A Prolegomenon to the Study of Paul

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The apostle Paul's significance to both early Christian history and Christian theology is undisputed. Indeed, Paul is second to none but Jesus in this regard—or as Adolf Deissmann puts it, "[f]rom the broadest historical standpoint Jesus appears as the One, and Paul as the first after the One." Yet despite the small mountain of books on Paul, there seemingly remains a persistent failure to generate a cogent and compelling understanding of his thought. Granted, this concern is decidedly more acute in Pauline scholarship than it is among everyday readers of the New Testament. But Paul's eminence in Christian history and theology ought to dictate otherwise. Indeed, given his ubiquitous significance in Christianity, all readers of Paul would do well to reflect not only upon the multifarious Pauls that we encounter, but even more important, the various considerations that condition *any* understanding of him, regardless of whether one views him as an impenetrable figure.

Occasioned by this concern, this study is intended to serve as a type of prolegomenon to the study of Paul. Specifically, this study examines foundational assumptions that ground each and every reading or interpretation of the famous apostle to the gentiles. Such an examination touches on several topics, invoking issues pertaining to truth, hermeneutics, canonicity, historiography, pseudonymity, literary genres, and authority. Moreover, this study is guided by an underlying thesis, namely, that every encounter with the Paul of the New Testament is conditioned by a kind of pre-understanding of Paul (or a proto-*Paulusbild*), which filters and interprets the Pauline data. Indeed, it is this pre-understanding of Paul that fundamentally determines how we use the New Testament data in the course of constructing our understandings of Paul. Thus, our pre-understandings of Paul are integrally linked to what this study refers to as "Pauline Archimedean points"—fixed points of reference that establish the measure for

constructing *any* interpretation of Paul. Building on this premise, this study aims to interrogate the assorted issues that relate to and inform the formation of these Pauline Archimedean points. In doing so, my underlying goal is relatively modest: to urge Pauline scholars, and for that matter Pauline readers of any persuasion, to engage in a modicum of self-reflection over the "positive prejudices" that shape all of our efforts to comprehend or reconstruct Paul.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My wife has repeatedly needled me about how disturbingly long my time in graduate studies has been. That needling is justified. But regardless of how long it has taken, I know that I never would have made it two this point if I had not happened to come across two brilliant professors and kind individuals as an undergraduate student.

The first of these is Dr. Willi Braun, who I first encountered in an "Introduction to the New Testament" course. Dr. Braun instilled in me a way of thinking and inquiring about the New Testament (and religion in general) that was entirely new to me. That class led to further courses with Dr. Braun, who for years has allowed me to benefit from his wisdom, kindness, and congenial yet rigorous scholarly "attitude." I am tremendously fortunate to have had such an outstanding supervisor and intellectual mentor, and am indebted to him in a way that can never be repaid.

A second pivotal figure for me has been Dr. Robert Burch, who I first encountered in his (famous) "Existentialism" course. Over the years, I've gained a greater appreciation for how much the material in that course continues to resonate in my thinking. But beyond that, this course introduced me to the matchless oratory skills of Dr. Burch, a living and breathing rosetta stone for continental philosophy. Having been acquainted with him now for some time, I also feel confident in saying that his intellectual prowess and penchant for incisive criticism have, unlike his hockey skills, only grown over the years.

In addition to these two, I would also like to thank Dr. Lorne Zelyck for serving on my supervisory committee, and for his valuable criticisms and insights. While I know that our conceptual matrices very much differ, I am exceedingly grateful for his input, and am truly fortunate to have had him as a supervisory committee member.

I also must extend my deepest thanks to those involved in my examination committees: at my candidacy examination, Dr. Francis Landy (chair), Dr. John Kitchen, and Dr. Jeffrey Dudiak, and at my thesis examination, Dr. Ryan Dunch (chair), Dr. William Arnal, Dr. Zeba Crook, and Dr. John Harris.

There are many others who have in some manner or another helped me or influenced me along my long academic journey in religious studies at the University of Alberta. In particular, I am grateful to Dr. Wayne Litke, Dr. Charles Barbour, and again, Dr. Francis Landy. I am also grateful to Barb Baker, Janey Kennedy, and Nicola DiNicola for their administrative help, and to David Sulz for his always cheerful assistance in research-related matters (in spite of our more competitive relationship as hockey adversaries).

Outside of the field of religious studies, I must thank Dr. Paul Paton, who has provided consistent academic encouragement over the years, and sound career-related advice at critical junctures. I am also thankful to everyone at Jackie Handerek & Forester, particularly the partners, John Jackie, David Handerek, and Jeff Forester, who permitted me to pursue doctoral studies during my employment.

I am tremendously fortunate to have had such wonderful peers throughout my time as a doctoral student: Dr. Peter Sabo, Kristian Klippenstein, Dr. Ian Wilson, Dr. Clayton Bench, Rev. Rick Van Manen, Allan Wright, John Parish, and Michael Gillingham are all wonderful colleagues. I also owe very special thanks to Dr. Mark Wheller and Dr. Glen Fairen, whose own doctoral interests intersected at certain points with mine, resulting in much productive discussion (perhaps more for me than them). I am also grateful for their willingness to review drafts of my work and provide helpful comments and editorial suggestions along the way.

Outside of academia, I am lucky to have so many great friends who are in one way or another also owed much thanks. While I cannot name them all, I would be remiss if I did not make mention of three individuals: Preston Norris, Jason Norris, and Everett Norris. The contents of this thesis are in no small part rooted in the countless discussions that we have had over the years on topics relating to religion, philosophy, early Christianity, and especially Paul.

Last, but not least, I owe an immense amount of gratitude to my parents, brothers, and other family who have supported me throughout my lengthy academic journey. I am especially thankful to our children, Kylan, Logan, and Rory, for all the (usually) wonderful distractions that they provide. Above all, I cannot thank my wife Angela enough. She has exhibited unending patience and support throughout the many years of my life as a student. I love you. And don't worry: I am pretty, *pretty*, sure that I will not be pursuing another degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASR	*American Sociological Review*
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
Bib	*Biblica*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BR	*Biblical Research*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
ExtTim	*Expository Times*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HR	*History of Religions*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHC	*Journal of Higher Criticism*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MTSR	*Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TS	*Theological Studies*
ZNT	*Zeitschrift für Neues Testament*

All biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

INTRODUCTION

The Familiar Paul?[1]

To many, Paul is a familiar figure. Too familiar, perhaps. For as David Horrell laments, "[t]here is already a small mountain of books about Paul" and "even those whose research specialism is Paul despair of reading all that is being published about him."[2] I find this despair to be quite real. Indeed, even aside from a host of other entirely legitimate frustrations that might contribute to a level of jadedness when it comes to the study of Paul, the sheer glut of work on him is alone daunting, and can easily lead one to confess, alongside Cavan Concannon, that "studying Paul is no longer fun."[3]

Be that as it may, interest in Paul persists. And to be sure, there are many reasons for this, not the least of which relate to a prestige ascribed to him in both Christian history and theology. To a certain extent, this prestige is connected rather obviously to Paul's dominant presence in the New Testament, as both an author and integral character in Acts. For it is in Acts, of course, where we are told of Paul's famous "road to Damascus" conversion (Acts 9:13-19)—Paul transitions from being an early persecutor of Christianity to becoming one of its most zealous advocates. Further, insofar as his message and apostolic commission are said to be of divine origin—a "mission from God," as Elwood Blues would put it—Paul's immense significance to

[1] I recognize that on its face, the notion of a "familiar Paul" stands in stark contrast to some, such as Jacob Jervell, who present Paul as unfamiliar, or unknown. See Jacob Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984). Nonetheless, for reasons that will become clear shortly, the use of the word "familiar" is entirely deliberate.
[2] David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 3rd edition (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), xiii.
[3] Cavan Concannon, "Paul is Dead. Long Live Paulinism!: Imagining a Future for Pauline Studies," *Ancient Jew Review*, 1 November 2016, http://www.ancientjewreview.com/articles/2016/11/1/paul-is-dead-long-live-paulinism-imagining-a-future-for-pauline-studies. While it is not obvious to me that Concannon's title is an intentional allusion to the 1960s urban legend involving Paul McCartney, I would like to think that it is indeed a deliberately playful nod.

Christianity is almost impossible to overstate.[4] Indeed, one could well argue that Paul is relevant not only to Christianity, but also, more generally, to *any* who would take seriously the concept of divine revelation.

Yet even on top of all of this, there is an entrenched sort of literary eminence that Paul enjoys, an eminence continually reinscribed, deliberately or not, in each and every study of him (including this one). In fact, one routinely sees flagrant signs of Pauline veneration in scholarship, ranging from descriptions of him as a "gifted exegete"[5] or "genius,"[6] to even "one of the greatest religious leaders of all time."[7] Yet while some vague and unceasing sense of esteem is, for some writers at least, one factor that justifies and fuels a sustained preoccupation with Paul, there is another that is both ubiquitous among scholars and also quite embarrassing: despite the small mountain of books on the subject, there seemingly remains a persistent failure on the part of scholars to generate a cogent and compelling understanding of Paul's thought. As Ernst Käsemann remarks, "the real Paul... [is] for the most part unintelligible to posterity."[8] Paul, in other words, proves relentlessly incomprehensible.

