result of the fact that Luke tends to highlight Paul's Jerusalem background at the expense of his Tarsus background. Second, he states that Paul was intimately comfortable with the Greek language and writing forms, and lastly that he was at ease travelling through the Jewish Diaspora and repeatedly returned to Tarsus throughout his life.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, if we work with the probability that Paul was raised until adolescence in Tarsus, the city presents us with a perfect example of the blending of Greek/Jewish/Roman strands. Tarsus was renowned for its rich literary and philosophical life. Strabo says that Tarsus even surpassed Athens and Alexandria for study of philosophy and education: τοσαύτη δὲ τοῖς ἐνθάδε ἀνθρώποις σπουδὴ πρὸς τε φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην παιδείαν ἐγκύκλιον ἅπασαν γέγονεν ὥσθ' ὑπερβέβληνται καὶ Ἀθήνας καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καὶ εἴ τινα ἄλλον τόπον δυνατὸν

---

<sup>2</sup> Hengel (1989) demonstrated the extensive Greek influence on Palestine in the first century.

<sup>3</sup> "The Pre-Christian Paul" 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Du Toit 2000, 388, 391, 398.

εἰπεῖν, ἐν ᾧ σχολαὶ καὶ διατριβαὶ φιλοσόφων γεγόνασι (*Geogr.* 14.5.13). A whole array of Stoic philosophers came from Tarsus: Zeno (of Tarsus), Chysippus, Archedemus, Heraclidides, Antipater, and Athenodorus. Strabo also writes about the university at Tarsus, begun by Athenodorus the Stoic philosopher after his return from Rome tutoring Augustus (14.5.13-4). Athenodorus used his significant influence gained by association with the Emperor to reform the Tarsian constitution and institute a Greek university with public lectures for the citizens in all areas of science and literature.

From Josephus we learn that Syria had the largest percentage of Jewish inhabitants in the Empire, especially in the cities of Antioch and Damascus the Jewish population was to be counted in the thousands. (*BJ.* 2.20, 2 (561). As for Tarsus, Ramsay infers that in 171 BCE a group of Jewish colonists were settled there by Antiochus Epiphanes, in accordance with Seleucid policy.<sup>5</sup> Philostratus also comments on a significant Jewish presence in Tarsus (*Life of Apollonius*, 6.34). There were a number of cities in the East where Jews possessed rights of citizenship, particularly Antioch and Alexandria,<sup>6</sup> and it is not unlikely that the citizens of Tarsus claimed the same privilege. Seleucus I Nicator is stated to have bestowed citizenship on the Jews of cities that he founded in Asia Minor and Syria and Josephus states the privilege still existed in his own time (*AJ.* 12.3.1). It is possible that Antiochus gave Tarsian Jews citizenship when he settled them there.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ramsay 1907, 180.

<sup>6</sup> Schürer 1986, 126.

For Alexandria, in the *Letter of Aristeas*, and for Berenice, in two inscriptions (CIG 5361/2), the term *πολίτευμα* is used to describe the resident Jewish community. Although the term has a broad definition, it essentially grants a group self-administration or autonomy in religious and social organization.<sup>7</sup> For the Jews this meant the right to build synagogues, have courts of justice, educate youth in the Torah, and to have communal institutions with officials to perform religious functions such as the collection of the temple tax. One may imagine that this type of situation was more widespread in the East than we have literary evidence for. Given the substantial and influential Jewish population in Tarsus, I suggest a kind of *πολίτευμα* may have existed there as well.

The city of Tarsus came under Roman control in 67 BCE, as a result of Pompey's campaign against the pirates (Cassius Dio 47.26.2). The city was well disposed to Rome, supporting both Julius Caesar and Octavian, and in 42 BCE Tarsus was given the status of a free city (Appian *History* 5.1.7). With an exemption from duties on imports and exports, Tarsus thrived under Augustus' favor as a trading port and became home to many Roman citizens.

The example of Tarsus has introduced us to Paul's three worlds: one of Greek language and culture, of Judaism and the Jewish community, and also one of overarching Roman politics and power. This chapter now turns to a more in depth look at each, starting with the presence of Greek language and philosophy in Paul's social environment.

---

<sup>7</sup> Tcherikover 1959, 297.

## Greek Language and Learning

Paul communicated in Greek. All but two of the cities he preached in had Greek as its dominant language.<sup>8</sup> Learning Greek in the ancient school system essentially entailed memorization of classic texts. One could not, therefore, learn Greek without learning about Greek culture. Particularly in the first century, Greek education seems to have flourished in the East, with Asia becoming both the richest and most cultured province, the best place to go for advanced learning in any subject, especially Cos, Pergamus, Ephesus, and Smyrna.<sup>9</sup>

Primary education entailed the most basic reading and writing skills: learning the alphabet, reading and writing words and sentences and then reciting small passages from memory.<sup>10</sup> Secondary school involved more extensive memorization of classical texts (such as Homer, Euripides, Menander and Demosthenes) along with some grammar lessons. Mathematics and astronomy were included to a lesser extent. Students finished secondary education around the age of fifteen and a few would continue to higher education in the form of the study of philosophy and/or rhetoric.<sup>11</sup>

There were three main forms of philosophical teaching. The first was the teaching given in the actual “schools” by each separate sect. Second, there were independent teachers working in different cities where they established themselves, attracting their own students. Epictetus, for instance, did this after Domitian drove

---

<sup>8</sup> Meeks 1983, 50.

<sup>9</sup> Marrou 1956, 215.

<sup>10</sup> Marrou 1956, 271.

<sup>11</sup> Marrou 1956, 207.

him from Rome; he settled in Nicopolis in Epirus and opened his own school. Third, there were the wandering philosophers or popular lecturers who preached in the market places or street corners to the passersby. The first was obviously the most exclusive option, those with less means might opt for the second, and access to the third method was open to everyone, although generally came without great prestige. The study of rhetoric was the primary option for the student who wished to have a prominent role in public life. The study of oratory and eloquence lasted approximately four years under the guidance of a rhetor and also generally included some study of philosophy. A large part of Paul's cultural context was then thoroughly permeated with Greek thought through the language and education of his peers and audience.

As for Paul himself, he tells us nothing about his youth, so we are forced to make deductions concerning his education based on the existing educational systems and traces of his education in his letters. Paul's education has long been a topic of dispute. While some scholars have ridiculed Paul's koine Greek,<sup>12</sup> others have called his letters literary masterpieces.<sup>13</sup> While having been criticized for his straightforward and largely unadorned style, Paul's letters do show knowledge of Hellenistic letter writing conventions and structures.<sup>14</sup> Sanders' study of Paul's education draws several conclusions: Paul quotes exclusively from the Septuagint, he shows no knowledge of the Hebrew Bible in his writing, he is familiar with popular Greek literature and has a good knowledge of rhetoric, he does not,

---

<sup>12</sup> Norden, 1958, 509.

<sup>13</sup> Betz, 1975, 187.

<sup>14</sup> De Toit 2000, 394.

however, often directly quote any Greek literature or philosophy, and his use of the Septuagint in his letters indicates that he may have memorized it.<sup>15</sup> If we take into account all this information about Paul's abilities and limitations in reading and writing, we should be able to deduce the form of education he underwent in Tarsus in the first century from the age of seven to fifteen.

We know that in first century Tarsus there was Jewish synagogue education, Hellenic gymnasium education, as well as the state funded university lectures.<sup>16</sup> Due to his lack of thorough knowledge of Greek literature, he probably did not have a gymnasium education, however, his use of Greek and not Hebrew suggests that his schooling was conducted in Greek, excluding a traditional Jewish education. I follow Sanders in suggesting that there is a good probability that Paul attended a Jewish school that taught in Greek.<sup>17</sup> Murphy-O'Connor has noted that the primary education for Jews and Greeks must have been quite similar because Jewish children had to learn to function in a thoroughly Hellenistic world.<sup>18</sup> Through this education he likely read some Greek works necessary for learning the rhythm and conventions of the language, perhaps even Greek philosophy, but mostly biblical literature. He then possibly had some training from the Greek tradition on rhetoric in Tarsus before the age of fifteen as well as attending and becoming familiar with the popular lectures of Tarsian Stoics.

---

<sup>15</sup> Sanders 2009, 77-82.

<sup>16</sup> Ramsay 1907, 231.

<sup>17</sup> 2009, 89.

<sup>18</sup> 1996, 48.

## **The Jewish Diaspora**

One cannot forget, however, that this liberal Greek education went alongside attendance at the synagogue of Tarsus and within a Jewish Diaspora community. The dispersion of the Jews from their homeland began with the sack of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, but the large-scale movement of Jews outside Judea began after the conquest of Alexander and subsequent liberation of the Jews from the yoke of Persian rule. In the first century CE, large populations of Jews inhabited especially Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, although Rome also had a sizable Jewish population.

Outside of Jerusalem, the Jewish communities faced the challenge of both surviving in and adapting to a thoroughly Hellenized environment, while still remaining true to their religious commitment and heritage. Thus, communities formed around synagogues were born. The synagogue, a term denoting primarily the organized group rather than a building, served to fulfill several needs of the Diaspora Jews: the assembly for Sabbath services and for religious education, as well as the collection of funds for both the upkeep of the meeting place and for the temple tax.<sup>19</sup> Although they formed their own cultural communities, the Diaspora Jews still had to contend with the Gentiles with whom they shared the city and with the broader Roman political authorities.

The pattern of Roman relations with the Jewish Diaspora up to the second century CE is overwhelmingly positive. In 49 BCE the consul Lentulus Crus exempted Jewish Roman Citizens from conscription in Asia (*AJ* xiv, 228-32, 234, 236-40), as participation in the Roman army was incompatible with their dietary

---

<sup>19</sup> Smallwood 1976, 133.

requirements and Sabbath observance. Again, in 43 BCE, Jews were exempted from military service in the civil war in Asia (*AJ* xiv, 223-7). Julius Caesar followed precedent in exempting the Jews from military service, and under Augustus there was established a universal, empire-wide exemption.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, synagogues were protected even when other *collegia* were banned; Caesar allowed those with ‘ancient foundations’, including the Jewish synagogues, to continue (Suet. *Iul.* 42, 3)(Josephus *AJ* xiv, 213-16). In Rome, the “Synagogue of the Augustans” (*CIJ* 284, 301, 338, 368, 416, 496) testifies to the gratitude and good relations between the Emperor and the Jewish Diaspora.

These very preferences that the Diaspora communities enjoyed also served to create friction with the other members of the cities in which the Jews lived. Key issues concerned the collection of temple tax and discontent over the Jews’ civic status. As an example, in 49 BCE a quarrel arose between the Greek citizens and the Jewish community in Sardis. The Jews had the right of *πολίτευμα*, forming an autonomous civic unit within the city that had administrative and juridical powers over its own members, independent of the Greek citizen body and local government. It seems the Greeks were trying to undermine the civic authority of the Jews, which caused the Jews to appeal to the proquaestor, L. Antonius, who then confirmed the Jewish rights and stated that the current arrangement should remain unchanged (*AJ* xiv, 235). Legislation did not deter this ill-feeling towards the Jewish communities, however, and even under Augustus, several appeals occur by the Jews of Asia and

---

<sup>20</sup> Smallwood 1976, 137.



Cyrene to Roman officials concerning attacks on their rights by local authorities.<sup>21</sup> It is perhaps their precarious position of belonging and yet not-belonging to the city that resulted in their ability to function economically within the Hellenic system but remain religiously and culturally close-knit.

The Diaspora Jewish communities lived and worked among Gentiles, necessitating the knowledge of Greek and some Greek cultural norms and values; however, within their communities they also taught their own language and religious values. Schürer has noted that in the New Testament, the primary role of the synagogue seems to be as a school.<sup>22</sup> Similarly Philo states that the synagogues were schools where the ancestral philosophy was cultivated and every virtue taught (*Vit. Mos.* ii.39). The formation of Jewish schools is not evidenced until quite late; Schürer postulates that Jewish primary schools were not widespread until after 70 CE. According to literary tradition, the High Priest from 63 to 65 CE, Joshua ben Gamla, ordered school teachers to be appointed in every province and in every town (bB.B. 21a), which presupposes that there must have been some schools existing at the time, but perhaps not as a general institution.<sup>23</sup>

Since these Jewish primary schools were established after the Hellenistic schools, they often took up the basic Hellenistic model. Townsend notes the similar threefold division of education into primary, secondary and higher, consisting basically of Scripture, the Mishna and the Talmud (Judah b. Tema *Avot* 5:21), as well

---

<sup>21</sup> Smallwood 1976, 139.

<sup>22</sup> Schürer 1986 vol. 2, 425.

<sup>23</sup> Schürer 1986 vol. 2, 419.

as similar methods for teaching the alphabet and basic writing.<sup>24</sup> In Roman synagogues the teachers are even called *Grammatei*.<sup>25</sup> Similar to the Hellenistic schools, basic education consisted of memorization and recitation, but presumably of scripture rather than Homer. Secondary education focused on further memorization of the oral Torah and from there some students would go on to higher education, either studying at an academy or attaching oneself to a great scholar for advanced scriptural interpretation and the study of the Talmud.

In the Diaspora, however, a strict education in Jewish scripture would not be sufficient to provide one with the means to function in a Greek speaking society. This suggests the possibility that there were Greek speaking Jewish schools in the Diaspora. Although there is no evidence for teaching Greek in orthodox Jewish schools, the popularity of the Septuagint and the tendency of certain Jewish authors, namely Paul and Philo, to quote from this Greek translation rather than the Hebrew, may suggest that some Diaspora communities taught their children the scripture from the Greek, or at least provided Greek lessons in addition to the traditional curriculum.

Returning to Paul, what kind of Jewish education can we ascribe to him as a Diaspora Jew? Paul says of his own education that he “advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors” (*Gal.* 1:14). Luke says of Paul that he was “brought up in this city

---

<sup>24</sup> Townsend 1971, 154.

<sup>25</sup> Leon 1960, 183.

[Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel,<sup>26</sup> educated strictly according to [his] ancestral law (*Acts* 22:3). As was discussed above, most scholars would now agree that Paul did not move to Jerusalem at a young age and was not educated in Palestinian Pharisaism.<sup>27</sup> Sanders notes that there are no signs in Paul's writing of a distinctly Palestinian Pharisaic education; Paul seldom shows knowledge of the Hebrew text of the bible where it differs from the Septuagint and he shows no knowledge of specifically Pharisaic scriptural interpretation.<sup>28</sup>

Several options remain open. Murphy-O'Connor suggests that after primary and secondary education in Tarsus, Paul travelled to Jerusalem to complete his studies with a Jewish scholar.<sup>29</sup> He cites Strabo on the custom for the young men of Tarsus to leave and complete their education abroad (*Geog.* 14.5.13). Thus, he suggests Paul was not descended from Pharisees as Luke says, but he managed to join a group of them when he got to Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup> Sanders says only that it was unlikely that he was educated by Gamaliel in Jerusalem because of his lack of knowledge in Hebrew so she suggests he attended advanced Jewish studies that taught in Greek and from the Septuagint.<sup>31</sup> Hengel, similarly, suggests that Paul did indeed come to Jerusalem after his primary and secondary education and likely did, as Luke and Paul himself says (*Phil* 3:5), join the Pharisees. Whether he was directly

---

<sup>26</sup> Gamaliel (grandson of the famous rabbi Hillel) was a Pharisaic rabbi known for his learning and was president of the Sanhedrim during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. According to *Acts* (5.34) when the apostles were brought before the council, Gamaliel convinced the others to spare the apostles and leave their fate in God's hands.