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[4] See Acts 9:3-4; Acts 22:6-21; Acts 26:12-18; and Gal 1:12.

[5] Jacob Jervell, "Paul in the Acts of the Apostles: Tradition, History, Theology," in *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 76.

[6] See, for example, Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, 2nd edition, trans. William E. Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 79 ("Paul must be classed with the few people regarding whom that much misused phrase 'religious genius' can rightly and fittingly be used"); Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*, 5th edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 19 ("Ultimately, Paul's letters are understandable only in the light of his genius and the gospel he preached"); and Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 1 ("Paul is a man of enormous influence, a religious genius whose capacity for creative thought and original writing has made him a mountain on the landscape of Christian history"). It is worth noting, however, that the "genius" designation takes on an entirely different connotation in the work of Søren Kierkegaard, who actually views the concept as an inaccurate and ultimately inadequate descriptor of Paul. See Søren Kierkegaard, "The Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle," in *Without Authority*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[7] E.P. Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), xix.

[8] Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W.J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 249.

But lest contemporary readers of Paul despair too much over this state of affairs, it is worth adding some small measure of consolation: this failure, or the inability to "get Paul right,"[9] as Benjamin White puts it, goes back at least to Polycarp of Smyrna (ca. 69-155 CE), who remarked, "neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul."[10] In fact, even within the New Testament itself, the author of 2 Peter expresses some concern over the interpretation of Paul's letters, acknowledging that "[t]here are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:16). Empathizing with the author of 2 Peter, Richard Pervo notes that "[t]his observation is valid, for Paul has supplied exegetes with almost two millennia of employment, and his actual and putative comments have without doubt been twisted by many persons, not all of them to be numbered among the ignorant or unstable."[11] Similar sentiments abound in scholarship. Heikki Räisänen, for example, notes that in connection especially to Paul's relationship with Judaism and Judaic law, "[i]t is symptomatic that the followers of the apostle have hardly ever been able to agree on what he really wanted to say."[12] More despairing

[9] Benjamin L. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests Over the Image of the Apostle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15.

[10] Pol. *Phil*. 3. Philip Sellew points to the interesting fact that in the course of making this remark, Polycarp refers to letters, plural (i.e. *espitolas*), that Paul had written to the Philippians. Sellew goes on to revive and develop an argument concerning the status of canonical Philippians as a composite letter, i.e. an epistle comprised of multiple parts that were later synthesized. Philip Sellew, "'Laodiceans' and the Philippians Fragments Hypothesis," *HTR* 87 (1994): 17-28. Further, I should note that I am deliberately making use of the translation by J.B. Lightfoot in this instance. Of specific relevance here is that Lightfoot translates the word *katakoloutheó* ("follow after") as "follow." Elsewhere, it is translated as "come up to," or even "walk in the shoes of." See Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903); and Richard I. Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2016). The significance of this relates to the general theme of imitation (*mīmēsis*) that is present in Polycarp's letter. See Pol. *Phil*. 8-10; and Kenneth Andrew Berding, *Polycarp and Paul: An Analysis of Their Literary and Theological Relationship in Light of Polycarp's use of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 137-138. Thus, *katakoloutheó* could signal either (or both) that Polycarp is unable to comprehend the wisdom (*sophia*) of Paul, or that he's unable to replicate it. Given the emphasis of the present study, I am appealing here to the former interpretation.

[11] Richard I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 144.

[12] Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 3.

are the remarks of Paul Shubert, who laments, with no palpable sense of exaggeration, that "[a]s regards Paul and his letters there is no notable agreement on any major issue."[13]

Thus, in spite of the nearly two millennia that have passed without the formulation of a definitive understanding of Paul, it would seem that Pauline scholars either remain "like unto" Polycarp, or are—worse yet—among the ignorant and unstable. In either case, this state of affairs in Pauline studies is quite dissatisfying.

It would seem, then, that our purported familiarity with Paul is something of a façade. For while we viscerally tend to identify Paul as a figure who is reasonably well known, there appears to be no clear consensus on what he is actually saying.[14] And so, appealing to a Hegelian axiom, perhaps it is necessary to distinguish between our *familiarity* with Paul and our *understanding* of him:

> Quite generally, the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood. The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account; with all its pros and cons, such knowing never gets anywhere, and it knows not why. Subject and object, God, Nature, Understanding, sensibility, and so on, are uncritically taken for granted as familiar, established as valid and made into fixed points for starting and stopping. While these remain unmoved, the knowing activity goes back and forth between them, thus moving only on their surface.[15]

Drawing some inspiration from Hegel's precept, my interest here lies not in providing any guide that would purportedly lead to a firmer grasp of Paul, but rather in offering an account of how all endeavours to understand Paul operate within the confines of a necessary, but typically latent,

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[13] Paul Schubert, "Urgent Tasks for New Testament Research," in *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, ed. H.R. Willoughby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 221. Victor Paul Furnish restated Schubert's lament years later: "What P. Schubert wrote a generation ago is just about as true today: 'As regards Paul and his letters there is no notable agreement on any major issue.'" Victor Paul Furnish, "Pauline Studies," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 321.
[14] My reference to a lack of consensus on what Paul "is actually saying" is meant in two ways. First, I am referring here to the *interpretation* of Paul's writings. Second, I am referring more literally to a lack of consensus on what material can be identified as authentically Pauline (which in its own way is simply just another element of the interpretive task). Broadly speaking, this study relates to *both* ways of thinking about what Paul is actually saying.
[15] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), § 31.

selection of fixed starting points. Generally speaking, the selection of these points relates fundamentally to vital choices about *data*. Moreover, these choices condition all interpretations of Paul, regardless of whether they are expressly acknowledged. Indeed, they often are not. Frequently, the assumption of fixed points of knowledge in the study of Paul is "uncritically taken for granted."

To put the matter differently, these fixed points that precede all understandings of Paul might collectively be referred to as a Pauline "Archimedean point." In the context of Pauline studies, this phrase is employed by Calvin Roetzel, who worries, "[i]f we cannot locate a single archimedean point from which to measure Paul himself in the letters, how shall we do the same with a later tradition?"[16] While this worry is not frequently addressed in Pauline studies, White argues that the prospect of a Pauline Archimedean point is in fact impossible:

> [W]hat is now needed in Pauline Studies is a full-scale shift away from the continued impulse to deploy positivist and Rankean historiography in the service of the "real" Paul... A more hermeneutically sophisticated approach is required if we are to take seriously the epistemological challenges of the twentieth century. And in the attempt to historicize discourses on the "real" Paul, exposing their social and ideological situatedness, we must come to the place where we can concede that an "Archimedean point" for reconstructing the "real" Paul may never be possible.[17]

White can most definitely be lauded for calling on scholars to employ "a more hermeneutically sophisticated approach" to Pauline studies. And admittedly, my own epistemological proclivities are such that I empathize with his desire to "shift away from the continued impulse to deploy positive and Rankean historiography." Yet in a sense, I think he is not entirely right in suggesting that an Archimedean point for reconstructing the real Paul may never be possible. I say this,

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[16] Calvin J. Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 176. Elsewhere, Roetzel uses this phrase in reference to second-century Christianities generally, noting that "no clean line divided orthodoxy and heresy and no single archimedian [sic] point could be summoned to verify the truth claims of any confession." Calvin J. Roetzel, "Paul in the Second Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 228.

[17] White, *Remembering Paul*, 69.

however, in a very particular way. For even though I agree with the sentiment that the quest for a general, or universal Archimedean point is problematic in Pauline studies (among other fields), there is nonetheless a sense in which the formation of a Pauline Archimedean point is actually indispensable: it is a precondition to each and every study on Paul, and also a precondition to all of our evaluations of those studies. In other words, we *must* have a kind of grounding, or some type of functional or operational Pauline Archimedean point in order to get anywhere at all.[18]

Granted, the use of the phrase "Archimedean point" may seem ill-suited to the study of Paul, as it is a notion that is often thought to carry weightier, or perhaps more "earth moving" connotations. The most significant epistemological allusion to an "Archimedean point" is found in Descartes' second meditation, in which he writes that "Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth; so I too can hope for great things if I manage to find just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshakeable."[19]

To be clear, I am certainly not employing the phrase in the same sense as Descartes, who invokes it quite solemnly in a discussion of great epistemological gravitas. Nonetheless, I employ the phrase here partly as a continuation of the language reflected in the comments of Roetzel and White. But admittedly, I am also using it in a refined way. I use it to serve as a reminder that studies on Paul involve vital methodological assumptions or choices at the outset. Indeed, it is these assumptions or choices that engender a kind of functional Pauline Archimedean point that grounds all of our studies. For there is no doubt that we are faced with a curious phenomenon in the study of Paul, one that distinguishes it from the study of most other

[18] In truth, I do not think that I am at sharp odds with White in this regard. The issue here really turns on how one uses the phrase "Archimedean point." Understood in its admittedly more common Cartesian sense, I concur with White's position. However, viewed in the functional sense I wish to emphasize here, I think it impossible to completely jettison the concept of an Archimedean point.