<sup>27</sup> Sanders 2009, 77. Murphy-O'Connor 1996, 59. Hengel 1991, 40.

<sup>28</sup> Sanders 2009, 77.

<sup>29</sup> Murphy-O'Connor 1996, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Murphy-O'Connor 1996, 59.

<sup>31</sup> Sanders 2009, 80.

educated under Gamaliel is questionable, however, Hengel proposes it is very likely that Paul attached himself to a group of Greek-speaking Pharisees and that he learned and preached at Greek-speaking synagogues in Jerusalem.

Given the amount of scholarship in recent years revealing the extent of Hellenism in Jerusalem, Hengel's hypothesis seems reasonable. In the second temple period 33% of inscriptions found in Jerusalem were written in Greek.<sup>32</sup> It is likely that a significant portion of the population of Jerusalem in the first century BCE spoke Greek. There were travelling Greek-speaking pilgrims from the Diaspora moving in and out of the city en masse every year, as well as the number of freedmen that migrated back to Jerusalem after their initial enslavement by Rome, during which time certainly they learned some Greek, and Hengel also posits that about 15% of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were native Greek speakers.<sup>33</sup> We can infer that there was some access to higher Greek education; some training in oratory and rhetoric was taught as evidenced by the abilities of Herod the Great, Josephus, and Tertullus.<sup>34</sup> What most scholars agree on is that Paul memorized the Greek translation of the Bible, he could write everyday Greek accurately, and that he knew how to argue, especially the argumentative use of the Bible. So regardless of his precise Jewish education, we can be sure that Paul absorbed the core of Judaism, likely through the Greek language, and probably first in the Tarsus synagogue and then in Jerusalem within a Pharisaic synagogue.

---

<sup>32</sup> Hengel 1991, 55.

<sup>33</sup> 1991, 56.

<sup>34</sup> Tertullus was an orator who was employed by the High Priest Ananias to speak against Paul to the governor Felix. While Tertullus could have been a Gentile, most commentaries suggest that Tertullus was most likely a Hellenistic Jew. See The MacArthur Bible Commentary (J. MacArthur 2005).

## The Italian Diaspora

While Paul lived as a Diaspora Jew in a Greek style city, his world, like that of his future Christian communities, was dominated by the presence of Rome. What was the Roman presence in the provinces? The most immediate and day-to-day presence of Rome was its citizens. Scattered throughout the Empire, Roman citizens stood out for their privileged status outside of Rome. Just as we speak of a Jewish Diaspora, one can speak of an Italian Diaspora at the time of Paul.

Roman colonization outside of Italy began with Gracchus desiring to settle a colony in Carthage for the defense of Roman territory. Colonies in the East were also then initiated by Marius and Sulla as a reward for their veterans. By the time of Caesar and Augustus, colonization became more planned and strategic, but remained largely military in character. Caesar forged colonies for his veterans in Carthage, Corinth, Buthrotum and Dyme and especially in Asia Minor in cities such as Lampsacus, Apameia, and Sinope. Augustus largely followed the policy of Caesar, establishing colonies for veterans in Asia Minor and Macedonia but also Syria and central Anatolia. Augustus' colonies served as provision of land for his soldiers as well as serving a defensive purpose for the empire. While colonies began with the grant of the latin right, *ius Latii*, after Caesar citizen colonies, *colonia civium Romanorum*, became more popular. In a *colonia civium Romanorum*, discharged citizen soldiers from legions were given the institutions of a city, the land, and a special arrangement of rights and status from which to create a prosperous community with loyalty to Rome.<sup>35</sup> Grants of full citizenship were generally

---

<sup>35</sup> Purcell 2005, 96.

reserved for communities of immigrant Italians while Latin status could be given to a mixed community as a stepping stone towards full citizenship, which could be gained through serving on magistracies.<sup>36</sup>

Possession of Roman citizenship gave one certain practical advantages such as freedom from taxation, but these special colonies of citizens were also given a special municipal autonomy that gave them freedom from provincial governors and thus set them apart from the rest of the city having parallel and sometimes superior powers to the municipal council. In this way the status of Italians in the Italian Diaspora is somewhat similar to that of the Jewish *πολίτευμα*, in that they were recognized often as a separate entity existing alongside the city in a favored position. What held the Italian Diaspora together, however, was not a shared culture and religion rather it was the special political relationship to the Imperial state. Especially for the veteran colonies, service in the army led to economic and political opportunity. Slaves, as products of war, provided a profitable business in the veteran colonies. Contractors and traders also always followed the legions and thus veteran colonies often became prosperous economic centers.

Wherever they settled Roman citizens distinguished themselves in relation to Rome. Resident Romans formed collectives, gave benefactions, and gained honors, rights and privileges under local law. An honorific inscription from Apamea illustrates this special status: "The Council and People of Apamea and the Resident Romans honor Ti. Claudius Piso Mithridatianus" (*IGRR IV 790*). The inscription goes on to list the dedicatee's various titles and proclaims that a statue will be set up in

---

<sup>36</sup> Sherwin-White 1973, 337.

his honor. Just as the Jews' privileged position left them open to jealousy from the native communities, Roman citizens were at times singled out for violence by the rest of the city. In addition to the massive killing of Roman citizens by Mithradates in 88 BCE,<sup>37</sup> Roman citizens were killed in rioting in Cyzicus in 20 BCE (Dio 54.7), and in 43 CE Roman citizens were crucified in Rhodes (Dio 60.24).

How does Paul fit into this Roman context? Paul was a Roman citizen living in a province with a substantial population of Roman citizens.<sup>38</sup> This puts him not only in the sphere of the Jewish Diaspora but also in the Italian one. There are several theories on how Paul acquired his Roman citizenship, and our lack of secure knowledge on this fact, mirrors our lack of information concerning how any Jews of the Province of Asia had citizenship, but we do know that they had it. One particular example is that of the Roman citizen Marcus Laelius Onasion, who appears among the ἄρχοντες of the Jewish πολίτευμα of Berenice in a decree of 24 CE (*SEG* XVII no. 823). Ramsay has suggested that Paul obtained such citizenship through an individual grant to a forbearer.<sup>39</sup> When Pompey and Antony came to Tarsus, both gave out citizenship to prominent citizens of the community in order, no doubt, to create internal ties to the empire. Numerous Antonii, Julii, and Claudii of Eastern Provinces record grants of citizenship through their names (*IGRR* iv). It is possible that Paul's grandfather was one of these Eastern gentry. Sherwin-White suggests another way these Eastern elite obtained citizenship may have been through the

---

<sup>37</sup> Valerius Maximus estimates 80,000 victims (9.2 ext. 3).

<sup>38</sup> Augustus settled his Pisidian colonies in Syria. In neighboring Asia Minor, Consul Lentulus raised two legions of citizens in 49 BCE (Caesar *B.C.* 3.4).

<sup>39</sup> Ramsay 1907, 180.

Provincial councils;<sup>40</sup> as the link between local aristocracies and Roman governors, they may have assisted their fellow members to attain this sought after status. Either way, it is evident that, from the time of Augustus, it was fully possible and acceptable that the elite in Eastern Greek cities combine a career in local politics with a personal acquisition of Roman citizenship.

A more likely suggestion for the origin of Paul's Roman citizenship comes from Hengel who postulates that one of Paul's forebears was freed by a Roman citizen.<sup>41</sup> The number of freed slaves with citizenship far outnumbered those of free-birth who were granted it.<sup>42</sup> Rome took control of Palestine in 63 BCE and subsequently there were various occasions (61, 55, 52, 4 BCE) when Jews from the country were enslaved and sent abroad.<sup>43</sup> Many of these prisoners of war were later manumitted by their owners, as attested by Philo who comments that most Jews in Rome had Roman citizenship as descendants of freedmen (*Leg.* 23 155). In the early Principate, Augustus encouraged citizens of Rome who were poor or of Eastern origins to emigrate to the East. It is likely that many Jewish freedmen may have followed this course. Some returned to Jerusalem as is evident from the 'synagogue of the libertini' in *Acts* (6:9). Tarsus, as a significant city with numerous Roman citizens and a strong Jewish community, would also have made an attractive spot for Paul's forebears to relocate.

---

<sup>40</sup> 1973, 310.

<sup>41</sup> Hengel 1991, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Sherwin-White 1973, 322.

<sup>43</sup> Murphy-O'Connor 1996, 39.



The last probable avenue for the acquisition of citizenship by Paul's family is the possibility that his ancestor was enslaved and then freed as Hengel suggests and was granted citizenship upon the completion of military service. While normally only citizens were admitted to the legions, in times of crisis freedmen were called upon (Livy 10.21.4, 22.11.8). Auxiliary units regularly recruited freedmen and bestowed citizenship on them after their service. Voluntarily or not, it is possible that one of Paul's forbearers was recruited to the Roman army and thus attained Roman citizenship.

Paul was comfortable operating in the Roman world. He, as a Roman citizen, held a privileged place in the Diaspora. When he travelled, Paul was drawn to cities with a similar social context. The communities of his letters strike a canny resemblance. Philippi and Corinth were both Roman veteran colonies and thus centers of trade and economic prosperity. Thessalonica was the provincial capital and although not made a Roman colony until 250 CE, it had a prominent Roman element and shared a special relationship with Rome.<sup>44</sup> In Galatia, according to Acts, Paul evangelized in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe – four of the Roman colonies established by the province's first governor Marcus Lollius, under Augustus.<sup>45</sup> It seems probable that Paul was specifically targeting areas with Roman citizens, and perhaps more specifically, veteran colonies.

Pisidian Antioch provides a fitting example of Paul's operation in the Roman world. Had he wished to target the provincial capital and the home of a strong and

---

<sup>44</sup> Murphy-O'Connor 1996, 116.

<sup>45</sup> Levick 1967, 34-38.

ancient Jewish community, Paul could have chosen the capital Apamea as the first stop on his Galatian mission. Instead, however, he made Antioch the springboard for his first mission to spread the gospel outside of its Semitic homeland. Pisidian Antioch was the principle Roman colony in the Greek East, having been re-founded by Augustus in 25 BCE and populated with Italian veterans from legions V and VII.<sup>46</sup> Since then, the city had undertaken a large building program, which included an imperial temple, porticos, squares, and a triumphal arch commemorating Augustus' Pisidian victories. The city had become, in Levick's words, a "little Rome".<sup>47</sup>

Paul deliberately chose a distinctly "Roman" city to begin his preaching. Perhaps he recognized that the success of his mission depended not just on winning converts but on winning the right type of converts, namely those of substance and influence: Romans. In fact, at the very outset of his first mission Paul approaches the most influential person in the province, the proconsul Sergius Paullus. As it turns out, Sergius Paullus is a native of Pisidian Antioch.<sup>48</sup> So, not only was Antioch a city with a large presence of Roman citizens but it was also the home of a Roman senatorial family. No doubt Sergius Paullus recommended Antioch to Paul and gave him letters of introduction to aid him on his travels.

Not only was Paul a Roman citizen, but also he seemed to be targeting Roman citizens by seeking out veteran colonies and centers with a large population of Roman citizens. Several examples of Paul's noted converts from *Acts* will illustrate the particular blend of identities present in these provincial Romans. Sergius Paullus

---

<sup>46</sup> Gadza 2011, 33.

<sup>47</sup> 1967, 78.

<sup>48</sup> Mitchell 1995, 6.

was of Italian origin, resident of Asia, Roman magistrate, commemorated in both Greek and Latin inscriptions, and was receptive to new Eastern cults. Titus Iustus, a member of Paul's Corinthian congregation, was a Roman colonist and a Jewish sympathizer. Corneilus of Caesarea was a centurion of the Italian cohort as well as a "God-fearer". Prisca and Aquila, Jews and prominent associates of Paul, were also closely tied to Rome, having lived there before they were evicted by Claudius and returning there after their travels with Paul.

### **Conclusion**

The veteran colonies, as well as the citizens within them, which are the target of Paul's evangelizing, are microcosms of the blended identity of the Roman Empire. The cities are, like Paul's own city, centers of Greek philosophy language and learning, hosts of a Diaspora Jewish community, as well as the homes of large populations of Italian veterans and businessmen, which through their connection to Rome make up the Italian Diaspora. Their people are connected through various stands to the Jewish synagogue, the Roman hierarchy, and Greek culture and language. Through our examination of Paul's social context we have seen a tangle of these three strands, Greek, Jewish, and Roman, which coexisted, peacefully or otherwise, within the cities of Paul's world. Each group claimed a certain status that set it apart from the other, yet all three lived and worked together within a single urban center. Within this mesh of cultural identities, is it any wonder that Paul's letters show he took from each what it had to offer?

## Chapter Two

### **Introduction**

Our examination of Paul in Chapter One has set the scene for a close reading of his letters. We have established that Paul and his contemporary audience were products of a cultural milieu in which Stoicism played a prominent role. Did Paul, moreover, adopt this way of thinking? Through a detailed look at two of his letters, *Galatians* and *Romans*, this study will show that yes, Paul had absorbed Stoic doctrine and vocabulary because he employs it in his letter writing, both at the surface level of terminology and at the deeper level of theological framework.

Part I of this chapter begins with background information on our sources, Stoic and Pauline, and then discusses three main themes found in *Galatians* and *Romans*: moral worship, the ethics of community, and the nature of God. These themes will then be compared to Stoic thought. The themes themselves are not revolutionary, neither are they necessarily unique to Stoic philosophy; it is rather the way that Paul communicates them, which recalls the current and popular Stoic philosophers of the time.

Part II then provides two in-depth case studies on the topics of natural law and rational worship. These two topics are critical to both Pauline and Stoic thought, and this study of them will prove that Paul is not only using the language of the Stoics but is in fact using a Stoic conceptual framework to explain God and his relationship to man.

## Part I

### **Background**

Because Stoicism was an ever-evolving philosophy, with doctrines that change over time, it is important for our study of Paul and the Stoics to use closely contemporary sources. Therefore, the Stoics whose work we will be comparing to Paul (5 - 67 CE) will be Seneca (4 BCE - 65 CE), Musonius Rufus (30 - 101 CE) and Epictetus (55 - 135 CE). Although these philosophers are largely Rome-centered, due to the lack of extant writings from the philosophers of Tarsus, these three are the closest sources to Paul that we have. Seneca was educated by Attalus and practiced his philosophy in Rome, climbing to high political station as tutor to Nero, a position he held at the time of Paul's letter to the Romans.<sup>49</sup> His many writings focus on the practical teaching of Stoicism, on ethics in action, and comprise the largest collection of Stoic writings we have. Musonius was also vocal about politics in Rome,<sup>50</sup> his interests being in practical application of Stoic ethics, and was at one point banished by Nero for his outspokenness. His writings come down to us second hand, from his pupil Lucius, as summaries of his twenty-one discourses, as well as fragments from followers and historians. Epictetus alone among the three was born of low status. He was a slave who was brought to Rome and later climbed to a place of distinction after Nero's death. Having studied under Musonius, his philosophy stands out for its focus on universal humanity and his personal portrayal of God/Zeus, which brings him closer to theism than other Stoics. Like those of

---

<sup>49</sup> 54-58 CE.

<sup>50</sup> He was associated with a group of Stoics at Rome who openly opposed the emperor Nero, and was exiled in 65 CE. For the life of Musonius see Lutz 1947.

Musonius, his discourses come down to us through another, Arrian, but most scholars agree that the discourses appear as dictation records of his lectures.<sup>51</sup>

Many scholars are of the opinion that Paul had a very limited and rudimentary knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy. Barclay published an article comparing Paul to other Diaspora Jews of the first century, such as Philo and Josephus, on scales of assimilation, acculturation, and accommodation.<sup>52</sup> He found that generally Diaspora Jews who had a high assimilation score also had a high accommodation score, by which he meant that they used whatever Hellenistic resources were available to revitalize or downplay Jewish claims. Barclay, however, stated that Paul was an anomaly in this case because he scored very low on the accommodation scale.<sup>53</sup> He arrived at this categorization because he did not see any significant use of Hellenistic concepts in Paul's writing. I disagree with this assessment, and state that Paul's use of Hellenistic philosophy was a key tool in his re-conception of Judaism, which raises his accommodation level and puts him more in line with other Diaspora Jews of the time such as Philo.<sup>54</sup> This point will be made through a close examination of two of Paul's letters, *Galatians* and *Romans*, the context of which will first be briefly outlined.

Paul's letter to the Galatians was his first surviving letter as well as the earliest surviving document of the Christian Church. It was written after Paul's first visit to the Galatians (45-49 CE) but before the Apostolic Council (50 CE) and Paul's

---

<sup>51</sup> Long 2002, 38-43.

<sup>52</sup> 1996, 89-120.

<sup>53</sup> 110.

<sup>54</sup> Hellenistic Jewish Philosopher in Alexandria. 20 BCE-50 CE.

return to Galatia (50-53 CE). Written during the controversy preceding the council, the purpose of the letter is to realign believers in Galatia with the correct understanding of the law. It seems that in Paul's absence, other groups in Galatia, likely the Jewish community, were promoting circumcision and obedience to the law for Christ believers. The letter consists of a review of Paul's life and his mission to the Galatians and, mainly, an argument for Paul's vision of the gospel, one that puts faith before works of the law, followed by an explanation of the practical application of his views in community life.

*Romans*, likely Paul's last letter, written between 54 and 58 CE, is addressed to the Christian community at Rome and, like his other letters, is primarily an instrument of moral instruction and is divided into sixteen chapters. It begins, as is typical of Paul, with a greeting and thanksgiving, then launches into what is the most comprehensive overview of Paul's version of the Christian faith. He writes of accountability to God, and stresses that Israel's covenantal privileges do not lessen their accountability. In chapter four, Paul explains that Abraham is the ancestor of both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, thus including the Gentiles through the righteousness of faith rather than through the law. Paul then expresses life in the spirit and why it is preferable to life in the flesh and, in chapters nine to eleven, defends God's promise to Israel, the mistakes that Israel has made, and how the Jews will find their way back to God again.

### **Moral Attitude and Worship**

Scholars have commonly seen chapter twelve as the start of the heart of *Romans* and the beginning of Paul's moral exhortation. It is here we begin to see

many Stoic allusions to rational worship. Paul begins by setting out for the Christian community the proper way of living and proper way of thinking. He states “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your rational worship” (*Rom.* 12.1). Paul is stressing that the way to worship God is not through literal sacrifice but through moral service of your living body. Paul and the Stoics agree on this point that being morally good is the most important way to serve God. Seneca states: “honor paid to the gods lies not in victims for sacrifice but in the upright and holy attitude of the worshippers” (*Ben.* 1.6.3). While this focus on upright moral action is not exclusive to Stoic philosophy, the term that Paul uses, λογικός, was a popular Stoic term at the time. Epictetus writes “if I were a nightingale, I should be singing as a nightingale; if a swan, as a swan. But as it is, I am a rational (λογικός) being, therefore I must be singing hymns of praise to God” (*Diss.* 1.16.20). Since Epictetus is a rational being, his worship must be “rational worship” in the form of hymn and praise.<sup>55</sup> Given Paul’s exposure to Stoicism, it is certain he had heard of this popular Stoic concept and thus consciously chose to use it to describe the proper worship of God. The inclusion of the word “rational” otherwise seems curious.

Directly following this allusion to Stoic language, Paul says “do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind so that you can know what is the will of God, good and acceptable, and perfect” (*Rom.* 12.2). Paul states that the way to knowing how to worship God is through a transformation of the mind, namely coming to know Christ through baptism. The

---

<sup>55</sup> More of Epictetus on rational worship: 1.3.1-3, 2.8.2-3.



Stoics also believed that moral behavior was based on proper learning and awareness; a man who erred did so only out of ignorance (Seneca, *Ira*. 2.10.7). Stoic terminology for this concept particularly revolved around the renewing or transformation of the mind. Thus Seneca states: “one is not a wise man until his mind is metamorphosed into the shape of that which he has learned” (*Ep.* 94.48). Seneca also refers to a saying of Epictetus: “the knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation” (*Ep.* 28.9). Paul is employing the popular Stoic concept, often written of by Seneca as “*animus transfiguratus*”, the transformed mind. He also uses it for a similar purpose: to show that the way to worship God was through moral action begins with a mental transformation. It is only when one is able to recognize what is the proper way to live, that one could embark on moral action.

Next, Paul references two of the Stoic cardinal virtues: prudence (the disposition to make right moral judgments) and moderation (the capability of self-control). He states, “do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think (*φρονεῖν*) but think with moderation (*σωφρονεῖν*) each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned” (*Rom.* 12.3). The first virtue, prudence (*φρονησις*) has traditionally been placed first and foremost in Stoic discussion of virtues. Musonius Rufus, when speaking about the education of virtue, says: “In the first place, a man must have good judgment (*φρονεῖν*) and so must a woman, or what pray would be the use of a foolish man or woman?” (*Diss.* 4.12-14). Johnson has noted that this example of moral transformation, “to think with proper moderation”, which includes two cardinal virtues, is programmatic for the entire community forming

ethic in *Romans*.<sup>56</sup> Paul's use of this terminology sets up a distinctly philosophic tone for his letter.

The final example from *Romans* shows how both Paul and the Stoics exhort their audience to emulate a "sage" figure, with the result that Jesus and Socrates are described with strikingly similar language. In *Romans*, Paul's moral instruction is to "put on" (ἐνδύω) Jesus Christ, in other words, to emulate his actions and way of life (*Rom.* 13.14). The Stoics preach similarly: "Whoever imitates them (the wise men) is worshipping them sufficiently" (Seneca *Ep.* 95.50). On the importance of a moral example Seneca states: "We must have someone according to whom we may regulate our characters" (*Ep.* 11.10). Imitation of a good example as a form of moral worship is similarly recommended by both groups. The sage most often cited by the Stoics is Socrates; his life and death were regarded as *the* example to emulate. Epictetus states: "even if you are not yet a Socrates, still you ought to live as one who wishes to be a Socrates" (*Ench.* 51.3). Thorsteinsson<sup>57</sup> has written on the curious parallels between using Jesus and Socrates as tools for moral instruction. He states that they had analogous functions; they were both sent into the world by God on a divine mission to be a good example and to show others how to follow God, and Socrates is even likened to a son of God.<sup>58</sup> Thorsteinsson quotes Epictetus on Socrates: "He has been sent by Zeus to men" (*Diss.* 3.22.23), "in fact, why should he not call himself a son of God" (*Diss.* 1.9.6) and Seneca says that Socrates was "born to be an example" (*Prov.* 6.3) and "has been brought into nearness with God" (*Const.*

---

<sup>56</sup> Johnson 2003, 221.

<sup>57</sup> *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism*, 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Thorsteinsson 2010, 149-156.

8.2). Although there was never a figure in Stoicism who had the same pivotal theological role as Jesus Christ, there are similarities in the way Paul talks about Christ and the way the Stoics talk about Socrates.

In *Galatians*, Paul offers a catalogue of virtues and vices, a literary technique that was common in the Greco-Roman world. What is interesting is that the virtues listed correspond very closely to the list of virtues that a Stoic wise man should possess. Paul writes: “the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control” (*Gal.* 5.22). Stobaeus lists self-control, cheerfulness and piety as sub-virtues of the main four cardinal virtues (*SVF* 3.262, 3.264) and when speaking of passions emphasizes that the Stoic is gentle, patient and kind (*SVF* 3.564, 3.632). Epictetus says that humans are by nature affectionate, gentle, faithful, helpful, and loving (*Diss.* 4.1.26). Regarding love, the Stoic wise man was expected to love and be affectionate with his family and friends;<sup>59</sup> it is a key concept in the Stoic ethic of community, which will now be examined.

### **Community Ethic**

Paul devotes much of the content of his letters to preaching his community ethic. He was concerned with bonding the Christ-believers into a faith-based community that supported and defended one another, which he believed was necessary for its survival in the larger Greco-Roman world. There are several points at which Paul, when describing his community ethic, sounds remarkably like a Stoic philosopher. Paul picks up on several literary terminologies that were employed by

---

<sup>59</sup> See Stephens (1996) for more on Stoic conceptions of love and affection.

popular Stoics of the day. *Romans* 12.5 states: “we who are many in one body of Christ and also accordingly you members of one another”. Paul uses the common Greco-Roman body metaphor to preach community unity. While the metaphor itself is general, it was used by Stoics at the time to convey the same concept: “I can lay down for mankind a rule, in short compass, for our duties in human relationships: all that you behold, that which comprises both God and man, is one – we are the parts of one great body” (Seneca *Ep.* 95.51). For Stoics, formation of kinship and community was a natural principle (Epictetus *Diss.* 3.24.58). Epictetus preaches that for the true Stoic sage, the whole world is his fatherland and all of humanity his family. Paul preaches the same concept within the Christ-believing community, achieving this unity through the value of love and mutual care.

For Paul, love is fundamental to the formation and maintenance of the Christian community ethic. In *Romans*, Paul writes “let love (ἀγάπη) be genuine. Hate evil, hold tight to good. Love one another with love, lead the way for one another in showing honor” (12.9/10). In *Galatians* he states: “the only thing that counts is faith working through love (ἀγάπη)” (5.6). In *Romans* and *Galatians* the same words: “love (Ἀγαπήσεις) your neighbor as yourself” (*Rom.* 13.9, *Gal.* 5.14). Through ἀγάπη the law is fulfilled. It is the key to bringing Gentiles into the fold. One can find in the writing of any Roman Stoic a similar concept of mutual care. Seneca writes, “Man is born for mutual help, anger for mutual destruction” (*Ira* 1.5.2). Again the concept of mutual care is rooted in human’s essential nature. Epictetus states: “human beings are created to do good, to cooperate, and to pray for the well-being of one another” (*Diss.* 3.13.5). Most striking are the familiar words of

Seneca “one must live for one’s neighbor as if one would live for oneself” (*Ep.* 48.2). The concept of mutual care was in no way revolutionary to Roman society or to Greco-Roman philosophy, but Paul, Seneca, and Epictetus have ‘love’ as a central concept in their philosophy. Although they use different key words, Paul with ἀγάπη, Seneca with *amor*, and Epictetus with φιλία, most scholars agree they are essentially equivalent.<sup>60</sup>

Although I think Paul has loosely based his communication of ἀγάπη on the Roman philosophical precedent set by the Stoics, all three philosophers use the term to convey a slightly different purpose. Seneca most often employs *amor* when he talks about the proper form of human relationships. The Stoic view was that everyone had a duty to love one another and be affectionate with family and friends. Affection for family was a natural impulse and the path to becoming a Stoic sage involved expanding one’s circle of concern so that everyone was like a brother (Stobaeus 4.671,7-673,II). Epictetus uses φιλία to illustrate the essence of universal humanity. Using Diogenes as an example of positive moral behavior, Epictetus urges brotherly love: “was there anyone that Diogenes did not love, a man who was so gentle and kind-hearted that he gladly took upon himself all those troubles and physical hardships for the sake of the common well-being” (*Diss.* 3.24.64). Stephens’ study on Stoic love states that while Epictetus excludes erotic passion because of its excessiveness and uncontrollableness, which endangers rationality, he includes rational, purely positive joy and love which the Stoic should extend to all people.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Lee 2006, 178/9; Louw and Nida 1989, 294 “It does not seem possible to insist upon a contrast in any and all contexts”.

<sup>61</sup> Stephens 1996, 1.

While the Stoics believed all people were citizens of the cosmos,<sup>62</sup> through their possession of reason, they also recognized that in practice they would not be able to help all people equally. Often the people in your own community receive most of your help. Stoics are citizens of the cosmopolis, but also citizens of their own polis; both roles aim to improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

In Paul's writing, however, ἀγάπη casts a much smaller net. It is used only to strengthen the Christ-believing community, rather than to apply to human relations in general. While Paul preaches showing goodness to all, love is reserved for the Christian community (*Gal.* 6.10). Paul has taken the Stoic division between the earthly and political community and the spiritual community a step further so that the "cosmopolis" for Paul includes only certain people. Best argues that in *Ephesians* when "the members of the community are told not to lie to their neighbors, this is qualified by the introduction of the image of the body so that the 'neighbor' has to be given the sense of 'other member of the (Christian) community' and not of 'other person'".<sup>63</sup> Members of the community are told to be kind to one another and forgive one another without any suggestion that they should be kind or forgiving to those outside the community. Jesus says to his disciples: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (*John* 13:34). In this passage love is restricted to members of their community. Thorsteinsson agrees that ἀγάπη is being used in *Romans* to represent an in-group act.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, in *Romans* "love one another with love, lead the way for one another in showing honor" (12.10). The "one another" are

---

<sup>62</sup> Men and gods form a community or a city, the location of which is the universe itself (Cicero *ND* 2.3).

<sup>63</sup> 1997, 154.

<sup>64</sup> 2006, 145.

the members of the Christian community. Again, in *Galatians*, Paul says “bear the burden of one another, in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (6.2). Thus, for Paul, love is more narrowly applicable to the Christian community while the Stoic concept is closer to the idea of universal humanity, however, both attempt to illustrate proper relationships with others through the use of the concept of love.