[19] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. and trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

ancient seminal literary figures.[20] This phenomenon relates largely to the issue of *authorship*, and the fact that serious studies on Paul demand at least some type of preliminary inquiry over which literary material is or is not admissible as evidence. To be sure, this type of concern is by no means unique. With Plato, for example, there exist disputes over the authenticity of epistles[21] and even certain dialogues[22] that have been attributed to him. Yet be that as it may, there is still a rather large, unassailable corpus of Platonic literature inexorably identified as authentic. Consequently, when it comes to debates over the authenticity of the "disputed" Platonic corpus, the stakes are limited.

With Paul, the situation differs. For despite some intermittent points of agreement between scholars, the ground rules in Pauline scholarship are neither static, nor universally agreed upon—nor, for that matter, are they even expressly addressed in each and every study. Consequently, when it comes to knowing, with precision, the varying evidentiary weight that we grant to various works in the Pauline data archive, we can at times be left wondering, or required to draw conclusions for ourselves.

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[20] In making this assertion, I am very cognizant of the scholarly tendency to (consciously or otherwise) demarcate "Christianity," or certain aspects of it, as special, or even unique. I am not intending to reinforce that tendency in suggesting that we are faced with a curious phenomenon in Pauline studies. Rather, while I recognize that there may be a fine line between conscientiously examining the subject matter and inadvertently privileging it, my intent here is to merely highlight a phenomenon that in my view genuinely warrants examination.

[21] T.H. Irwin notes that "[t]he long controversy about the authenticity of the Platonic *Letters* is still not settled. I am inclined to agree with those who reject all of them." See T.H. Irwin, "Plato: The Intellectual Background," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 78, n. 4. Irwin's assessment is consistent with the more overarching view of Necip Fikri Alican, who writes that "[t]he verdict on [the authenticity of Plato's letters] tends to be piecemeal as well as wholesale, with some scholars accepting some letters while rejecting others, and other scholars arriving at uniform judgments on all thirteen letters, thus formulating a blanket opinion one way of the other, though not necessarily agreeing yea or nay among themselves." Necip Fikri Alican, *Rethinking Plato: A Cartesian Quest for the Real Plato* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 136-137.

[22] Alican presents a table that "reflects a fairly typical position on the breakdown of authenticity, which is to say, it might not please everyone, but it will certainly not alienate very many people." In that table, he identifies twenty-four "genuine" dialogues, six "dubious" dialogues, and twelve "spurious" dialogues. See Alican, *Rethinking Plato*, 134-135.

Yet in stating all of this, my aim here is not to suggest that Pauline studies have led to a type of knowing that in Hegel's words "never gets anywhere, and it knows not why." On the contrary, the study of Paul, particularly over the past two centuries, has generated a wealth of important scholarly work, much of which forms the fertile ground on which this study is based. As such, my own views are of course a product of this scholarly "inheritance," to put it in Jacques Derrida's terms. Indeed, as obvious as it may seem, such an inheritance presents itself, as Dawn McCance writes, "as an injunction to which we *must* respond."[23]

That being said, my primary purpose in this study is to examine the conditions that ground our efforts to understand Paul—conditions that are universal, if implicit, in every encounter with the Paul of the New Testament. Yet to be clear, I do not intend to assert that there exists a single, absolute Archimedean point that forms the basis of all studies on Paul. Rather, in referring to these conditions as "universal," I mean only that all studies proceed on the basis of *some* kind of functional or operational Archimedean point. In other words, the fact that we *possess* Pauline Archimedean points is universal. However, the iterations of those Archimedean points can manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Indeed, it is the recognition of manifold Archimedean points that occasions this study.[24]

In any event, the relevance of a Pauline Archimedean point can hardly be overestimated, as it is a prerequisite to *any* engagement with Paul, regardless of whether it is expressly cognized or formulated. Accordingly, I view this topic as one that is fundamentally relevant not only to Pauline scholars, but ultimately to *any* reader of the New Testament Paul. Further, this topic is one that is entirely distinct from the question of whether we as Paul's readers are able to agree

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[23] Dawn McCance, *Derrida on Religion: Thinker of Difference* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 1. See Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 54.

[24] And in stating this, I recognize that I am most certainly perverting the dominant, Cartesian notion of an Archimedean point.

upon a construction of the real Paul, or "get Paul right." My aim here is not to propose some new or refined hermeneutic strategy for understanding Paul, but rather to provide an account of key issues that are vitally relevant to each and every engagement with him.

In a sense, my tack here draws inspiration from Kant's reconfiguration of philosophy's approach to metaphysics—the so-called Copernican turn—in which he reframed the relationship between human subjects and objects of inquiry. For Kant, the focus was not on trying to grasp knowledge of objects, but rather on apprehending the *a priori* categories of human knowing that condition any experience of objects whatsoever.[25] Comparably, my aim here is to focus not so much on Paul himself, or Pauline theology as objects of inquiry, but rather the particular conditions under which study of these topics occurs. Yet admittedly, the move is not altogether congruous with Kant's approach. For as mentioned above, the *particular* conditions that precede our substantive inquiries on Paul are neither universal, nor *a priori*. More precisely, the fact that there *are* very significant conditions that precede our studies of Paul is universal; however, the *specific* conditions themselves are not. The reason for this is that readers of Paul have a great degree of control over the conditions, or perhaps the "rules of engagement" under which Pauline studies occur. Each and every interpretation of Paul is based on its own prior interpretive principle, or guiding conditions, and each interpretation essentially views these conditions as *the* Archimedean point for all credible interpretation of Paul. Yet at the same time, there is no one, single principle, or one set of guiding conditions that can compellingly establish itself as the universal principle.[26] For example, while one person may be methodologically inclined to

[25] Kant puts it thus: "[i]f intuition has to conform to the constitution of the objects, then I do not see how we can know anything of them *a priori*; but if the object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, then I can very well represent this possibility to myself." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 110.

[26] This relates to White's earlier assertion concerning the impossibility of a Pauline Archimedean point. I agree with White's view that a universal interpretive principle, i.e. a Cartesian Archimedean point, is not possible with respect to the study of Paul. However, I would also insist that a kind of functional Archimedean point is absolutely

construct an account of Paul using Acts and the pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) as valid resources, another may be prone to exclude these texts as evidence. Thus, given our perpetual and inextricable role in the construction and management of these conditions, I think that the orientation of this study also draws inspiration from Hans-Georg Gadamer's assertion that the task of hermeneutics is "not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place"[27]:

> Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks. On the other hand, hermeneutical consciousness is aware that its bond to this subject matter does not consist in some self-evident, unquestioned unanimity, as is the case with the unbroken stream of tradition. Hermeneutic work is based on a polarity of familiarity and strangeness…there is a tension…in the play between the traditionary text's strangeness and familiarity to us, between being a historically intended, distanciated object and belonging to a tradition. *The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between*.[28]

In this study, the adaptation of Gadamer's approach requires a closer examination of some of the issues that account for the paradoxical tension between Paul's firmly-established familiarity on the one hand, and his persistent strangeness, or seeming impenetrability, on the other. Yet to be clear, it is not my intention to provide an account of one particular theory of Pauline interpretation or another, nor to offer up a novel one that would lead to a firmer grasp of the real Paul. Rather, my aim is to address a variety of issues that lie at the substratum of *all* interpretations of Paul.

In doing so, however, it is also critical to acknowledge that on a fundamental level, this study involves and implicates rather distinctive notions of truth. For on the one hand, the concept

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necessary in order to proceed with any study of him. As Jonathan Z. Smith notes, "[y]ou have to allow me some measure of monomania if I am to get anywhere." Jonathan Z. Smith, "Afterward: The Necessary Lie Duplicity in the Disciplines," in Russell T. McCutcheon, *Studying Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 80.

[27] Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1999), 295.

[28] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 295.

of any Archimedean point inevitably implicates a Cartesian epistemology, one in which "'truth,' in the strict sense, denotes the conformity of thought with its object."[29] Under this model, one apprehends truth if an object of cognition aligns with the object as it is in reality.[30] Yet in the case of grasping a true understanding of Paul, we are not dealing with an ontological truth about an object in the world, *per se*. Rather, we are concerned with truth as it relates to the proper interpretation of a person's *thought*. Consequently, the Cartesian epistemology that is implicated here is perhaps better articulated in terms of Friedrich Schleiermacher's formulation of hermeneutics as "the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly."[31] This is precisely what is entailed in most efforts to get Paul right. And it is our attachment to this traditional idea of "getting Paul right" that forms the foundation of this study.

On the other hand, this study is itself governed by a *different* approach to the notion of truth. Specifically, the approach in this study begins with the premise that we do not possess the ability to grasp absolute truth as finite, rational beings.[32] Thus, applied to the subject matter here, my claim is that we are unable to apprehend a definitive, true, interpretation of Paul. Consequently, and as noted earlier, this study takes a quasi-Kantian turn, shifting the focus from trying to grasp the real Paul, to reflecting on those conditions that ground any and all

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[29] René Descartes, "Letter to Mersenne: 16 October 1639," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 3 vols., trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3:139.

[30] Put in Thomistic terms, "truth is correspondence of thing and mind" (or in the original formulation, "*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*"). Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ed. Timothy McDermott (Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1991), 45.