After illustrating the concept of ἀγάπη and its fundamental role in fulfilling the law, in *Romans* 14 Paul discusses the practical application of the ethics of love in the community. In speaking of helping others in the community and not judging them, Paul uses some familiar Stoic terminology. He states, “Take in the weak of faith, do not debate over opinions” (14.1) and “We, being strong, ought to lift up the weakness of the unable” (15.1). He writes that no matter about dietary restrictions, days of rest, or wine drinking, all members, weak or strong, are to be treated with respect. Here, ἀγάπη is used to promote thoughtfulness and open-mindedness to the needs of others in the Christ-believing community. Seneca also employs this strong/weak terminology: “in practical matters, the path should be pointed out for the benefit of one who is still short of perfection, but making progress” (*Ep.* 94.50). “Weaker characters, however, need someone to precede them, to say: ‘avoid this’ or ‘do that’” (*Ep.* 94.51). Seneca again speaks of weak and strong when talking about proper relations with fellow neighbors: “Not yet had the stronger begun to lay hands upon the weaker; not yet had the miser, by hiding away what lay before him, begun to shut off his neighbor from even the necessities of life; each cared as much for his neighbor as for himself” (*Ep.* 90.40). Paul and the Stoics share a similar

position on mutual support of those who have not attained complete faith or reason, and moreover, they use the same language to express this value.

After Paul's exhortation of love for in-group relations, he moves on to illustrate proper relationships with the out-group: non-Christ believers. In *Romans* 12, Paul gives a few commands concerning the out-group: "bless those who persecute you...do not repay evil for evil...live peaceably with all men" (12.14/15). Here Paul conveys a message of non-retaliation that is very similar to the Stoics'. Epictetus takes it a step further, actually encouraging his listeners to "love those who torture you" (*Diss.* 3.22.54). Another strikingly similar phrase is Seneca: "persistent goodness defeats bad men" (*Ben.* 7.31.1) and Paul: "Defeat evil by doing good" (*Rom.* 12.21). Although in their conceptions of non-retaliation, the Stoics and Paul are remarkably close, it is pertinent to note an important difference. Paul wrote that people should practice non-retaliation because vengeance belonged to God. Thus: "'Vengeance is mine, I shall repay' says the Lord" (*Rom.* 12.19). Paul has in mind here divine punishment that will take place in the very near future, such as through the Roman authorities that serve as God's instrument (*Rom* 13.4), and also perhaps God's final judgment at the end of times. In Stoic sources, on the other hand, there is no real evidence for divine vengeance. Seneca states: "towards those who sin the sage is kindly and just because he is not the foe but the reformer of sinners" (*Ira* 2.10.7). This shows the dissimilarity in the roles of Christ and the Stoic sage and also an essential difference in theology. Paul's God can exact vengeance because he rules *over* everything, whereas the Stoic system posits that God/divinity is *in* everything. For Stoics, God is the actual form of the cosmos or the active principle at



work in the cosmos.<sup>65</sup> This strikingly different stoic viewpoint will be further examined in the case study on natural law in Part II.

### **Nature of God**

Through Paul's letters, however, one can see some similarities in the Pauline and Stoic conceptions of the nature of God. In *Romans*, Paul aims to show that his gospel is in full accord with the nature of God, more specifically, that the mission to the Gentiles is bound to God's essence and purpose.<sup>66</sup> Paul states that the promise God made to Abraham, that all his children would be saved (according to Paul, Abraham is the father of Israel and the Gentiles), is now fulfilled by the inclusion of the Gentiles through faith. The fulfillment of this promise is stated as the "righteousness of God" (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ). The first example from *Romans* states: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) is revealed through faith for faith" (1.16/7). Later in the text Paul discusses the fact that the "righteousness of God" requires the judgment of wrong (3.5). Lastly, God justifies or makes righteous those who trust in God; without the law one cannot hide from God's judgment (3.21/2). So, for Paul, the righteousness of God is appropriate moral nature/conduct of God, which through faith has now been revealed to all people for them to emulate.

Can a parallel for this Pauline concept be found in Stoicism? Firstly, δικαιοσύνη was a Stoic cardinal virtue. As righteousness/justice it was a popular

---

<sup>65</sup> Algra 2003, 166.

<sup>66</sup> Williams 1980, 254.

Stoic term often linked to God and natural law. The Stoic Cleanthes writes, “O Zeus, giver of all, shrouded in dark clouds and holding the vivid bright lightning, rescue men from painful ignorance. Scatter that ignorance far from their hearts, and deign to rule all things in justice (δίκης)” (*SVF* 1.537.32-5). Thus, it is likely that here again Paul is consciously using Stoic language to make a connection between Stoic philosophy and his theology. The Stoics believed that natural law or the divine part ordering the universe was by nature righteous/just. Cicero, although not a Stoic in the strict sense of the word, provides the best source for the Stoic view of natural law in his *De legibus*: “The whole cosmos is ruled by a divine law of nature, men participate in this law through their reason” (2.8-16). So while the righteousness of God is revealed to humans through faith, the righteousness of Stoic natural law is revealed through reason. Paul himself may have alluded to this natural law of the Gentiles when he says “When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves.” (*Rom.* 2.14). Furthermore, Cicero continues his statement above with “and this reason is distributed evenly within all minds”. Stoic thought posited that every person naturally possessed a divine spark: reason. Thus, all people were naturally inclined toward moral goodness, since moral goodness for the Stoics was attained by reason. Through this divine element, they were able to develop rationality, the perfection of which was the goal of the Stoic sage (*Seneca, Ep.* 76.10).

Paul similarly postulates that, through faith, people share in God’s righteousness and thus have Christ inside them. Paul speaks of righteousness through faith several times in *Romans*. First of Abraham: “he received the sign of

circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised" (4.11). Next, he writes of the Gentiles "who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith" (9.30). Lastly, he comments on the Jews who are "ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God" (10.3) "for one who believes with the heart is so righteous" (10.10). Similar phrases are found in *Galatians* such as at 2.15 "we know that a person is made righteous not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ". Paul explicitly states that this divine element of God's righteousness exists inside a person. "You are not in the flesh but in the spirit since the spirit of God lives in you ... if Christ is in you, though the body is dead through sin, the spirit lives through righteousness" (*Rom.* 8.9-10). Also in *Galatians*, "it is Christ who lives in me" (2.20). Extremely similar are Seneca's words: "God is near you, He is with you, He is within you" (*Seneca Ep.* 61.1) and also Epictetus: "remember never to say you are alone, for you are not alone; no, God is within" (*Diss.* 1.14.14). While Stoic and Pauline ideas of the divine may differ in many other respects, due to the close parallels in the concept of "righteousness of God" and "righteousness of natural law" as well as the striking vocabulary similarities, it is reasonable to suggest that Paul may have been influenced by Stoicism in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

In looking for evidence of Stoicism in Paul, this chapter has made several main points. Paul absorbed Stoic doctrine and used Stoic concepts and vocabulary, as shown by this examination of his letters *Romans* and *Galatians*. The Stoic concepts highlighted fell into one of three main Pauline themes: moral excellence

and worship, community unity, and the nature of God. The similarities found were not simply concerning broad themes, such as non-retaliation, moral worship, and mutual love, which, although common to Paul and the Stoics, are also common to other Greek philosophies and the Jewish tradition. It is the occurrence of common themes with the use of common vocabulary and sometimes even literary techniques that provide a convincing argument for Paul's knowledge and employment of Stoic doctrine. Thus, it is not just that both Seneca and Paul write of non-retaliation but that both of them write that good, or doing good, defeats (νικά /*vincit*) evil. When both Paul and Epictetus discuss that moral behavior is the best way to honor God, they both use the term rational worship (λατρεία λογική). Similarly, both the Stoics and Paul use mutual love to elucidate the proper relations between humans, but they both also use the same phrases concerning caring for a neighbor as one would for oneself. Taken on its own any reference could be dismissed, but put together, the numerous Stoic references in Paul's writing, both in his earlier letter *Galatians* and his later letter *Romans*, leave no doubt that Paul had knowledge of Stoic doctrine. The fact that he used Stoic terminology in a logical and perspicuous way that would have made sense to a Roman Stoic shows that these were not simply catchphrases that Paul inadvertently appropriated. Through his letter writing, Paul shows a depth of Stoic knowledge that indicates he had an understanding of the workings of the philosophy.

## **Part II**

The multitude of parallels between Paul's letters and Stoic texts warrant closer examination. To examine the parallels in greater depth, moving beyond the

recognition of linguistic similarities to explore patterns of thought, this chapter presents two case studies on the topics of natural law and rational worship, which were briefly outlined earlier.

### **Natural Law**

For a long time, the debate over Paul's "righteousness of God", δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, consisted of whether Paul was referring to the righteousness that belongs to God or the righteousness that God finds acceptable and bestows upon us. Käsemann has largely put this argument to rest, having defined Paul's "righteousness of God" as describing God's morality and moral conduct; however, Käsemann also identifies a "gift aspect" to the phrase, in which God's righteousness proceeds from him and is a gift to man, without being separated from God.<sup>67</sup> In this way, the ambiguity and contradiction in Paul's use of the phrase is solved. For Paul, God's righteousness is the connection between God and man, as God has given a part of himself, his perfected righteousness, to mankind.

The Stoics used righteousness, δικαιοσύνη, to describe their concept of "natural law", or what Epictetus and Cleanthes call the "law of God".<sup>68</sup> Firstly, as comfortable as we are today with the term, for the Greeks the concepts of νόμος on the one hand and φύσις on the other, were opposing terms, and the pairing of them must have been a conscious paradox. The concept of "natural law" or νόμος τῆς φύσεως was coined in Greek philosophy before the Stoics. Plato and Aristotle used the term, not in the common moral sense that we today associate with the term

---

<sup>67</sup> 1969, 169/170.

<sup>68</sup> Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*, 36. Epictetus, *Disc.* 1.29.13 , 2.16.28.

“natural law” but in a more strictly legalistic context, in such cases when a “natural law” (such as the stronger prevailing over the weaker) supersedes any narrow human-made law code.<sup>69</sup> They referred to this concept also as “natural right”, φυσικό δίκαιο. The Stoics took this conception of natural law and added to it the relationship between natural law and the creative principle (divinity) in the universe. The theory then became a way to explain the connection between man and this creative principle.

It is important to break down the Stoic concept of “natural law” in order to understand how the Stoics conceived of it. By “nature”, φύσις, referred to everything in the cosmos. “Law”, νόμος, as used by the Stoics, is identical to reason: “Est quidem vera lex recta ratio naturae congruens” (Cicero *Rep.* 3.33). “Reason” (*ratio*, or λόγος) is the one indestructible force that survives each conflagration of the world and is the one creator or creative force in the world.<sup>70</sup> Seneca states: “Sed nos nunc primam et generalem quaerimus causam. Haec simplex esse debet; nam et materia simplex est. Quaerimus quid sit causa? Ratio scilicet faciens, id est deus” (Seneca, *Ep.* 65.12). Seneca identifies divine/creative reason with God. Thus, “natural law” is the divine principle in the world. The divine principle, sometimes identified as “God”, is reason, and this reason is in all of nature. Therefore, God is not governed by natural law but is natural law perfected. The phrase “righteousness of natural law” δικαιοσύνη του φυσικού νόμου then refers to God’s perfect or just reason, resulting

---

<sup>69</sup> Watson 1996, 218.

<sup>70</sup> For Stoics, reason is also identified as a creative fire, which structures all matter. The world begins from a state in which all is fire, through the generation of the elements, to the creation of the world we are familiar with, and eventually back to fire in a repetitive cycle.

in just action, which is equal to virtue. A passage from Diogenes Laertius illustrates the point:

“Living virtuously is equivalent to living in accordance with the experience of the actual course of nature, as Chrysippus says ... for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. And this is why the end may be defined as life in accordance with nature, or, in other words, in accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe, a life in which we refrain from every action forbidden by the law common to all things, that is to say, the right reason which pervades all things and is identical with Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is” (7.87-8).

Thus, the gods don’t prescribe certain behavior because it will lead to a good result; rather, a certain behavior is righteous because it is in accordance with the order of the world created by divine reason. This moral aspect to natural law was not present before the Stoics.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the righteousness of natural law/God amounts to God’s virtue and virtuous action, and thus prescribes just and virtuous conduct for men. This definition sounds very similar to that of Paul.

Now that it has been established that both the Stoics and Paul defined their terms similarly, and that a Stoic would have identified with what Paul meant by the righteousness of God, it remains to be proven that the function of God’s righteousness in the world, and thus the nature of the relationship between God and man, was built upon the same framework for the Stoics and for Paul. For this study I will be concerned only with Paul’s use of “righteousness” in *Romans*, not with its use

---

<sup>71</sup> Striker 1996, 218

in *2 Corinthians* (5:21) or *Philippians* (3:9). The first use of the term in *Romans* occurs at 1.17 in the context of spreading the gospel: “For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) is revealed”. Paul does not imply that it is something new, only that through the education of the gospel, through faith, the righteousness of God will become apparent and in a sense become activated. He goes on to say, “ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (1:20). Again at 3:21, “But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed”. In chapter four, Paul goes back to the story of Abraham, to explain how righteousness originally connects God and man. Paul explicitly rejects a contractual relationship based on the covenant (4:4/5), instead he interprets a more naturalistic connection: righteousness was God’s gift to man, a part of himself and thus the gift is never separated from the giver.<sup>72</sup> Paul tells that Abraham, the father of Israel and the Gentiles, was judged righteous before he was circumcised (4:9), it was not through the law that he was connected to God, but he was connected through righteousness expressed as faith.<sup>73</sup> In chapter five Paul emphasizes again the “free gift of righteousness”. In Paul’s view, God has given a part of his own divine character to his creations. He has implanted righteousness in man; one must only come to recognize it through the gospel of faith. Those still under the law are simply “ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God’s righteousness”

---

<sup>72</sup> See Käsemann on the gift aspect of God’s righteousness. 1969, 174.

<sup>73</sup> See also Galatians 3:6/7: “Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so you know that it is those who live on the basis of faith who are sons of Abraham”.



(9:10). Paul also wrote of the possibility of turning away from God's righteousness, and through vice, extinguishing the connection to God. When men turned to idolatry God "gave them up" and they were filled instead with every kind of wickedness described by Paul with a list of over twenty vices (1:26-31). The mind that is set on the flesh is "hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law" (8:7).

To summarize, Paul's conception of the "righteousness of God" is that it is the virtue of God, and a part of himself that he has given as a gift to man as his creation; it is thus the connection between men and God. In God, this morality is perfected, but in men it is something that must be revealed and nurtured through faith rather than extinguished through vice. Chapters twelve and thirteen of *Romans* elaborate on how exactly one must nurture this righteousness through faith, namely through moral worship which will be investigated later in this chapter.

Now that the use of the "righteousness of God" in *Romans* has been established, one can assess whether a Roman (Stoic) audience would have related to this way of understanding the connection between God and man. We have already established that "God" or the divine principle and natural law are one and the same for Stoics. The righteousness of this law is simply the virtue of God. The Stoics wrote that natural law was not, however, the possession of God alone. Natural law or logos flows through both men and God(s). In Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, God's reason flows through the universe, giving order and direction to all things (*SVF* 1, 537). Logos is then the connection between God and man. Cicero states, "the whole universe is one commonwealth of which both gods and men are members" (*Leg.* 1.23). Logos/law, as the creative force in the world, is present in all its creations. How then, in the Stoic

system, does man come to know natural law? The Stoics held that, from birth, every living being has self-awareness, which leads him toward things that are beneficial to him and away from what is harmful, and these primary impulses lead to self-preservation (Diogenes Laertius 7.85-6). From these instincts grows the capability of assenting to good things while rejecting the bad: "Every living thing possessed of reason is inactive if it is not first stirred by some external impression; then the impulse comes, and finally assent confirms the impulse" (Seneca, *SVF* 2, 169). This initial self-awareness is then the beginning of the development of reason, and since it exists in all men since birth, it is an element that is part of the creative force or divine principle. Seneca writes that reason is present in gods and men, in the divine this reason is perfected and in humans it is capable of being perfected: "Dociles natura nos edidit et rationem dedit imperfectam, sed quae perfici posset" (*Ep.* 49.12). Stoics use the terminology of a "seed" or a "spark" to describe the reason that is present in man. Diogenes Laertus, writing on the genesis of the world, states that the original creative force of Logos interacts with the element of water and, as the "original seed", creates a fertile field with which to create the universe (7.135-36). Stobaeus writes an analogy between universal Logos in the universe and seeds in a womb (*SVF* 1, 87a). This seed of reason is sometimes expressed as God's gift to man. Cleanthes calls on Zeus as the "giver of all" to scatter ignorance and bestow wisdom (*SVF* 1, 537). Horowitz has argued for a synthesis of these various elements of natural law.<sup>74</sup> He states that, from birth, a man has four possessions: the faculty to reason, the ability to form common notions, the seeds of knowledge, and the spark

---

<sup>74</sup> Horowitz 1974, 16.

of divinity. These together are the divine gift to man, providing the potential for man to attain full knowledge of natural law.

Strikingly similar to Paul's description is the Stoic idea that while this divine gift is present in man, it must be "revealed" and "nurtured" or "kindled", but could also be killed or extinguished through vice (Cic. *Leg.* i.33). Through Stoic education, one can work towards perfecting this divine part of oneself and thus become closer to God. Education was the cultivation of this seed of reason, causing it to grow towards wisdom and virtue. Exactly how the Stoics advised this growth will be examined as the second case study in this chapter concerning reasonable worship. In sum, the Stoics conception of the "natural law" is that natural law is one with the divine principle, variously identified as God or Logos, as the creator of men and the universe, has given a part of this divinity in the making. Thus, men and god both share in natural law and are intimately linked. In God, this virtue is perfected, but in men it is something that must be revealed and nurtured through education to cultivate wisdom rather than extinguished through vice.

Both Paul and the Stoics share the same structure of thought in terms of natural law. A first century Stoic reading *Romans* would have identified immediately with Paul's train of thought. Both identify a supreme being or force that in creating man has given to man part of himself. Both see this shared element to be perfected in the former and rudimentary in the latter. Finally, both express the possibility for men to either to become aware of and foster this divine element within them, or to remain ignorant and destroy it. Whether through a gospel of faith or philosophical training, both groups aim to become closer to God by perfecting the divine part of

their soul and attaining wisdom. Roman Stoics could have perhaps easily understood Paul's gospel as another route towards the same God and the same goal, becoming one with the inextinguishable creator of the universe, the seat of wisdom and virtue.

### **Rational Worship**

Having examined exactly how man and God are connected for both the Stoics and Paul, how is it that man can foster this connection, staying in accord with natural law, and become closer to God? In the opening line of *Romans* 12, Paul tells us exactly how we should glorify God: through rational worship, “λατρεία λογικη”. The sound of the Stoic buzz word “λογικός” brings to mind the Stoic use of this term, especially in connection with the relationship between man and God as being one of reason, the divine element that they share. This section discusses the parallel thought of the Stoics and Paul concerning moral action as a way to worship God.

What exactly does Paul mean by “rational worship”? Taking λογικός first, it is possible that Paul meant only to distinguish his worship from the distinctly irrational cult worship practices that existed in the Greco-Roman tradition. As I have mentioned above, however, I postulate that taking into account the many other Stoic references as well as the popularity of Stoic thought at the time, Paul was specifically drawing a line between his gospel and Stoic philosophy. If this is so, perhaps Paul, by using λογικός, is referencing the rational part of man. The Stoics often used λόγος to refer to the divine, and λογικός to refer to the divine part in man.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the way to worship is with the rational or divine part of oneself, the

---

<sup>75</sup> Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 263/4.

part that is connected to God. What exactly is worship, “λατρεία”, for Paul? Onesti and Brauch have noted three primary elements that Paul accentuates as proper worship: the nexus between the Jesus tradition and the Christ of experience, the primacy of love, and, on the horizontal plane, edification.<sup>76</sup> In other words, that a certain moral attitude and behavior is the proper response to the acts of God through Jesus, and that love of one another is the proper response to God’s love for man. Through moral action one can imitate God and thereby worship him justly.

The Stoics did not all condemn the traditional ways of venerating the gods as vehemently as the Christian tradition; however, they also believed that the proper way to worship the deity was through moral intention. Seneca states “The honor that is paid to the gods lies, not in the victims for sacrifice, though they be fat and glitter with gold, but in the upright and holy desire of the worshippers” (*Ben.* 1.6.3). Musonius connects natural law explicitly with moral worship; he writes that the proper service is to obey God’s law, which bids man to be good (16.104.35-6). The Stoics also emphasized imitating God (perfected reason) as the ultimate moral source. So when Paul writes that a particular way of life is the proper way to worship, a Gentile (Stoic) audience may well have associated it with the familiar Stoic claim and understood it within this context.

A particularly interesting aspect of worship in the Stoic and Pauline tradition is prayer. Any discussion of prayer in the traditional Greco-Roman sense of the word within Stoicism would seem to be illogical. A Stoic, having direct access to the divine within himself, has no need to pray to an external God. In addition, if the divine

---

<sup>76</sup> 1993, 827-37.

principle is also identified with fate, how can prayer change what is already predetermined? Stoic positions on prayer are not uniform, likely a result of the mix of pantheism and theism that Stoics exhibit, but even Seneca is not strictly against the idea of prayer. The chief proponents of Stoic prayer seem to be Cleanthes and Epictetus. Epictetus states “I am a rational being, therefore I must be singing hymns of praise to God” (*Diss.* 1.16.20/1). Simon has identified two primary types of Stoic prayer.<sup>77</sup> The first, most popular form is thanksgiving for divine benefaction. Epictetus exhorts one to give thanks to the divine for bestowing reason within them: “do you not rather render thanks to the gods that they allowed you to be superior to all the things that they did not put under your control, and have rendered you accountable only for what is under your control” (*Diss.* 1.12.32). Again in chapter sixteen he writes: “Why, if we had sense, ought we to be doing anything else, publically and privately, than hymning and praising the Deity, and rehearsing his benefits?” (1.16.15). The second way to pray according to Simon is to affirm the wise person’s submission to the divine will or natural law. An example of this would be Cleanthes’ *Prayer to Zeus* (ap. Epictetus, *Ench.* 53): “Lead me, O Zeus, and you, Destiny, to wherever you have assigned me to go. I will not falter, and follow; and should I be unwilling, and be bad, I shall follow even so”. Even the *Hymn to Zeus*, which technically belongs to the early Stoics and is thus outside of our narrow scope of Roman Stoicism, is not a petitionary prayer in the traditional sense. Cleanthes prays to Zeus for virtue and rationality, it is a spiritual request, not a material one.

---

<sup>77</sup> 1980, 213-4.

Still, these prayers seem to emphasize the theistic elements of Stoic theology at the expense of their general philosophical coherence. Algra, having confronted the paradox of Stoic prayer, has suggested a possible solution. He proposes that Stoic prayer is a self-address as a form of meditation.<sup>78</sup> For the example of Cleanthes' Prayer, this means that one simply affirms for oneself that Zeus will lead and that one will follow. Similarly, the Hymn becomes a way of telling oneself that Zeus will reveal rationality in all men. This self-address then becomes a tool for perfecting one's own reason. Re-interpreting Stoic prayer this way as internal prayer, rather than external, would no longer be at odds with their thought about fate and determinism because it involves only the assent or non-assent of the rational self to what is presented to it, which is within man's power to decide.

How does this compare to Paul's view on prayer? Like the Stoics, Paul does not use petitionary prayers for material items. The absence of these material requests in prayer differentiates Paul's view from the Greco-Roman tradition as well as the first century rabbinic Jewish tradition, in which personal requests, especially for economic prosperity, were common.<sup>79</sup> Occasionally he asks for prayers concerning his travel plans (*Rom* 1:10; 15:30-2), but prayer is largely reserved for spiritual ends. We have no real written prayer from Paul, only prayerful language. As Stendahl has commented, however, "His gratitude, his greetings, his farewells, his hopes, his admonitions, his worries, and his travel plans are all often cast in a language which borders on prayer, a language shaped and informed by his

---

<sup>78</sup> 2003, 175-6.

<sup>79</sup> Instone-Brewer 2004, 95-97, 101-18.

awareness of divine presence, divine activity”.<sup>80</sup> I argue, Paul’s conception of prayer is not a dialogue with a personal and personified God – as made popular in the Christianity of the nineteenth century – it is rather internal communication with the Spirit, which is present within oneself. To substantiate this view, one can look to *Romans* chapter eight. The chapter opens with Paul proclaiming that the law of the Spirit, through Jesus Christ, has set men free from the law of sin and death (8.2) and that this Spirit of God lives in men (8.9). Paul then shifts to discuss the suffering and weakness of the present time, followed by this statement: “the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray [προσευξώμεθα] as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit” (8.26-7). The chapter concludes with an affirmation of trust that God’s power will carry us through all struggles. So, for Paul, The Spirit, which lives within us, communicates with us, even if we do not know how to communicate with it. God knows us through this Spirit because the Spirit is part of God. The way to pray then, involves addressing the Spirit, which resides within oneself.

“Rational” worship, as examined here, seems to be a strikingly similar concept in the Stoic and Pauline tradition. Both advocate a particular way of living as the proper and best form of worship. Both consider prayer to be a supplementary form of worship, through communication with the rational/divine part of the self, serving as an instrument to further develop rational and moral behavior that brings them closer to Logos/God. The internal nature of the prayers underlines the fact

---

<sup>80</sup> 1980, 240.



that for both these groups the nature of the individual is continuous with that of the community and with God, reflecting back to the framework of belief discussed under natural law.

### **Conclusion**

In order to convey the deeper conceptual framework that Stoicism and Pauline thought share, two case studies were presented. These close examinations of natural law and rational worship show that the major differences sometimes ascribed to Stoics and Paul, namely that Stoicism lacks a religious motivation, does not do justice to the strong theological foundation of Stoic ethics. Stoic theories on the divine origin of man and on God/Logos and the presence of this divine force in the world are strikingly similar to Paul's conception. Modern scholarship has been deeply affected by a largely superficial distinction between philosophy and religion when often, as seen in our examination of prayer, the ethical motivation is the same.

### Chapter Three

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter has shown that Paul extensively employed Stoic vocabulary and concepts in his letters to the Galatians and the Romans. The next question to ask is why he would have done so. An obvious answer would be that he was communicating in a language that would have connected with his intended audience. An audience that understood these references to, and uses of, Stoic philosophy would be for the most part educated Romans. This chapter will examine the individuals and groups that made up Paul's real converts, with the goal of establishing that Paul purposely sought out high status Romans and converted them through a shared belief in philosophical ethics.

Much of the modern conception of early Christianity is still influenced by the nineteenth century tradition of assigning to Christianity the title of a poor peoples' movement. As late as 1975, scholars such as J.G. Gager insist upon the "fundamentally nonintellectual, non-aristocratic character of Christianity in this period (first and second centuries CE)" and that "there is little evidence of highly educated Christians until well into the second century".<sup>81</sup> The theory that Christianity spread primarily among disadvantaged groups has largely been based on a few vague lines from *Corinthians* (1 Cor. 1:26-28), the devaluation of wealth and status within Christian writings, and a lack of evidence for high status Christian groups.

---

<sup>81</sup> Gager 1975, 107, 106.

Through recent archeological discoveries and excellent scholarly research however, these assumptions have been challenged. Alongside the pervasive Stoicism, there was a prominent Judaizing movement among the upper classes in Rome in the first centuries BCE and CE, which I suggest was fuelled by an intellectual literary exchange. Newly discovered inscriptions provide further evidence that this exchange of knowledge led to the formation of social groups of Jewish sympathizers, the “God-fearers” and the “Hypsistarians”, whose social position made it likely that they were the recipients of the intercultural literature. Through an examination of *Acts* as well as Paul’s letters to the Romans and Galatians, it is possible to identify these groups of Jewish sympathizers as the targets and converts of Paul’s missions.

### **The Judaizing Movement**

Scholars such as Stephan Mitchell<sup>82</sup> have recently done a great deal to illuminate the mass Judaizing movement among the Roman upper classes in the first centuries BCE and CE. This movement was sparked by the intellectual exchange between Jewish and Roman writers and readers. Jewish authors of the first century such as Philo and Josephus adopted and employed elements of Greco-Roman philosophy in their narratives for their own purposes. Philo’s goal was to show that the teachings of Moses held the highest philosophical truth. He was not inventing a new philosophy as much as expressing the ideas of Judaism with the tools and language of the philosophical schools, producing a mingling of Hebrew and Greek

---

<sup>82</sup> Mitchell 2008: “Herod’s People. Roman-Jewish Sympathies in the Rise of Christianity”.

ideas. The Doctrine of Logos formed the central factor of Philo's philosophy, an ancient idea in Greek philosophy, which Philo brought into new combinations. In an analysis of Josephus' *Contra Apionem*, Mason has identified a pervasive use of philosophical themes and suggests that the document is best understood as an invitation to already interested Gentile readers to embrace Judaic philosophy.<sup>83</sup> In turn, Greco-Roman literature of the period shows a distinctly Jewish influence. In the third century BCE, Hecataeus of Abdera references the LXX (Leviticus 26:46) concerning Moses' reception of the Laws from God (Hecataeus *apud* Diodorus 40.6). Ocellus Lucanus, a second century BCE Roman citizen and philosopher, references the Septuagint (*Genesis* 1.28) in his work (*De Universi Natura* 46). In the first century CE, we have a third direct reference to the Septuagint by a Gentile. *De Sublimitate*, written by an anonymous Greek author, was one of the most influential works of literary criticism in antiquity. It is therefore of great significance that he also quotes the opening section of *Genesis* as an example of literature that represents real divine nature. The Greek author writes: "I quote his (the lawgiver of the Jews) words: 'God said' – what? 'Let there be light. And there was. Let there be earth. And there was'" (*De Sublimitate* 9). The fact that Moses is quoted without explicit identification or explanation suggests the expectation that his readers, fellow Gentiles, had at least a basic knowledge of Jewish customs. Furthermore, the way in which this author speaks of Moses implies a deep knowledge of and respect for the Jewish legislator and the Septuagint.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> 2006, 140.