[31] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3. I would suggest that theoretically speaking, this task persistently eludes the Jesus scholar. For insofar as we have no material written by Jesus, there is no discourse from him that we can strive to correctly interpret. Rather, when it comes to the case of Jesus, the Schleiermacherian hermeneutic task would more precisely be framed as an attempt to understand the *gospel writers*.

[32] This is an essentially Kantian position. See also Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), viii, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

engagements with Paul.[33] In stating this, however, I would again emphasize that I am not suggesting that there are unchanging *universal* conditions that ground all of our encounters with Paul. Rather, what I mean to suggest is this: while there are vital conditions that ground all studies of Paul, these conditions can manifest themselves in various iterations, depending in large part on our preferences or biases. Given this, my approach here is fundamentally informed by Gadamer's thesis concerning the "positivity of prejudice"—that is, our biases are integral to our ability to formulate *any* cogent understanding whatsoever:

> It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being. This is a provocative formulation, for I am using it to restore to its rightful place a positive concept of prejudice that was driven out of the linguistic usage by the French and the English Enlightenment. It can be shown that the concept of prejudice did not originally have the meaning we have attached to it. Prejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous, so that they inevitably distort the truth. In fact, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something—whereby what we encounter says something to us.[34]

Thus, building on Gadamer's thesis, the heart of this study revolves around a single question: what are the conditions under which *any* understanding of Paul takes place? In working through this inquiry, I hope in part to account for the major factors that make possible the production of a "small mountain" of Pauline scholarship, while simultaneously (and somewhat ironically) adding to it. But more important, my underlying goal is this: to urge Pauline scholars,

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[33] I should note here that I hesitate to invoke the Kantian language of "transcendental" conditions on account of two considerations. First, insofar as these conditions can manifest themselves in different forms from reader to reader, the term "transcendental" would imply a universality that does not apply here. Second, taking into consideration the subject matter I am concerned with, I wish to avoid the use of language that might evoke any notions of a metaphysical (or even spiritual) realm—while such concepts are of course arguably relevant to discussions about Pauline theology, they are not relevant to this study, in which I am concerned with the conditions that ground our studies of Paul.

[34] Hans-George Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 9. At the risk of oversimplification, I would suggest that Gadamer's thesis here is somewhat akin to the sociological notion of "framing," which denotes "'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label' occurrences within their life space and the world large." David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *ASR* 51 (1986): 464. See also Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 21.

and for that matter Pauline readers of any persuasion, to engage in a modicum of self-reflection over the "positive prejudices" that shape all of our efforts to comprehend or reconstruct Paul.

Mapping the Study

While the point may appear obvious on its face, the primary and most fundamental consideration in formulating any construction of Paul involves the issue of *data*. Questions relating simply to data—the various resources available in Pauline studies, the authoritative hierarchy of those resources, the identification of certain difficulties within and between these resources, the genre and occasion of these resources, and uses to which we put them—are at the thematic core of this inquiry.

Going forward, I divide this study into five chapters. The first of these focusses largely on preliminary methodological and epistemological concerns, and reflects broadly upon the varied interests and backgrounds that Pauline scholars bring with them to their studies on Paul. In this regard, I am of course by no means a dispassionate observer; on the contrary, I have a rather ingrained set of impressions that inform my own disposition vis-à-vis Paul as a historical figure, the study of Paul generally, and *this* study of Paul in particular. Bearing this in mind, this first chapter might be viewed not only as an occasion for methodological reflection, but also as a form of confession (minus, however, any request or expectation for absolution).

The second chapter in part traces the development of a Pauline data set. In short, the chapter is concerned largely with the formation of the canonical Pauline archive.[35] Yet given the

[35] Although I will touch on the point later in this study, I should add here that despite some passing references, I am not inclined to delve into a detailed discussion of non-canonical Pauline material (e.g. the Acts of Paul, the Correspondence Between Paul and Seneca, the Epistle to the Laodiceans, the Third Epistle to the Corinthians, the Prayer of the Apostle Paul, and the Apocalypse of Paul). My rationale in this regard relates primarily to the fact that if there is one small issue that virtually all Pauline scholars agree on, it is this: none of the Pauline apocryphal texts—of those discovered so far, at least—can be viewed as sources of reliable data on what Paul did or said. They are neither reliable sources for constructing a "historical Paul," nor for formulating a compelling account of the "real

concerns of this study, I do not intend to closely scrutinize every epistle. Instead, I begin by appealing to the general notion of *canon* as a starting point. My rationale for this tack is that it is the contents of the New Testament canon, and in particular the Pauline epistles within it that comprise the entire Pauline data set. For in every study of Paul, the letters, as the key constituent parts of this canonical archive, are employed in various combinations and permutations. In this section, however, my concern is not so much with the individual letters themselves. Rather, I will outline various theories concerning the formation of the Pauline canon, and will also discuss the presence of Paul in the writings of some of the early church fathers, as well as Marcion of Sinope, who remains the most notable early Pauline archivist. Further, recognizing that the text is both canonical and frequently appealed to in the study of Paul, I will discuss the placement of Acts in the Pauline archive, and the methodological concerns that can accompany that placement.

The third chapter focusses on the issue of pseudonymity, and draws some inspiration from White's identification of what he refers to as "modern rhetorical strategies for discerning and deploying the 'real' Paul."[36] The first such strategy, according to White, involves the Pauline authorship of an entire text.[37] For example, if one denies that Paul authored the pastoral epistles, then—for the purposes of determining Paul's genuine thought, at least—it ordinarily follows that these texts are removed from the data set. A second strategy involves deliberating over

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Paul" (a distinction that I will elaborate on in the following chapter). In stating this, however, I by no means intend to disparage these texts or impugn their utility. On the contrary, I concur with the remarks of Mark Harding on this point: "Do these letters further our knowledge of Paul? The answer, clearly, is No. Nevertheless, quite obviously, they do provide a window into the manner in which early proponents of the Pauline heritage made use of the apostle in the enterprise of defending and interpreting the faith." Mark Harding, "Disputed and Undisputed Letters of Paul," in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 144. Recognizing, then that these works have much to contribute to a wealth of scholarly endeavours—not the least of which concerns, in the broadest of terms, the development of various Christian ideologies—it is nonetheless the case that for the purposes of this particular study, reference to them will be limited.

[36] White, *Remembering Paul*, 4.

[37] White, *Remembering Paul*, 4.

"interpolations," or "adulterations" to an otherwise genuinely Pauline text.[38] If one concludes that a particular segment of a text is not representative of Paul's original thought, then that segment of text is typically severed from the data set. Third, if the authenticity of a text is affirmed, one can shift into a discussion over the particular interpretation of the passage.[39]

In this study, my concern is not so much with the third strategy outlined by White, but rather the first two. For it is these strategies—or rather that selection of data that *flows* from the deployment of these two strategies—that enables the operation of the third, and conditions the production of *any* understanding of Paul or his thought. Accordingly, the third chapter addresses not only the issue of pseudonymity in general, but the issue of pseudonymity as it relates to both letters in their entirety, and parts of those letters, i.e. interpolations.

The fourth chapter first discusses issues pertaining to literary genre, reflecting in particular upon the letters as occasional writings. In turn, this discussion will lead to a question over intentionality: put in broad terms, what were the letters were intended to achieve? Indeed, this is a two-fold question, as it requires us to consider both the addressees of the letters, and also the epistemological expectations that we place upon these letters, notwithstanding their status *as* letters.

The final chapter in this study addresses the issue of authority in the study of Paul. Discussion of authority here involves many facets: contemporary theories on authority, the relevance of canonical authority to the study of Paul, and the cultural entrenchment of Paul as an authority figure—indeed, this entrenchment is one that subsists even beyond the milieu of Christianity. This section will reinforce the underlying thesis of this study: that our examinations of Paul demand a number of integral preliminary choices made by the reader. And while these

[38] White, *Remembering Paul*, 5.
[39] White, *Remembering Paul*, 5

choices are frequently covert, and perhaps even subconscious, it remains the case that they precondition any engagement with Paul. Given this, readers of Paul would do well to carefully reflect upon the multifarious issues that animate our functional Pauline Archimedean points.

CHAPTER 1

"IN A MIRROR DIMLY"

"Our Knowledge is Imperfect…": The Historical Paul, the Real Paul, and *Paulusbilder*

In a sense, one could say that this study serves simply as a reminder that "our knowledge is imperfect" (1 Cor 13:9) in Pauline studies. The consequence of this, as Cavan Concannon states, is that we must "stop trying to craft 'real' Pauls that can pronounce judgment on our political and theological projects" and "stop pretending that our historical procedures can get us back to *the* historical Paul."[40] Such remarks echo the earlier-referenced statement by White about the impossibility of locating a universal Archimedean point for reconstructing the "real Paul."[41] Indeed, White notes further that "the quest for the historical Paul is cracking, along with the epistemic certainty that attends the language of the 'real' Paul."[42] To be sure, my study here certainly draws some inspiration from these views. Yet at the same time, I do not entirely share the notion that we should "stop trying to craft 'real' Pauls," even though I *do* agree that we should "stop pretending that our historical procedures can get us back to *the* historical Paul." In this regard, I think it vital to distinguish between the limits of our epistemological abilities and the incessancy and inextricability of our epistemological impulses. In other words, while I do not advocate for any sort of injunction against *attempts* to grasp the real Paul or the historical Paul, I would, however, concur with the assertion that *the* real Paul or *the* historical Paul cannot be grasped.[43]

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[40] Concannon, "Paul is Dead."
[41] White, *Remembering Paul*, 69.
[42] White, *Remembering Paul*, 12.
[43] Implicit in my view on this point is a fidelity to a certain epistemological position, one that "retains the faith in the uniqueness of truth, but does not believe we ever possess it definitively." Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), viii. To some extent, this will be addressed again later in this chapter, and also at the conclusion of chapter 4.