<sup>84</sup> Stern 1984, 362.

As Jewish works were presented to Gentile readers as philosophical in form and content, this is the way they were received. The roots of this reception also lie in the Gentile tradition to assign to the Jews philosophical origins, and even to incorporate Jewish doctrine into the origins of Greek philosophy, especially Pythagorean. In *De Pythagora*, a second century BCE author Hermippus of Smyrna posits Pythagoras' dependence on doctrines of Jews. Clearchus of Soli, in his dialogue *De Somno*, traces origins of Jews to Indian philosophers. In the second century CE, Galen spoke of the "school of Moses" in the same breath as other Greek philosophical schools.

### **Sympathizers**

The first century BCE and CE, and particularly the reign of Augustus, was the height of unprecedented spread of Jewish ideas and customs through the Greco-Roman world as seen through the literature of this period. It is also the period of close connections between the Imperial family and Jewish royalty. This combination resulted in a cultural milieu that was receptive to the mingling of Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions. Several high-ranking Jewish sympathizers can be identified in this period. First, Asinius Pollio, a Roman consul in 40 BCE, had deep connections with the Jewish royal family; he was a friend of Herod and gave hospitality to his sons in Rome for their education. Evidence that he identified on an intellectual level with Judaism comes from the dedication of Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* to this statesman, a

work that shows influence of Jewish eschatology from the Eastern Sibylline Oracles produced by the Hellenistic Jews of Egypt.<sup>85</sup>

Jewish sympathies are also evident through financial benefactions. Iulia Severa, the wife of a Neronian senator, paid for the construction of a synagogue in her hometown. An inscription from Tralles in Asia Minor later in the third century emphasizes the continued tradition of support for the Jewish community by certain high-ranking Gentiles. The benefactor was a wealthy pagan woman, also a senator's wife, who contributed funds to build a synagogue in her community.<sup>86</sup>

Still other Roman aristocrats are recorded politically defending the Jewish faith. Marcus Petronius, the legate of Syria put his life at risk when he defied Caligula's order to place a statue of the emperor himself inside the Temple at Jerusalem. He narrowly avoided death by the emperor's own expiry. A Jewish source, Philo, records that Petronius had shown an active intellectual interest in Judaism and acquired the basics of Jewish philosophy (*Leg.* 33, 245). Poppaea Sabina, wife of Nero, was visited first by Jewish delegations to Rome, and intervened twice on behalf of the Jews.<sup>87</sup> Josephus records that a certain Fulvia of the senatorial circle was conversing with a Jewish prophet. Although she was ultimately duped by this prophet, according to Josephus he succeeded in convincing her of the appeal of Judaism (*AJ.* 18.3.5). Finally, Cassius Dio records that Flavia Domitilla and her

---

<sup>85</sup> For a line-by-line analysis of the Jewish elements in the Fourth Eclogue see Nisbet: *Virgil's Fourth Eclogue: Easterners and Westerners*.

<sup>86</sup> Koch 2006, 75.

<sup>87</sup> Mason 2006, 142.

husband were victims of Domitian's punishment for those who had Jewish sympathies (67.14).

Several high status sympathizers also appear in *Acts*. First, Sergius Paullus, a Roman Proconsul, is described as having an audience with a Jewish "false prophet", before Paul converts him to Christianity (13:7). Felix, the procurator of Judea, who was married to a Jewish wife Drusilla,<sup>88</sup> is portrayed as being "well-informed about the way" (24:22) and comes to listen to Paul speak about faith in Jesus Christ.

Our sample of Jewish sympathizers has consisted of high-status Romans, which reflects the larger picture of this movement. These are the same circles that would have had access to and the ability to read Jewish literature. As educated Romans, they also would have had knowledge of Stoicism and philosophical forms. Lastly, these Romans would be the group most likely to appreciate the affinity between the strict piety and moral code of both Stoicism and Judaism. This social Judaizing movement made it possible for Paul to turn to the Gentiles, since they were already familiar with Jewish belief and practice.

### **The θεοφοβείς "God-Fearers"**

While the individuals discussed above can be termed "sympathizers" through a recording of their actions toward Jews and/or Judaism, there exists another category of sympathizer, a group that has its own identity: the God-fearers (θεοφοβείς). These God-fearers are Gentiles who have made a religious commitment to Judaism and are involved in the synagogue community, but who are not full Jews because they lack circumcision. This section will first sketch the

---

<sup>88</sup> The sister of Herod Agrippa II and Bernice.

evidence we have outside of *Acts*, consisting of inscriptions and Jewish literary sources, next it will examine both the individuals and the groups alluded to in *Acts*, and lastly it will evaluate Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Romans for signs of the God-fearers. This study will show that the God-fearers were a distinct social group in the period of Early Christianity, which generally consisted of high status Romans, consistent with the above-mentioned sympathizers. As *Acts* makes clear, and as the letters suggest, these God-fearers were the targets of Paul's missionary work.

The discussion around the φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν "fearers of God" or σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν, "worshippers of God" began with the eleven references in *Acts*.<sup>89</sup> Until recently these references were often dismissed, as little evidence existed outside of Luke's narrative.<sup>90</sup> Through recent archeological discovery however, inscriptions now confirm at least five communities of God-fearers in Asia Minor. In Miletus, a Roman theater of the second century CE bears an inscription speaking of "the place of the Jews who are also called God-fearers (θεοφοβεῖς)".<sup>91</sup> In Philadelphia in Asia Minor, an inscription records a gift of a basin to the synagogue by Eursthathios, who is described as θεοφοβεῖς.<sup>92</sup> In Tralles, an inscription has been found which memorializes a wealthy gentile woman, Capitolina, who donated money for the synagogue. She is called "worthy and a God-fearer" and a religious element to the benefaction is given by the fact that she gave the money "in

---

<sup>89</sup> 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7.

<sup>90</sup> See Kraabel (1981) claiming the God-fearers were an invention of Luke.

<sup>91</sup> Feldman 1993, 361.

<sup>92</sup> Feldman 1993, 361.



fulfillment of a vow”.<sup>93</sup> Capitolina, who is known from other inscriptions, was a member of a leading family in Asia Minor and she was married to a Roman senator. In a 3<sup>rd</sup> century synagogue in Sardeis, two out of twelve donor inscriptions recovered bear the name of a God-fearer. One reads: “Aurelios Polyhippos, God-worshipper, I made a vow and fulfilled it”. The other reads: “Aurelios Eulogios, God-worshipper, I fulfilled a vow”.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, nothing is known of these two God-fearers outside of this inscription. The last inscription is the aforementioned one from Aphrodisias, which seems to be a list of donors to the synagogue from the third or fourth century CE.<sup>95</sup> The front side of the stele lists 55 Jewish names, separated by an empty space of a few lines and then lists 52 names under the heading “σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν” on a donor list.<sup>96</sup> The first nine donors are identified as town councilors and rest of the names are followed by occupations such as mason, marble worker, athlete, portrait painter, fuller, and tax collector. It is interesting that these occupations are of higher status than those occupations of the Jewish donors listed such as vegetable seller, candy-maker, and bird seller.<sup>97</sup> The opposite side of the stele, which Koch has argued is an entirely different inscription,<sup>98</sup> lists members of a Jewish association, including two members specifically identified as God-fearers and two members identified as proselytes. These inscriptions from Asia Minor confirm

---

<sup>93</sup> Koch 2006, 76.

<sup>94</sup> Kroll 2001, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Koch 2006, 64.

<sup>96</sup> Chaniotis 2002.

<sup>97</sup> Feldman 1993, 367.

<sup>98</sup> Koch 2006, 64.

that the God-fearers were organized bodies of worshippers that existed as a formal group attached to a Jewish community.

The same distinction can be found in Jewish literature of the period. Josephus says: “And let no one wonder that there was so much wealth in our temple, since all the Jews throughout the habitable earth, and those that worshipped God, nay, even those of Asia and Europe, sent their contributions to it” (*AJ* 14.7.2,110). In the Testament of Joseph, Apocrypha from the first century CE, a wife attempts to seduce Joseph by telling him she wanted instruction in the word of God and that she will convince her husband to give up idol worship. Joseph replies that God did not want those who fear him (τοὺς σεβομένους αὐτόν) to live in uncleanness and adultery. The author of the Testament of Joseph uses the same term as in *Acts* and Josephus and the inscriptions. Some reference to God-fearers can even be found in the Talmud. Feldman has compiled a list of references, a few of which will be highlighted here.<sup>99</sup> She identifies the term “Heaven-fearers” used by the Rabbis to be equivalent to “God-fearers” used in the New Testament. In the Babylonian Talmud, a rabbi says of King Lemuel, “All know that your father was a Heaven-fearing man (*yirei shamayim*), and therefore they will say that you inherit [your sinfulness] from your mother” (*Sanhedrin* 70b). Since, King Lemuel was not a Jew, the reference likely refers to the fact that he was a sympathizer. A second passage from a Halakhic Midrash from the second century refers to four categories of worshippers: Israelites, full proselytes, repentant sinners, and “Heaven Fearers” (*Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* 18). This further literary evidence shows the God-fearers as a distinctive group of

---

<sup>99</sup> Feldman 1993, 353-7.

people (distinguished from proselytes, pagans, and Jews) who had a certain religious commitment to the synagogue but who were not full Jews. The next question is the extent of their role in the spread of early Christianity in the first and second century CE, and for that we turn to *Acts*.

*Acts* includes several high status Jewish sympathizers whom Paul encounters who are specifically identified as God-fearers. Corneilus, the Roman centurion and citizen, is the first gentile convert in *Acts*. Before his conversion by Peter at Caesarea, he is described as an “upstanding and god-fearing (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν) man, who is spoken well of by the whole Jewish nation” (10:22). In Phillipi, Paul meets Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth and a σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν (16:14). As a successful trader in a veteran colony, she too may have had Roman citizenship. She listens to Paul’s preaching and he baptizes her and her household. Titius Iustus was a God-fearer and a Roman citizen whom Paul met in Corinth. He is identified as a σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν who lived next door to the synagogue. It is even possible that he donated the land for the synagogue, as these types of benefactions were common for Jewish sympathizers.

In *Acts*, Luke also identifies the God-fearers as a group in Paul’s audience. After his first gentile convert, Sergius Paullus, Paul goes to Antioch. He makes a speech in the synagogue: “Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλεῖται καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, ἀκούσατε.” (13:16). The result of Paul’s mission to Antioch was a conversion of many Gentiles and anger of many Jews, who incited some of their supporters: devout women (τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας) of high standing and the leading men of the city (13:50) to drive Paul out. Luke narrates the same series of events in

Iconium. In Thessalonica, Paul goes again to the synagogue where “a great many devout Greeks (σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων) and not a few of the leading women were persuaded” (17:4). The Jews, having lost their high-status supporters to Paul’s preaching, this time sought help from “some ruffians in the marketplace”(17:5) and formed a mob to insight uproar and drive Paul out. The events in Beroea were similar, and so next Paul went to Athens. There, he argued first “in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons (τοῖς σεβομένοις) and also in the marketplace everyday with those who happened to be there” (17:17). Paul debates with several Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and ultimately is brought to the Areopagus to present his teaching. Paul receives mixed reactions from this Gentile audience, but in the end converts the Aeropagite Dionysius and several others. At Paul’s next stop, Corinth, he once again “went to the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks” (18:4). When the Jews once again opposed him he finally announces he is done with the Jews and goes to preach to the Gentiles in the home of the God-worshipper Titius Iustus, who lived next door to the synagogue. At every city, Luke narrates that Paul goes to the synagogue to preach, and yet at every city the Jews push him out. Why does he continue to go to the synagogues? Because the “God-fearers” or “devout Greeks” are also in the synagogues. These are the people that Luke then identifies as Paul’s successful converts. It is clear from *Acts* that the God-fearers existed as a distinct group within the synagogue, as Paul addresses them separately and they are then specifically identified as groups or individuals as the converts Paul wins over in the synagogues.

What evidence can we gain from Paul himself about his audience? Paul's letters do not explicitly name the "God-fearers" as his audience and nowhere in his letters does the term "God-fearers" appear. *Romans* simply addresses "all God's beloved in Rome" and *Galatians* "to the churches of Galatia". But of course, to Paul, his audiences are no longer Jewish sympathizers, but Christians. There would be no reason to address them as "God-fearers". It is clear, however, both from the style and content of the writing, that Paul was communicating with educated Romans who had a basic understanding of Judaism and Greek philosophy, precisely the characteristics of the God-fearers. I have already argued for Paul's use of Stoicism blended with Jewish theology in his letters; what I suggest here is that the central cultural issues of the letters are exactly those that would be the divide between Jews and God-fearers, such as circumcision.

*Galatians* is particularly instructive. This letter is primarily a defense of his Gentile mission and it sets out Paul's understanding of the law for them. Paul emphasizes that the Gentiles do not need to follow the law for "if you seek to be justified by the law you are not living by faith"(5:2). He argues that those who keep the law must keep the whole law (5:3). He is obviously addressing an audience that has been keeping some parts of the law but not the whole law, consistent with the sympathizing group of the God-fearers. In Galatia, the Jewish community seems to have been pressuring the Gentile sympathizers to circumcise and keep the whole law and Paul was advocating the opposite.

*Romans* explores similar cultural issues, also stating that circumcision is unnecessary and advocating harmony between those in the community who kept

dietary restrictions and the Sabbath and those who did not. Appended to the letter to the Romans is a list of names of people that Paul recommends to the church in Rome. Meeks has analyzed this list with regard to social status as a cross section of Paul's community.<sup>100</sup> Meeks excludes those whom Paul may have only known by reputation or brief encounter,<sup>101</sup> which leaves fifteen names of those whom Paul calls fellow workers or were part of one of his congregations. Of those fifteen, four offer no clue of social status.<sup>102</sup> The remaining eleven figures may be able to give us a clue as to the average social position of Paul's audience. The result is a fairly broad spectrum, excluding the extreme top and bottom of the social scale. Epaenetus (16:5), Andronicus and Junia (16:7) and Ampliatus (16:8) are posited by Meeks to be freed-persons.<sup>103</sup> Tertius (16:22), who has a Latin name and is identified as a scribe could possibly have held a position in the provincial bureaucracy.<sup>104</sup> Quartus (16:23) and Lucius (16:21) both have Latin names in colonies where Latin was the dominant language, they may have belonged to the families of the original colonists who generally have high status in such communities.<sup>105</sup> Gaius (16:23) has a good Roman name and ample space to put up Paul and to accommodate meetings of the Corinthian Christian groups. He is obviously a man of some wealth and status. Erastus is named in *Romans* along with a title "municipal treasurer" (16:23). He was therefore an important official, and from another inscription we know that he later

---

<sup>100</sup> Meeks 1983, 56-61.

<sup>101</sup> Mary, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Persis, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus, and Olympus.

<sup>102</sup> Urbanus, Timothy, Jason, and Sosipater.