But in stating all of this, I should also pause here to reflect on the way in which we understand such phrases as the "historical Paul" and the "real Paul" in the first place. For while these two phrases are used synonymously by scholars such as Concannon and White (among others), I want to draw a distinction between the two, and refine them for the purposes of this study.

The notion of a "historical Paul" of course picks up on the phrase used to reference the quests for the "historical Jesus."[44] And if one looks to those quests, or rather their attributes, it quickly becomes apparent that many of them are common to the endeavour to acquire an understanding of Paul. Writing on the multiple historical Jesus quests, Willi Braun outlines both the nature and function of some of these attributes:

> The "past" (the historical Jesus) is selectively identified from items in an "archival" record; by applying complex value judgments and evidentiary standards, these items are then counted as evidence or assigned a factual status; the valued items, now counting as evidence or facts, are then interpreted in relation to each other by some explanatory schema of coherence and meaning generated by the creative intellectual activity of the historian. *Et voilà*, an image of the past (the historical Jesus) is put in place.[45]

This very assessment can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to scholarly works that are concerned, explicitly or implicitly, with apprehending the historical Paul. Thus, the quest for the *historical* Paul involves constructing an "image of the past," one relating to what the Paul of history actually did and said (or wrote).

Yet at the same time, there is an ostensibly trite yet fundamentally relevant distinction between the quest for the historical Jesus and the quest for the historical Paul. In the case of the

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[44] The use of the plural here ("quests") is deliberate. As B.S. Rosner writes, "[t]he twentieth century will be remembered for two world wars, but in New Testament studies for no less than three quests of the historical Jesus." B.S. Rosner, "Looking Back on the 20th Century 1. New Testament Studies," *ExtTim* 110 (1999): 317. For a critical overview of the various quests, see Burton L. Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 25-40; and William Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London: Equinox, 2005).

[45] Willi Braun, "Socio-Rhetorical Interests: Context," in *Whose Historical Jesus*, ed. William E. Arnal and Michel Robert Desjardins (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 92. See also Willi Braun, "'Wir haben doch den amerikansichen Jesus.' Das amerikanische Jesus-Seminar: Eine Standortbestimmung," *ZNT* 16/8 (2005): 30-39.

former, we recognize from the outset that the available data on Jesus is filtered, coming to us largely through anonymously-authored gospels, canonical or otherwise, which more or less function, at the risk of oversimplification, as biographies.[46] Accordingly, there is a patent separation between the object of inquiry, Jesus, and our own data, the gospels. Nowhere is this more explicit than in the opening words of Luke's gospel: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us... it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed" (Luke 1:1-4). With these words, the author immediately discloses to us (or more specifically, to Theophilus)[47] that he is an *intermediary*, and freely admits that he is driven to synthesize the materials before him out of a desire for an "orderly account."[48] This Lukan admission accentuates a well-worn but oft-forgotten truism concerning one of the most significant problems with the quests for the historical Jesus: although we can endlessly attempt to separate the wheat from chaff, so to speak, the source material itself is patently a second-order

[46] Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58-59. Though second-century traditions associate the actual authorship of the canonical gospels with the names of the evangelists that we use to identify the gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), "most modern scholars do not think that the evangelists were eyewitnesses." Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 109.

[47] Luke expressly addresses his work to the "most excellent Theophilus" (*kratiste Theophile*) (Luke 1:3). As the name Theophilus can be interpreted simply as "lover of God," there are some who suggest that the intended audience is, in fact, lovers of God in general, rather than a particular individual bearing that name. Martin Culy, for example, states that "[t]he debate over the identity of Theophilus turns, in part, on the meaning of the adjective κράτιστε [*kratiste*]. While some argue the adjective refers to 'noble status, with the implication of power and authority'...others see it as a polite form of address used in dedications." Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall, *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 5.

[48] Luke's sources are generally identified as the gospel of Mark, material common to the gospels of both Matthew and Luke (typically referred to as "Q" or "Quelle," i.e. "source"), and material unique to Luke's gospel (often designated "L"). For a general overview in this regard, see Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 263-265.

production, and thus does not provide us with a first-hand account, nor does it provide us with the unadulterated words of Jesus.[49]

With Paul, however, the situation would appear different. For even though there exists a plethora of methodological concerns regarding the study of the Pauline epistles, there also subsists a steadfast impression that we have *some* data that can reliably be attributed to Paul himself. This in itself distinguishes the Pauline situation from that of Jesus. For in the case of Jesus, one of the underlying concerns is that *none* of the data is attributable directly to him; there is no point at which critical scholarship has claimed that Jesus *authored* certain texts.[50] As such, the quest for the historical Jesus involves a preliminary hurdle: procedurally, we get muddled up in trying to sift through whether one utterance or another, or some deed, can be genuinely traced back to a historical figure, before we even reach the point of trying to *interpret* that data, or put it to some further kind of use.

With Paul, the starting point differs. In his case, the New Testament presents us with thirteen letters purportedly authored by him—or at the very least, most would agree that *some* of

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[49] One particularly noteworthy example of the endeavour to identify the authentic words of Jesus can be found in the work of the Jesus Seminar, who examined the four canonical gospels, along with the Gospel of Thomas, and produced a ranking of authenticity in connection to the sayings of Jesus. See Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of* Jesus (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993). For some further information concerning the nature of the Jesus Seminar, see David B. Gowler, *What Are They Saying About the Historical Jesus?* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 31-57. While the work of the seminar has been the subject of criticism, Gowler nonetheless lauds these scholars for working "as a collaborative group in a distinctive fashion, something unusual in scholarship even today...the Seminar made a significant contribution to scholarly and public dialogues." Gowler, *What Are They Saying*, 57.

[50] We are, however, in possession of a text that is universally viewed as spurious: the Reply of Jesus to Abgar, King of Edessa. The letter is contained in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History.* See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.13.5-22. In the letter, Jesus commends Abgar for his belief, and indicates that while he cannot visit Abgar personally (as he is soon to ascend to heaven), he will later send one of his disciples to heal a disease that afflicted the king. This single letter attributed to Jesus is noteworthy—as J.K. Elliott notes, the letter "represents the only example of a text written in Jesus' name: such vehicles for Jesus' direct communications were not made use of in the apocryphal tradition." J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal Jesus: Legends of the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 64. The patently spurious nature of the epistle is evidenced by at least two considerations: "First, Jesus knows of the writings about himself, all of which modern scholars believe were written after his own death. Second, there appear to be direct quotations from the Gospel of John regarding not seeing, but believing in Jesus (Jn 20:29)." Terry G. Wilfong and Kevin P. Sullivan, "The Reply of Jesus to King Abgar: A Coptic New Testament Apocryphon Reconsidered," *BASP* 42 (2005): 109.

these were genuinely authored by him.[51] Consequently, even if we are unable to concur on the particulars, most of us begin with the assumption that we can identify some authentic data from which we can proceed with our studies. In other words, to repeat the point noted earlier: all studies proceed on the basis of some kind of functional Pauline Archimedean point.

With this in mind, I think it both possible and worthwhile to formulate a taxonomy that involves two distinct, but very much overlapping kinds of inquiries in Pauline studies. The first of these is the quest for the *historical Paul*. As indicated above, the quest for the historical Paul is concerned with grasping a better sense of what Paul actually *said* and *did*. Did Paul persecute followers of Jesus (e.g. Gal 1:13; Acts 8:1-3)?[52] Did he perform miraculous feats before his followers (e.g. 2 Cor 12:1; Acts 19:11-12)?[53] How many times was Paul shipwrecked (e.g. 2 Cor 11:25; Acts 27)? And *did* he write all of those letters that are attributed to him? These are all questions relevant to the construction of a *historical Paul*.

The second category concerns the endeavour to grasp "the real Paul," a task that I think is distinguishable from the quest for the historical Paul. The search for the real Paul, which I equate with the attempt to "get Paul right," is one that primarily relates to the interpretation of data that is already deemed to be authentically Pauline.[54] With this sort of inquiry, then, our starting point is markedly different than where we stand vis-à-vis the historical Jesus. In Paul's case, we *are* ostensibly in possession of some reliable data that comes directly from him. The trick, however, is to properly *interpret* it. In other words, the quest for the real Paul, or the quest to get Paul

[51] While this matter will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter, I am referring here essentially to the distinction between the canonical Pauline corpus, and what Raymond Collins refers to as the "critical Pauline corpus." Raymond F. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write: The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pauline Pseudepigrapha* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 245.
[52] I am intentionally including references to Acts here. While its utility to the study of Paul is a topic that will be addressed in the next chapter, there is no doubt that it is frequently cited by Pauline scholars engaged in trying to reconstruct the historical Paul.
[53] Acts includes a host of more specific examples in this regard. See, for example, Acts 13:11, 14:10, 16:18, 19:11-12, 20:10-12, 28:5, and 28:8.
[54] In the remainder of this study, I will use the phrases "getting Paul right" and the "real Paul" interchangeably.

right, is one that—having assumed the existence of a reliable set of data—attempts to reconstruct or figure out what exactly Paul *meant*.