<sup>103</sup> Meeks 1983, 57.

<sup>104</sup> Theissen 1974, 253.

<sup>105</sup> Meeks 1983, 56.

became aedile and donated money for the paving of a courtyard in his city. Erastus was thus a person of significant wealth and high civic status. Prisca and Aquila, (16:3) although not God-fearers but Jews, had enough wealth to move from place to place, established a sizable household in each city, and acted as patrons for Paul and his congregations. By trade they were tentmakers, not an elite occupation but far from the bottom and as independent artisans they operated on a fairly large scale. Prisca and Aquila were likely middle class with relatively high wealth. The next reference is to Rufus and to his mother, whom Paul calls “his mother too” (16:13). Likely this woman acted in some way as a benefactress to Paul. At the time of the letter resided in Rome, but had met and helped Paul in the East and thus likely had some wealth. Our last individual, but the first in Paul’s list is Phoebe, recommended by Paul with the title deacon of the church at Cenchreae (16:1). Although there has been debate as to what exactly the title implies, it is clear that in some way Phoebe has been the protector and patron of many Christians, including Paul himself (16:2). Phoebe is probably an independent woman (travelling to Rome on business) who has some wealth (to help Paul and others) and is also one of the leaders of the Christian group at Cenchreae. The list from *Romans* echoes the evidence of the Aphrodisias inscription list of God-fearers, showing generally that the converts seem to be of middle class (free artisan, small trader) with a few leaders of higher status.

### **The Θεός “Υψιστος” “Highest God”**

Another group of gentile sympathizers born in the Roman Empire in the last centuries BCE are identified as worshippers of the Highest God. Recently Stephen

Mitchell has brought together evidence on the worshippers of Θεός Ὑψιστος, “the Highest God”, and argued that they were a unified group of quasi-monotheist worshippers whose beliefs blended pagan Greek and Jewish elements. Although its unity has been challenged, Mitchell maintains that while there is local variety, the cult can be studied as a cohesive unit in the way that the Olympians are despite major differences in local cults. The worshippers show very similar patterns throughout the empire. With very few exceptions “Ὑψιστος” is only applied to Zeus and God as an adjective of exultation. Thus while most members of the cult worshipped an anonymous God, some chose to identify this superior God with Zeus. The Highest God was worshipped as the supreme deity, without anthropomorphism, with prayers but not animal sacrifice, and his essence was associated with fire, light and sun. The cult also observed Jewish dietary laws, and the Sabbath. The term Θεός Ὑψιστος is also used in the Septuagint to identify Yahweh, thus it became a standard term in Greek-Jewish literature and in communities of the Jewish Diaspora. Both Jews and quasi-monotheistic pagans used Θεός Ὑψιστος to identify the god they worshipped.

Out of the known Θεός Ὑψιστος inscriptions, seventeen can be identified as referring to the Jewish God, twenty-three have a definite pagan context, and the remaining one hundred and seventy-eight cannot be definitely classified as either Jewish or Pagan. Stephen Mitchell suggests these worshippers of Θεός Ὑψιστος were very close to the Jews, and that some pagan Hypsistarians became closely acquainted with Jewish cult. He sees this group as another one of the various categories of sympathizers from the second century BCE to the fourth century CE



and as part of an overall Judaizing pattern.<sup>106</sup> The belief in a Highest God created common ground between the cultures of Gentiles and Jews; the cult allowed them to emphasize this similarity without denying particular customs and traditions that were particular to a Jewish or non-Jewish notion of God.

Stephen Mitchell has also controversially identified Θεός Ὑψιστος worshippers with God-fearers.<sup>107</sup> His main argument for assimilation is based on similar beliefs and activities, as well as a similar geographical and chronological distribution. He suggests that if two similar religious groups occupy the same cultural milieu they are likely to be virtually indistinguishable. Thus, he asserts that “God-fearer” was simply the technical term that the worshippers of Θεός Ὑψιστος used to identify each other.

Stein has refuted that having similar activities in a similar milieu is not enough to provide the definition of being the same religious group.<sup>108</sup> I also hesitate to assimilate the two groups based on a discernable difference in the social strata of the members. We have already discussed the significantly high and middle class status of God-fearers, where as Stephan Mitchell’s research emphasizes the tendency of Θεός Ὑψιστος worshippers to be mostly from the humble level of society. Based on an analysis of the inscriptions he characterizes the dedications as “modest” and by “ordinary people”, often vows made for a good harvest or for recovery from an illness and often made in response to oracles and dreams.<sup>109</sup> Thus,

---

<sup>106</sup> Mitchell 2010, 167.

<sup>107</sup> 1999, 119-126.

<sup>108</sup> 2001, 125.

<sup>109</sup> 1999, 105/6.

the pattern of worship is in no way esoteric but rather resembles the worship of other pagan gods at the time. Whereas I have suggested that the God-fearers as the audience of Paul's letters were familiar with philosophy and Jewish theology, emphasizing the philosophical elements over rituals of fire and candlelight that dominate Θεός Ὑψιστος worship. If we can take Luke's picture as an example, he identifies high status people like Cornelius the Centurion as φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν (10:2), while the reference to Θεός Ὑψιστος is made by a slave girl (16:17). I do think they were similar religious movements in the same cultural milieu but were operating on different social levels with a different relationship to Judaism. Nevertheless, adding the vast geographical distribution of Θεός Ὑψιστος worshippers to our numbers of sympathizers and God-fearers lends credence to Josephus' and others claims that many Gentiles have taken up Jewish laws and customs (*Contra Apionem* 2.123).

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to illustrate Paul's audience. I have argued that this audience consisted of high status Romans (Stoics) who already had Jewish sympathies (and that this was a significant population). The ground was made fertile for this interaction through a period of intellectual exchange between Gentile and Jewish authors that associated Judaism with the philosophical tradition. This exchange, in combination with positive political relations at the time, facilitated the social movement of various sympathizing groups. We identified several elite Romans who we know made financial benefactions, showed political favor to, or intellectual interest in the Jewish tradition. Additionally, a distinct group of

sympathizers attached themselves formally to the Jewish community and were known as God-fearers. This chapter has demonstrated through literary evidence and inscriptions that this group was made up of educated Romans of mid to high status, precisely the readers of the literature mentioned above. This group is highly visible in *Acts* as the primary targets and converts of Paul's missions, as well as being the intended audience of Paul's letters. Lastly, an additional sympathizing group: the θεός Ὑψιστος worshippers, were introduced as an additional receptive audience to Paul due to their Jewish association. Paul's audience was not a rabble of destitute people who were converted by tricks or magic, rather they were an educated group who had an interest in the ideals of Judaism and who were won over by Paul through his use of logic and philosophical argument.

## Conclusion

This thesis has presented three distinct chapters, the first on the figure of Paul, the second on his message, and the third on his audience. This conclusion will tie these three essays together to give a complete picture of the interaction between Paul and his audience through a historical reconstruction. This reconstruction will work backwards the way we came, beginning with the audience (specifically an imagined potential convert of Paul), and tracing our way through the message to the man himself. The main arguments and findings of the chapters will then be presented, leading to the answer of our research question. Finally, avenues for further research will be identified.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that Paul's targeted audience and his actual converts were mid to high status Roman citizens who already had Jewish sympathies. Here we will recreate such a candidate in order to examine what would have been the appeal of Paul and his message. Our sample convert resides in Rome. He is a middle-aged stonemason in the city, a Roman citizen of medium income and status, who we know was associated with the Jewish synagogue as a "God-fearer". With this information we can assume several relevant points.

First, as a fairly well off Roman citizen, our stonemason would have had a standard primary and secondary education. In the Early Empire, there was a focus on the education of the youth, as evidenced by Augustus' *collegia iuvenum*. A general education was not only for the privileged, as many teachers were paid from public funds.<sup>110</sup> Even slaves were educated within the wealthier households, so that they

---

<sup>110</sup> Marrou 1956, 301.

were able to act as readers and secretaries. In Rome, the standard education consisted of first learning letters and numbers, and then reading and memorization of classical texts, which included: Ennius, Virgil, Terence, Sallust, and Cicero.<sup>111</sup> It is quite possible that our stonemason read some of Cicero's philosophical works. The more likely avenue for his learning of philosophy, however, is through its prominence in the popular political culture of the time. By the first century CE Stoicism had gained a large following among the Roman upper classes. Suited to the Roman's sense of morality but also practically suited for empire by its flexibility, Stoic ideas permeated politics, and literature. Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example, is set within a Stoic philosophical framework. The popularity of Stoicism in elite culture doubtless had a trickle-down effect, if only that everyone could hear the Stoic sage expounding his views in the marketplace. We can hypothesize then, that our stonemason was thus well acquainted with the basics of the Greco-Roman philosophic tradition, and, as a member of educated Roman society, was familiar with central Stoic ideas such as natural law and rational worship.

A second major influence on our stonemason's life was the Jewish faith. We know he was associated with the synagogue as a God-fearer. How could he have come to be associated with this group? In Rome in the first century there were thirteen Jewish synagogues. They all kept Jewish rituals of Sabbath observance, dietary restrictions, and also performed highly visible festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.<sup>112</sup> The scarcity of Hebrew suggests that they were not

---

<sup>111</sup> Marrou 1956, 278.

<sup>112</sup> Westenholz 1994, 30.

very familiar with the language, and that the synagogue service was most likely conducted in Greek, which was the every day language of the community, and also made it accessible to Gentiles. From the number of Jewish inscriptions at Rome as well as casual references to Jewish practice in authors like Horace (*Sermones*, 1, 9: 67-72) we can assert that in the first century at Rome, Judaism was both widespread and widely known among Rome's population. Furthermore, the Jewish catacomb inscriptions in Rome suggest that a large majority of these Jews were craftsmen and small tradesmen, a population that our stonemason would have interacted with daily.

It is in no way surprising that our stonemason would have been interacting with Jews on a daily basis and that he would have known about their beliefs and customs. What, however, would have prompted him to make a commitment to Judaism? While the answer to this question can only be guessed at, one could point to the very similar practical ethical/moral system that was taught in both Stoic philosophy and in Judaism. Stoic philosophy also moved towards monotheism, identifying Logos/God as one entity, which existed in the universe. We have already suggested that Judaism was linked with philosophy in Roman opinion and that popular Hellenistic Jewish writings show a particularly philosophical slant. Our stonemason may have found that Judaism offered a strict moral code and conception of God that fit well with his beliefs and background, and that unlike philosophy, it offered a non-academic community atmosphere complete with rituals and afterlife security.

We have shown how our stonemason may have been attracted to Judaism, and that as a God-fearer, he was connected to the Jewish community at Rome. He was not, however, a full Jew. Proselytism did occur in the centuries preceding Paul, as evidenced by the duties and rights prescribed to proselytes by the Rabbis in great detail in the Mishnah. If he identified with the beliefs of Judaism, why did he not convert and become a proselyte? There may have been several roadblocks facing our stonemason. First, although Jews were influential in the city of Rome, they were marked as drastically different. Their particular observances clashed with traditional aspects of Greco-Roman culture. Judaism required a commitment to a nationalistic and ethnocentric community that was distinctly separate from the Gentile world. A conversion to full proselyte may have cost our stonemason in both his personal relationships and his business partnerships. Certain public avenues, such as politics, were still problematic for Jews and proselytes in the first century CE. The philosopher Philo's nephew Tiberius Alexander had to abandon Judaism so that he could take the pagan oath of political office (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.5). In addition to institutionalized prejudice, popular bias is also evident. In particular, there was great discrimination against circumcision, the main marker that differentiated Gentiles, sympathizers, and God-fearers from full Jews. Roman authors such as Petronius (*Satyricon* 68:4-8) and Tacitus (*Historiae* 5:5:1) identify circumcision as a crucial fault and an abominable custom.

Finally we come to Paul and the appeal of his message, namely that he freed Judaism from the physical/cultural aspects that were a barrier to the Gentiles. Judaism, although admired by Roman authors for its ethical system and beliefs

about God, could not function as a religion for the Greco-Roman world. It was rooted too deeply in its nationalism and ethnocentrism, which did not make sense with its ideal of a universalist monotheism. Judaism needed to be adapted in light of the larger Hellenistic and Roman world. Paul saw this problem. His solution was to strip Judaism of these ethnic bonds and he achieved this through the use of Greco-Roman philosophy. Paul used allegorical interpretation to solve this theological dilemma. The law was no longer to be interpreted literally but philosophically and allegorically. Boyarin<sup>113</sup> has examined Paul's letter to the Galatians in this light. Paul writes: "For through the law I died to the law, in order that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; and what I now live in the flesh I live in faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me"(2:19-20). Boyarin suggests Paul is opposing his true Torah to the one that is understood as the Torah by other Jews.<sup>114</sup> The true law is the law of faith (3:27), an internal allegorical interpretation, whereas the false law is the observance of physical rituals and the physical ethnic connection. Paul is saying he has died to the old way of the law to be reborn in the true law. The example of circumcision is crucial. "Listen, I Paul am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you ... you who want to be justified by the law have cut yourself off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace ... for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor un-circumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love"(5:2-6). Paul's argument is that any

---

<sup>113</sup> "A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity"

<sup>114</sup> 1994, 123.



obligatory physical observances negate his message that the meaning of such observances should be spiritual. If the Galatians think they need to be circumcised, the gifts of the Spirit have no meaning. Paul was attempting to replace literal circumcision with circumcision in the Spirit (enacted in baptism). His reinterpretation of Judaism solved all the roadblocks facing Gentiles who had an interest in Judaism. They would no longer be weighed down by physical markers or ethnic ties. Thus, a commitment to the Spirit would not inhibit our stonemason's functioning in the larger Greco-Roman world. This was the appeal of his message.

Paul's message was convincing. But it also mattered who the message was coming from. What was significant about Paul, the man, which appealed to his converts? As we have already taken a look at Paul and his social world in Chapter One, I will only reassert a few main points. Paul was a tentmaker, a middle class, middle status, Roman citizen with a Greek education. This is a strikingly similar description as that of our sample convert the stonemason. Paul was also a Jew with a deep knowledge of the Septuagint. Thus Paul, like our stonemason, straddled two worlds. He was the perfect figure to deliver the message to the Gentiles because in many ways they shared the same culture, the same beliefs, and wrestled with the same stumbling blocks, only from the opposite side of the fence.