With this task, we are not as preoccupied with the particulars of Paul's life, except to the extent that they assist in understanding or reconstructing what ideas Paul was attempting to convey in his writings. Thus, the task of getting Paul right aligns with Friedrich Schleiermacher's formulation of hermeneutics as "the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly."[55] Indeed, I believe that this remains a fundamental enterprise for most Pauline scholars, one that generally involves an appeal to some combination or permutation of the Pauline letters.[56] For while the quest for a historical Paul can of course be interesting in its own right, I would suggest that it is a quest that is by and large incidental, or supplementary to, the effort to formulate a cogent and compelling account of what Paul *meant*.[57] And of course, in the quest to apprehend "what Paul meant" looms the spectre of something more: often, the quest

[55] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 3. As noted earlier, this is a task that persistently eludes the Jesus scholar—given that we have no material written by Jesus, there is no discourse from him that we can strive to correctly interpret.

[56] There are most certainly inquiries that focus only on single letters, of course, and I do not intend to suggest otherwise. However, I would maintain that for the most part, efforts to apprehend the real Paul generally involve an appeal to some collection or another of the letters (a topic that will be discussed in the next chapter). Indeed, in some instances, the task of getting Paul right also involves an appeal to Acts, even though Paul is not the author of this work. While the use of Acts in the construction of a real Paul will also be discussed further in the next chapter, suffice it to say that adherence to the Schleiermacherian notion of hermeneutics necessitates some nuance when considering the relation between Acts and Paul. Strictly speaking, the "correct" interpretation of Acts is not about interpreting Paul's words correctly, but rather *Luke's*.

[57] Although it is not my intent to investigate particular hermeneutic strategies in connection to the Pauline texts, I am most certainly aware that their placement alone (being located in the biblical canon) relates to a subset of interpretive issues or questions. For example, does the interpretation of a biblical text demand the use of strategies *different* from those employed in the interpretation of other "secular" texts? While my own proclivities lead me to answer such a question in the negative, there can be no doubt that those who advocate for some form of "theological hermeneutics" maintain otherwise: "Theological hermeneutics…encompasses a variety of interpretive models and practices. They have in common the desire to find an appropriate hermeneutic that is *faithful to the Christian theological tradition*." Stanley E. Porter and Jason C. Robinson, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction to Interpretive Theory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 245 (emphasis added). There are assuredly debates to be had in this regard, but I do not intend to delve into them in the context of this study.

is concerned not merely with what Paul *meant* in the Schleiermacherian sense, but also what Paul *means for us*.[58]

The present study relates then to these two distinct but overlapping projects—the quest for the historical Paul and the quest for the real Paul. For in part, this study addresses issues concerning the *reliability* of the data, primarily in terms of its authenticity. In essence, this issue boils down to a single question: is the data we have truly representative of Paul's thought? This question is relevant to *both* projects: the issue of what Paul said or wrote forms an integral part of the effort to construct a historical Paul, and the issue of what Paul said or wrote is also of fundamental relevance to the task of apprehending the real Paul.

A further focal point of this study simply relates broadly to the issue of interpretation, specifically in connection to the genre(s) of the Pauline data, and the expectations we place upon that data. And while this aspect, too, is relevant to both projects, I think that it is *particularly* salient to the task of getting Paul right. Now granted, it is trite enough to acknowledge that we of course filter or interpret *all* data. But when it comes to apprehending the real Paul, issues pertaining to interpretation become particularly acute. For it is the problem of interpretation that is at the root of Schubert's earlier-noted lament about there being "no notable agreement on any major issue."[59]

The aforementioned distinction between the historical Paul and the real Paul, and this study's focus on issues of authenticity and interpretation, lead again to a critical underlying

[58] This, I think, is entirely consistent with Concannon's call to "stop interpreting Paul and start creating Paulinisms that can change the world." Concannon, "Paul is Dead." In stating this, however, I believe that Concannon is simply calling upon scholars to be more explicit or transparent about the fact that most endeavours to apprehend the 'real Paul' are *already*, at least in part, attempts to understand what Paul can mean, or do, for us. This is entirely analogous to the way in which the historical Jesus figure is analyzed and deployed. As William Arnal argues, "scholarship on the historical Jesus uses the figure of Jesus as a screen or symbol on which to project contemporary culture debates, and to employ the inherent authority of this Jesus-figure to advance one or another particular stance on these debates." Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus*, 5. This very same observation can be transposed onto the study of Paul.

[59] Schubert, "Urgent Tasks for New Testament Research," 221.

thesis of this study, namely, that *all* studies on Paul must proceed from some kind of Archimedean point. Yet the thesis of this study goes further than this. Additionally, what I would posit here is that the concept of a Pauline Archimedean point goes hand in hand with what scholars have referred to as a *Paulusbild* (i.e. "Paul picture"). The way in which contemporary scholarship has employed this term is summarized by White:

> Changes in historiographical theory and practice in the 1970s, combined with the deconstruction of the Pauline Captivity narrative during that same period, have given rise to the now widespread focus on the images or portrayals of Paul (*Paulusbilder*) constructed in various early Christian texts. These texts portrayed Paul in tendentious ways that were productive for their authors' communities. The question Who got Paul right? was becoming less of a concern (although not absent) than How is Paul constructed in a given text and why?[60]

In this study, my use of the term *Paulusbild* will be somewhat different than what White describes. For in my view, the notion of a *Paulusbild* is applicable not only to the Pauls that are constructed in early Christian texts, but also to the products of Pauline scholarship generally. Indeed, *any* attempt to apprehend some kind of historical Paul, or the real Paul, is an attempt to form a *Paulusbild* as an end product.[61]

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[60] White, *Remembering Paul*, 54. White provides a rather encyclopedic list of examples that are in some manner interested in how Paul is constructed in a given text. These include: Robert A. Wild, "The Image of Paul in the Pastoral Letters," *TBT* 23 (1985); Stephen G. Wilson, "The Portrait of Paul in Acts and the Pastorals," *SBLSP* 15 (1976); and William R. Long, "The *Paulusbild* in the Trial of Paul in Acts," *SBLSP* 22 (1983).

[61] In taking this route, I recognize that there are other kinds of distinctions employed by Pauline scholars. Andreas Lindemann, for example, distinguishes between "the image of Paul (*Paulusbild*) upon a text, the influence of Pauline literature, and the influence of a genuine understanding of Pauline theology." Paul Hartog, ed., *Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp: Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 65. See Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum. Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1979). As another example, Michael W. Holmes distinguishes between "Paul as Writer, "Paul as Remembered," and "Paul as Theologian." See Michael W. Holmes, "Paul and Polycarp," in *Paul and the Second Century,* ed. Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson (London: T & T Clark, 2011). White makes reference to such distinctions as well, noting "[o]ne cannot escape [a] kind of distinction in New Testament scholarship—a distinction that trades on differences between the 'real' or 'historical' Paul and some other Paul, designated variously as the Paul of 'tradition,' the 'ecclesiastical' Paul, the 'canonical' Paul, or the 'legendary' Paul, among others." White, *Remembering Paul*, 2. While the way in which I am framing the matter here differs, I believe that my proposed conception of the categories is nonetheless sustainable, for the reasons argued above.

Yet paradoxically, the formation of a *Paulusbild* is also the *starting point* for any inquiry in Pauline studies. In other words, any attempt to formulate an understanding of Paul requires *some* notion of who he was, what he said, or what he was up to. Or as Hans Lietzmann remarks, "[o]ne has to know Paul to be capable of understanding him."[62] This is precisely what I am pointing to here in suggesting that a kind of *Paulusbild* lies at both the beginning and the end of our studies on Paul. Indeed, the *Paulusbilder* at the start of our inquiries informs—and in essence is largely synonymous with—our functional Pauline Archimedean points. We possess a general sort of impression of Paul, or a pre-understanding of him, one based on data that we believe can be relied upon in formulating that impression. From there, we proceed with our studies, which can lead back to a similar sort of *Paulusbild*, or to a refined or more nuanced "Paul picture." Consequently, the underlying claim here involves a feedback loop: our Pauline Archimedean points, or our proto-*Paulusbilder*, cultivate the production of further Archimedean points and new *Paulusbilder.* This study, then, aims to provide an account of the key issues involved in the formation of these proto-*Paulusbilder* or Archimedean points. In my view, these issues are often overlooked, even though they are fundamentally integral to Pauline studies, as they inextricably ground any attempt to grasp either the historical Paul or the real Paul.[63] In other words, a functional Pauline Archimedean point is a necessary prerequisite to *any* quest for the historical Paul or the real Paul.

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[62] Quoted in Gustaaf Adolf van den Bergh van Eysinga, "Early Christian Letters," trans. Frans-Joris Fabri and Michael Conley, *JHC* 9, 2 (2002): 313.

[63] While I will for the most part refer to the phrase "getting Paul right," or the task of apprehending "real Paul," it is again important to keep in mind that the underlying focus of this study, namely, the formation of our Pauline Archimedean points, implicates *both* the endeavour to get Paul right *and* the effort to construct a historical Paul. In this study, however, I will tend to refer to the former task, rather than the latter, simply on account of the fact that it is the former task that has captivated my own subjective interest in Paul.

"…For Now We See in a Mirror Dimly": (Self) Reflections on the Study of Paul

Appreciating, then, the rather obvious point that "our knowledge is imperfect" as it relates to Paul, and recognizing further that this study is concerned with the preconditions to our various readings of him, I think it important to add an additional comment about the intention of this study. For while I am fixating here on premises that inform all Pauline studies, I do not intend to imply that the endeavour to grasp the real Paul is an antiquated or naïve one. Rather, my intent is to simply identify a variety of inescapable issues that Pauline readers face, as our implicit or explicit engagement with these issues is, in fact, the precondition to our proceeding with *any* attempt to reconstruct Paul. And in addressing issues relating to the formation of our Pauline Archimedean points, this study in part seeks to account for *why*, in the study of Paul, we see in a mirror "dimly"—or perhaps *enigmatically*.[64] Indeed, my intent is to explore the enigmatic nature of certain fundamental preconditions to the study of Paul.

Beyond this, of course, is an important, if somewhat trite observation: the way in which we confront the issues relating to our Pauline Archimedean points reveals something about us, about *our* predilections concerning our approach to the Pauline data set. Thus, on a general level, a concern over "imperfect knowledge" points also to a necessary methodological prelude to this study. In a certain respect, this involves the type of "thinking" described in Plato's *Theaetetus*, where Socrates suggests to Theaetetus that the very act of thinking involves "[a] talk which the soul has with itself about the objects under its consideration…It seems to me that the soul when it thinks is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them

[64] The word enigma here is apt—in 1 Cor 13:12, "dimly" is a translation of the term *ainigmati*, meaning an "enigma," "obscure thing," or "riddle."

itself, affirms and denies."[65] To some extent at least, this notion aligns with Marc Bloch's methodological dictum:

> Every historical book worthy of the name ought to include a chapter, or if one prefers, a series of paragraphs inserted at turning points in the development, which might almost be entitled: 'How can I know what I am about to say?' I am persuaded that even the lay reader would experience an actual intellectual pleasure in examining these 'confessions.' The sight of an investigation, with its successes and reverses, is seldom boring. It is the ready-made article which is cold and dull.[66]

Accordingly, in the spirit of offering up some form of "confession," or 'having a talk with one's soul,' I think it worth reflecting (so to speak) on some aspects of how this study of Paul sees "in a mirror dimly." To be sure, my motivation for taking this jaunt remains closely tied to the heart of this study, as my intent here is to disclose a kind of conceptual matrix through which I am proceeding in this inquiry.

In a sense, reflection on my own predispositions concerning the study of Paul relates to the issue of *method*. Yet I am not referring here to a notion of a Cartesian method[67] as a

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[65] Plato, *The Theaetetus*, trans. M.J. Levett and Myles Burnyeat (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990), 189d.

[66] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), 71. While my own appeal to Bloch here is admittedly second-hand, being drawn from White's citation of him (White, *Remembering Paul*, 1), it is worth noting that the general sentiment of Bloch relates in part to Plato's famous learner's paradox, or Meno's paradox, the core of which is encapsulated in an exchange between Meno and Socrates:

> Meno: And how will you enquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know? What will you put forth as the subject of enquiry? And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is the thing which you did not know?
>
> Socrates: I know, Meno, what you mean; but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot enquire about that which he knows, or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to enquire; and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to enquire.

Plato, *Meno*, ed. Alexander Sesonske and Noel Fleming, trans. B. Jowett (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), 80d-80e. Plato's proposed solution to this paradox, as Robert Burch puts it, is to suggest that "the search for essential knowledge is possible only as a form of 'recollection,' wherein what is only vaguely or tacitly known to begin with is explicitly explored or mapped." Robert Burch, "Ambiguity of Phenomenological Method? A Reply to John Osborne," *Phenomenology+Pedagogy* 9 (1991): 227.

[67] Descartes lauds the epistemological benefits of his method, noting, "since my early youth I have had the great good fortune of finding myself taking certain paths that have led me to reflections and maxims from which I have fashioned a method by which, it seems to me, I have a way of adding progressively to my knowledge and raising it by degrees to the highest point that the limitations of my mind and short span of life allotted to me will permit it to

preeminent truth-finding tool—in this regard, I agree with George Steinmetz, who suggests that this notion of method "is a central site for the reinforcement of positivist hegemony in the social sciences."[68] Rather, I refer here to method simply as a "way of inquiry."[69] And with respect to the study of religion generally, there are of course a potpourri of such "ways." Indeed, the field thrives on the use of interdisciplinary tools, as Armin Geertz and Russell McCutcheon point out:

> *Religionswissenschaft*, or the comparative science of religion…has from its beginning been characterized by a methodological pluralism. Scholars in the study of religion apply historical, archaeological, linguistic, textual (e.g. philological, structural and semiotic), philosophical, sociological, psychological, ethnographic, anthropological and art historical methods. These methods having been developed by separate disciplines and do not constitute what is special about the comparative study of religion. Rather than founded on some distinct method for studying religion, the identity of *Religionswissenschaft* can perhaps best be formulated as an abiding interest in the critical and comparative study of but one worldwide, cultural phenomenon in both its historical and contemporary expressions.[70]

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reach." René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method*, trans. Ian Maclean (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5-6.

[68] George Steinmetz, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and its Epistemological Others*, ed. George Steinmetz (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 45. Mark C. Taylor relatedly remarks that "[a]s it assumes ever greater importance, methodology approaches the status of 'queen of the sciences' once reserved for theology. The Cartesian promise of a proper method is, in fact, a secularized version of theology's dream of an unconditional principle of principles." Mark C. Taylor, "Introduction," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 13.

[69] While I do not intend to anachronistically impose a modern definition on an ancient term, it is worth noting, for example, that a variety of passages in Plato's work deploy the Greek word *methodos* more or less as a "way of inquiry." For example, a discussion on poetry in the *Republic* commences with Socrates suggesting that the inquiry should be advanced by "our customary procedure [*methodou*]." Plato, *The Republic*, trans. H.N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 10.596a. Further, the Athenian Stranger remarks in the *Laws* that "I shall endeavor, if possible, to exhibit the correct method [*methodon*] for dealing with all such subjects." Plato, *Laws*, trans. R.G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 1.638e. Similarly, the Eleatic Stranger suggests in the *Sophist* that "this is the best method [*methodon*] for us to use, by questioning them directly, as if they were present in person." Plato, *The Sophist*, trans. H.N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 243d. In all of these cases, *methodos* essentially denotes a particular way of studying a subject—for Plato, this typically entails the employment of dialectic.

[70] Armin W. Geertz and Russell T. McCutcheon, "The Role of Method and Theory in the IAHR," in *Perspectives on Method and Theory in the Study of Religion: Adjunct Proceedings of the XVIIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Mexico City 1995*, ed. Armin W. Geertz and Russell T. McCutcheon (Leiden: Brill 2000), 6.

As Geertz and McCutcheon lucidly explain, there is no single method that stands as the *sine qua non* of the academic study of religion, or *Religionswissenschaft*.[71] Rather, the approach in the study of religion is somewhat akin to a smorgasbord, as scholars choose from a variety of techniques or skills to construct their own methodological amalgam.

This "methodological pluralism"[72] is certainly one major dimension of how we tend to understand method in the study of religion, and I suspect that some kind of pluralism has already proven evident in this study, particularly in terms of the appeals to Hegel, Kant, and Gadamer noted in the introduction. But there is another dimension of method pivotal to how I approach the subject matter of this study, i.e. the study of Paul. And while this dimension often lurks in the background, Bruce Lincoln's "Theses on Method" demonstrates how it manifests itself.[73]

Lincoln's fifth thesis states that "[r]everence is a religious, and not a scholarly virtue. When good manners and good conscience cannot be reconciled, the demands of the latter ought to prevail."[74] This injunction is immediately followed by a related observation: "Many who would not think of insulating their own or their parents' religion against critical inquiry still afford such protection to other people's faiths, via a stance of cultural relativism."[75] A complementary notion is contained in Lincoln's final thesis:

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[71] For the purposes of this study, I am content to view the phrase "academic study of religion" and the term *Religionswissenschaft* as being compatible (or even synonymous) with one another. Nonetheless, I recognize that in doing so, I am glossing the term *Religionswissenschaft* without the nuance that it ought to be afforded.