Our starting question was, how did the interaction of Stoicism and Judaism impact the development of Pauline Christianity? Chapter One examined Paul's social and cultural world through three lenses, Greek, Jewish, and Roman. The chapter showed that Paul's world was permeated by Greek culture and language. Both secular schools and Jewish schools taught in Greek. Philosophy was a standard part

of the secular curriculum as well as being widely available to a general audience. Paul himself spoke and wrote in Greek, and was likely educated in Tarsus, a renowned center of philosophic learning. Jewish communities were spread far and wide across the empire and occupied a position of privilege in Roman cities, although it is precisely this difference that often led to conflict between Jewish and Gentile members of a city. Paul himself belonged to the strong Jewish community in Tarsus and was well educated in Jewish traditions, albeit in Greek translation. The final major element in Paul's world is the Roman aspect. Just as the Jews in the empire formed their own diaspora, Roman citizens of the colonies formed their own diaspora in the first centuries CE. As Roman citizens outside of Italy, they often held special privileges that distinguished them from the rest of the population. They identified themselves by forming collectives and committees and always tied their identity to their political relationship to the Roman state. Paul himself was one of those Roman citizens; he also expressed his connection to other Roman citizens of similar status, specifically seeking out Roman colonies for his missions and, in particular, the Roman citizens within these colonies. Paul himself, his cities, and the empire itself, were a blending of these three strands of Greek, Jewish, and Roman.

With this social context in mind, Chapter Two explored the distinctly Stoic philosophical bent to Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans. Stoic philosophy was a blend of Greek intellectualism and Roman pragmatism, and it was a perfect fit for the educated classes of the Roman Empire. With a focus on practical ethics and a flexible yet abstract monotheistic conception of the divine, it was able to coexist among both paganism and Judaism. Using Stoic sources contemporary to Paul and

two of his letters this chapter examined how Paul used Stoicism to convey his message to the Gentiles. It identified three main areas of connection between Paul's philosophy and the Stoic tradition: moral attitude and worship, community ethic, and the conception of the divine. Paul used Stoic themes, vocabulary and literary techniques to communicate his philosophy. To emphasize the fact that Paul used Stoicism with a sense of understanding rather than a parroting of common phrases or mantras, Chapter Two presented two in depth case studies on Paul's presentation of natural law and rational worship. These case studies found that both Paul and the Stoics identified a divine element in man, this element was God's gift to man and, while perfected in God himself, it was a rudimentary spark in man, which could be nurtured or destroyed. Rational worship, our second case study, was given by Paul and the Stoics as the way to nurture this divine element and become closer to God. It consisted of a moral attitude and moral behavior. It could also consist of prayer, as far as prayer was an internal address to the divine element within oneself.

Our last chapter examined the recipients of Paul's message: who they were and why this message would have appealed to them. Prior to Paul, there was a Judaizing trend in motion within the Roman Empire. The combination of positive relations between the emperors and Jewish royalty as well as the intellectual exchange between Hellenistic Jewish authors such as Philo and Josephus, and authors of Greco-Roman philosophy such as Ocellus Lucanus provided a shared cultural knowledge for interaction between the two groups. The chapter showed how through this literature Judaism was presented as a philosophy and received thusly by their Greco-Roman audience. The common ground found between Jewish

and Greco-Roman philosophy led to social movement in the form of Jewish sympathizers. Evidence was given for many high status Romans who showed favor to Judaism and the Jewish community through intellectual interest, financial benefaction or political support. The chapter also identified two distinct groups who embodied the Judaizing movement. The God-fearers existed as an organized group who observed many Jewish customs and were formally associated with the synagogue but who were not full Jews. It has been emphasized that these God-fearers are also largely Roman citizens of middle to high status. An examination of *Acts* and Paul's letters showed that these God-fearers were precisely the targets of Paul's preaching and the large body of his subsequent converts. As an audience who is Roman and educated, and thus steeped in the stoic philosophical tradition, and also familiar with Jewish beliefs, customs and theology, they were the perfect audience for Paul's message as we interpreted it in Chapter Two. The θεός Ὑψιστος worshippers only provide added evidence for the wide range of Judaizing in progress in the Roman Empire, and show us the form that Jewish sympathies took among those of lower social status, a blend of pagan and Jewish ritual.

By examining the figure of Paul, his message, and his converts, this thesis has shown that Paul's philosophy is a blend of Stoic and Jewish tradition. Paul himself was fluent in Jewish theology and Greco-Roman philosophy, his message was essentially Jewish but allegorically interpreted with the tools of Stoic philosophy, and his communities were formed with converts who were fluent in Stoic philosophy and familiar with Jewish customs and theology. Thus, it follows that Pauline Christianity is, in an important way, a Stoic interpretation of Judaism.

This study of Paul and his audience opens many avenues for further research. Much more needs to be done in the area of Stoic education. To what extent did Stoic education reach outside of the Stoic school? How much Stoic philosophy was included in an average secular education? Due to its popularity among the elite, and its spill over into the political realm and popular literature at the time, I have inferred a trickle down phenomena. A better reconstruction of Stoic schools, however, may allow us to better comprehend what a normal citizen might be expected to know. A recent work by Stanley Bonner<sup>115</sup> begins to address this issue by using the Stoic-influenced essay *On the Education of Children* and pointing out the importance attached to a philosophical education in ancient Rome.

A second area requiring further research is the social status of early Christians. Past scholarship has labeled it a low class movement based on early Christian sources; however, at the level of potential converts and Jewish sympathizers, it seems to have been the domain of the educated classes. One roadblock is simply the lack of firm evidence for individual converts of Paul. Although there is limited evidence, my hypothesis, based on the status of Paul's missionary targets pre-conversion as well as what can be gleaned from Paul's list of his converts, remains strong in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Recent works, such as E.A. Judge's *The First Christians in the Roman World*,<sup>116</sup> are beginning to explore the thesis of a higher status origin for early Christians. Further research into Paul's communities will illuminate the social world of Paul's Christianity.

---

<sup>115</sup> 2012.

<sup>116</sup> 2008.

## Bibliography

### **Primary Sources**

- Acts of the Apostles* = Coogan, M.D. (ed.) 2007. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible*. Augmented 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Appian, *Historia Romana* = White, H. (tr.) 1912. *Appian: Roman History*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Baba Bathra* = Epstein, I. (tr.) and J.H. Hertz. (ed.) 1935. *The Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino Press.
- Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* = Heinemann, W. (tr.) 1914. *Roman History: Dio Cassius*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cicero, *De Legibus* = Keys, C.W. (tr.) 2006. *Cicero*. Vol. XVI. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *De Re Republica* = Keys, C.W. (tr.) 2006. *Cicero*. Vol. XVI. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cleanthes = Arnim, H.F. 1964. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. Vol 3. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubneri.
- Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* = Frey, J.B. 1970. *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*. Ktav Publishing House.
- De Sublimitate* = Quoted in Stern, M. (ed.) 1984. *Greek & Latin Authors on Jews & Judaism*. Pg 364. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* = Hicks, R.D. (tr.) 2005. *Diogenes Laertius*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Epictetus, *Discourses* = Oldfather, W.A. (tr.) 2000. *Epictetus*. Vol 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *Encheiridion* = Oldfather, W.A. (tr.) 2000. *Epictetus*. Vol 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Genesis* = Coogan, M.D. (ed.) 2007. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible*. Augmented 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horace, *Sermones* = Fairclough, H.R. (tr.) 2005. *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes* = Cagnat, R. 1927. *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes*. Vol. 4. Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux.

- Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* = Thackeray, H.J. 1926. *Josephus*. Vol. 5-13. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *Bellum Judaicum* = Thackeray, H.J. 1926. *Josephus*. Vol. 2-4. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *Contra Apionem* = Thackeray, H.J. 1926. *Josephus*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Judah b. Tema = Danby, H. (tr.) 1933. *The Mishnah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* = Foster, B.O. (tr.) 2006. *Livy*. Vols. 4 and 5. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Musonius Rufus = Lutz, C. (tr.) 1947. *Musonius Rufus: the Roman Socrates: Lectures and Fragments*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Ocellus Lucanus, *De Universi Natura* = Quoted in Stern, M., (ed.) 1984. *Greek & Latin Authors on Jews & Judaism*. Pg 133. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Paul, *Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Romans* = Coogan, M.D. (ed.) 2007. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible*. Augmented 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Petronius, *Satyricon* = Heseltine, M. (tr.) 2005. *Petronius*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Philo, *De Legibus* = Colson, F.H. and Whitaker, G.H. 1999. *Philo*. Vol. 8. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *Vita Mosis* = Colson, F.H. and Whitaker, G.H. 1994. *Philo*. Vol. 6. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Philostratus, *Vita Apolloni* = Jones, C.P. (tr.) 2005. *Philostratus*. Vol 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sanhedrin* = Epstein, I. (tr.) and J.H. Hertz (ed.) 1935. *The Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino Press.
- Seneca, *De Beneficiis* = Basore, J.W. (tr.) 2006. *Seneca: Moral Essays*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *De Constantia* = Basore, J.W. (tr.) 2006. *Seneca: Moral Essays*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- , *De Ira* = Basore, J.W. (tr.) 2006. *Seneca: Moral Essays*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *De Providentia* = Basore, J.W. (tr.) 2006. *Seneca: Moral Essays*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- , *Epistulae Morales* = Henderson, J. (tr.) 2006. *Seneca: Epistles*. Vol. 1 - 3. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Stobaeus = Arnim, H.F. 1964. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. Vol 3. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubneri.
- Strabo, *Geographica* = Jones, H.L. (tr.) 2006. *Strabo: Geography*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* = Rolfe, J.C. (tr.) 1998. *Suetonius*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* = A.G. Woodhead. 1960. *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Vol. 17. Amsterdam: A.W. Sijthoff.
- Tacitus, *Historiae* = Hutton, M. (tr.) 1925. *Tacitus*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Virgil, *4 Eclogue* = Lee, G. (tr.) 1984. *The Eclogues*. Toronto, Ontario: Penguin.

### **Secondary Sources**

- Algra, K. 2003. "Stoic Theology" In *Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, edited by B. Inwood, 153-178. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barclay, J.M.G. 1996. "Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 60:89-120.
- Best, E. 1997. *Essays on Ephesians*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd.
- Betz H.D. 1975. "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians" *New Testament Studies* 21:353-79.
- Bonner, S. 2012. *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny*. New York: Routledge.
- Boyarín, D. 1994. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chaniotis, A. 2002. "The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems" *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21:209-242.



- Du Toit, A. 2000. "A Tale of Two Cities: 'Tarsus or Jerusalem' Revisited" *New Testament Studies* 46:03:375-402.
- Engberg-Pedersen, T. 2000. *Paul and the Stoics*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Feldman, L.H. 1993. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gadza, E.K. and D.Y. Ng. (ed.) 2011. *Building a New Rome: The Imperial Colony of Pisidian Antioch 25 BC – AD 700*. Ann Arbor, MI: Kelsey Museum of Archeology.
- Gager, J.G. 1975. *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Hengel, M. 1989. *The 'Hellenization' of Judea in the First Century after Christ*. London: Trinity Press International.
- 1991. *The Pre-Christian Paul*. London: Trinity Press International.
- Horowitz, M.C. 1974. "The Stoic Synthesis of the Idea of Natural Law in Man: Four Themes." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35:3-16.
- Instone-Brewer, D. 2004. *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament: Volume One: Prayer and Agriculture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Johnson, L.T. 2003. "Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul" In *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham Malherbe*, edited by J.T. Fitzgerald, T.H. Olbricht, and L.M. White, 215-36. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 110. Leiden: Brill.
- Judge, E.A. 2008. *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Studies*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Käsemann, E. 1969. *New Testament Questions of Today*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia.
- Koch, D.A. 2006. "The God-fearers between Facts and Fiction: Two Theosebeis-inscriptions from Aphrodisias and their bearing for the New Testament." *Studia Theologica* 60: 62-90.
- Kraabel, A.T. 1981. "The Disappearance of the God-Fearers" *Numen* 28: 113-126.
- Kroll, J.H. 2001. "The Greek Inscriptions of the Sardis Synagogue" *The Harvard Theological Review* 94: 5-55.

- Lee, M.V. 2006. *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leon, H.J. 1960. *The Jews of Ancient Rome*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Levick, B. 1967. *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Long, A.A. 2002. *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lutz, C.E. 1947. "Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates'" *Yale Classical Studies* 10:1-147.
- Marrou 1956. *A History of Education in Antiquity*. New York: Sheed and Ward.
- Mason S. 2006. "The Contra Apionem in Social and Literary Context: An Invitation to Judean Philosophy." In *Religious Rivalries in the early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity*, edited by L.E. Vaage, 139-173. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Meeks, W. 1983. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Mitchell, S. 1995. *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor*. Vol 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- 1998. "Herod's People. Roman-Jewish Sympathies in the Rise of Christianity" (7<sup>th</sup> Ronald Syme Memorial Lecture) *Times Literary Supplement* 11-12.
- 1999. "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews, and Christians" In *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, edited by P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede. 82-129. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2010. "Further Thoughts on the Cult of Theos Hypsistos" In *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, edited by S. Mitchell and P. Van Nuffelen, 167-208. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy-O'Connor, J. 1996. *Paul: A Critical Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nisbet R.G.M. 2008. "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue: Easterners and Westerners." In *Virgil's Eclogues*, edited by K. Volk, 155-188. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norden, E. 1958. *Die Antike Kunstprosa. Vom VI ahrhundert v. Chr. Bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*. Stuttgart: Teubner.

- Onesti, K.L. and M.T. Brauch 1993. "Righteousness of God" In *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, edited by G.F. Hawthorne and R.P. Martin, 827-837. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Purcell, N. 2005. "Romans in the Roman World" In *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus*, edited by K. Galinsky, 85-105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ramsay, W.M. 1907. *The Cities of St. Paul: Their Influence on his Life and Thought*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Sanders, E.P. 2009. "Paul between Judaism and Hellenism" In *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, edited by J.D. Caputo L.M. Alcoff, 74-88. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Sherwin-White, A.N. 1973. *The Roman Citizenship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Schürer, E. 1986. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC-AD 135)*. Revised and Edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Simon 1980. "Prière du philosophe et prière chrétienne" In *L'expérience de la prière dans les grandes religions: Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve*, edited by H. Limet and J. Ries, 204-222. Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d'histoire des religions.
- Smallwood, E.M. 1976. *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian*. Leiden: Brill.
- Stein, M. 2001. "Die Verehrung des Theos Hypsistos: ein allumfassender pagan-jüdischer Synkretismus?" *EA* 33: 119-26.
- Stendahl, K. 1980. "Paul at Prayer" *Interpretation* 34:240-9.
- Stephens, W.O. 1996. "Epictetus on how the Stoic Sage Loves" *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 14:193-210.
- Stern, M., ed. 1984. *Greek & Latin Authors on Jews & Judaism*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Striker, G. 1996. *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tcherikover, V. 1959. *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Theissen, G. 1974. "Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde" *ZNW* 65:232-72.

Thorsteinsson, R.M. 2006. "Paul and Roman Stoicism: Romans 12 and Contemporary Stoic Ethics." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29:139-161.

——— 2010. *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Townsend, J.T. 1971. "Ancient Education in the time of the Early Roman Empire" In *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity*, edited by S. Benko and J.J. O'Rourke, 139-164. Valley Forge: Judson Press.

Watson 1996. "The Natural Law and Stoicism" In *Problems in Stoicism*, edited by A.A. Long, 216-238. London: Athlone Press.

Westenholz, J.G. 1994. *The Jewish Presence in Ancient Rome*. Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem.

Williams, S.K. 1980. "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99:241-290.