[72] This might also be viewed as the selection of certain *technai*. In putting the issue in such terms, I am influenced by Willi Braun, who, in the course of emphasizing the relevance of *theory*, states that "the *sine qua non* of the religion scholar's contribution to a general science of culture and society lies less in disciplined employment of this or that *technē*, though this is not unimportant by any means, than in the theoretical imagination that can translate the merely curious or puzzling data of 'religion' or the self-evidently significant but spectral objects of religious discourses into categories that can help us as scholars of religion—and the various publics who value (or merely tolerate) our labors—to understand the human interest and social arrangements in which religious discourses play their various generative and representational roles." Willi Braun, "Religion," in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon (London: Continuum, 2000), 15.

[73] Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," *MTSR* 8 (1996): 225-227.

[74] Lincoln, "Theses on Method": 226.

[75] Lincoln, "Theses on Method": 226.

> When one permits those whom one studies to define the terms in which they will be understood, suspends one's interest in the temporal and contingent, or fails to distinguish between "truths," "truth-claims", and "regimes of truth," one has ceased to function as historian or scholar. In that moment, a variety of roles are available: some perfectly respectable (amanuensis, collector, friend and advocate), and some less appealing (cheerleader, voyeur, retailer of import goods). None, however, should be confused with scholarship.[76]

What Lincoln advocates for here, then, is a particular disposition or comportment towards the subject matter, one that I am admittedly both drawn and strive to adhere to. Understood in different terms, the disposition that Lincoln is pointing to is similar to what Jonathan Z. Smith refers to as an "angle of vision for the historian of religion,"[77] or what Braun simply calls an "attitude," one that "signals not an arrogant stance of being deeper in the know, but an intellectual alignment."[78] This attitude, in other words, relates to our own subjective inclinations about how we engage our subject matter, and how (or whether) we implicitly or explicitly revere it or reduce it. This of course can specifically be applied to the study of Paul. Indeed, as will become clear through the course of this study, our "attitude" towards Paul most certainly relates to our outlook on the various issues that inform our Pauline Archimedean points.

This leads to the underlying "method" that I adopt in this particular study. On the one hand, I view this investigation as one that exhibits, on a general level, certain literary, historical, and philosophical characteristics, or appeals to those *technai* (to borrow again from Braun).[79] On the other hand, I would suggest that the "attitudinal" component of method here is one that differs from many, though by no means all, studies on Paul. Admittedly, I do not subscribe to the notion that the Pauline texts are somehow inherently privileged or sacred, or that it is necessarily

[76] Lincoln, "Theses on Method": 227.
[77] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xiii.
[78] Willi Braun, "Introducing Religion," in *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith*, ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2008), 485. See also Braun, "Religion," 7.
[79] Braun, "Religion," 15.

incumbent upon us (much less even *possible* for us) to work out the contents of his theology. But let me be clear. I am most certainly interested in Paul.[80] Moreover, I obviously cannot deny that I maintain a certain subjective reconstruction of Paul in my own mind—my own *Paulusbild*, in other words— that is rooted in certain canonical texts, or portions of them. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which my fascination with Paul has simultaneously (and admittedly paradoxically) developed into one where what Paul is, or is reputed to be, makes no difference to me (to paraphrase Gal 2:6). At the same time, I realize that in this regard, my "attitude" is hardly ubiquitous in Pauline studies. For in many instances, the study of Paul involves significant stakes, a point that Andrew Queen Morton effectively summarizes:

> The Pauline epistles are widely accepted as sacred and the reaction which follows any attempt to analyse a sacred text is violent. It may be that one element in religion is a search for certainty and assurance; it is counted by many religious people as a virtue to believe, and one thing commonly believed by such people is that the Bible is an inerrant record and that traditions about its origin and authorship are similarly immune from human frailty. As a result, any research into Biblical origins will meet with quite a different reception that would a paper on Homer or Isocrates. In the author's experience only Plato and Shakespeare among secular writings have acquired something of sanctity. Write on Sir Walter Scott, on Henry James, on Samuel Johnson and criticism will follow its usual course. Write on Shakespeare or Plato and angry letters begin to arrive. Write on Paul or Jesus and abusive and anonymous letters will surely flood in.[81]

Even though Morton's remarks were written a couple of generations ago, I believe that this sentiment holds true today. That said, I do not believe that most Pauline scholars who possess some patent or latent convictions about the value of the texts, or their "immunity from human frailty," tend to acknowledge those convictions explicitly in their studies. In fact, more often than

[80] In this regard, I think that the beginnings of my interest are rooted in a sentiment similar to that expressed by Concannon about his own early foray into Pauline studies: "When I started studying Paul…I remember feeling a deep excitement about what could be unlocked by applying historical analysis and sociological and anthropological theory to Paul's letters. There was a part of me that was yearning for a way to break out of the shackles of the doctrinal constraints that had framed my first introductions to Paul as a young man." Concannon, "Paul is Dead."
[81] Andrew Queen Morton, *Literary Detection: How to Prove Authorship and Fraud in Literature and Documents* (Bath: Bowker Publishing Company, 1978), 165.

not, I think that particular theological fidelities are tacit in Pauline studies, and need to be deduced by readers.

This phenomenon is hardly new. On the contrary, it is simply a transposition of what has been long recognized in scholarship on early Christianity in general, and Jesus scholarship in particular.[82] However, I do not mean to suggest that the phenomenon is entirely universal. Indeed, one can readily find instances where theological affinities or allegiances *are* expressly disclosed. Terry L. Wilder, for example, offers a laudably transparent admission in his preface to *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception*:

> Many scholars today believe that pseudonymous letters exist in the New Testament. Others, including me, do not accept pseudonymity in the New Testament for historical, theological, ethical, and psychological reasons. Nonetheless, for the sake of argument, I have assumed in this study that pseudo-apostolic letters are present in the New Testament. Consequently, this assumption leads me to ask questions of Scripture and employ certain methodologies that I usually would not…I have tried throughout my research to look objectively at the available evidence, but I acknowledge that my conservative presuppositions about Scripture will influence my work.[83]

Comparably, Paul Achtemeier asserts in his commentary on Romans that he intends to "undertake a fresh reading of the text which will be of value primarily to those who look to Romans as they look to the rest of Scripture, for guidance in their teaching and preaching as well as for guidance in their personal lives."[84] On a broader level, one finds the following statement in the *Paideai* series of commentaries on the New Testament:

> Our authors represent a variety of confessional points of view: Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox…each author brings his or her own considerable exegetical talents and deep theological commitments to the task of laying bare the interpretation of Scripture for the faith and practice to God's people everywhere.[85]

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[82] See, for example, Mack, *The Christian Myth*; and Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus*.
[83] Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004), Preface.
[84] Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 23.
[85] Mikeal C. Parsons and Charles H. Talbert, "Forward," in Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), xii.

A further example can be located in Dennis Ronald MacDonald's compelling *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*, where MacDonald concludes his study by making a choice on the basis of his status "as a Christian committed to the church."[86]

I find such transparent disclosures to be helpful, for at least two reasons. First, they provide a window into the "attitude" of the author, which can assist the reader in understanding and critiquing a work. Further, they demonstrate a level of self-reflection on the part of the authors—a self-awareness about our "prejudices," in the Gadamerian sense.[87]

With this in mind, I ought to elaborate further on my own "attitude." I do not view my own conceptual matrix as being substantively informed by ideas or theology dependent on a certain understanding of Paul. In part, my view in this regard is born out of a certain level of dispassion for theological matters, or perhaps an "indoctrination" of sorts into the field of religious studies. In this regard, my understanding of the field, and my own "attitude" towards it, is quite similar to that of Bruce Lincoln:

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[86] Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 102.

[87] In stating this, I should also note that I recognize Donald Wiebe's consternation over "the methodological problems implicit in [the relationship of theology to the study of religion]," and his specific concern that "the question of theology's relationship to the academic study of religion jeopardizes the existence of such an academic study for it opens to debate once again who or what it is that ought to set the agenda for, and therefore to control, such a study; is it the scholar-scientist or the scholar-devotee, the church or the academy, the procedures of science or the (supposed) transcendent subject-matter of that science, etc.?" Donald Wiebe, "The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion," in *Failure and Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion: Essays in Honor of Donald Wiebe*, ed. William Arnal, Willi Braun, and Russell T. McCutcheon (New York: Routledge, 2014), 6-7. While I agree with the sorts of concerns outlined by Wiebe, I also think that when it comes to Pauline studies (and studies in early Christianity generally), Pandora's box is, practically speaking, impossible to close. Thus, while the ideal of a clear division between theology and the study of religion is laudable in some respects—among other things, attention to this distinction can foster the development of departmental or institutional identities—I also think the prospect of realizing that divide, is, in relation to scholarly *discourse*, both unattainable and problematic. For I believe that the implications of such a sharp divide in discourse could actually prove an epistemological impediment in ways. For example, to the scholar of religion who does not share certain theological or confessional proclivities, is a particular theological work inherently devoid of value—apart, that is, from viewing it as a piece of confessional 'data'? Or on the other hand, is a non-theological study entirely irrelevant to a confessional scholar? For me, it is impossible to answer such questions affirmatively. Rather, I think that there is simply an onus on us as readers to be *critical* readers. And in employing the word "critical," here, I follow Braun, who does not view it "as a synonym for negation or refutation," but rather "in the old Greek sense, meaning the will and ability to distinguish and decide (*krinein*) between options on the basis of standards (*kritēria*) that are themselves the precipitates of a critical (*kritikos*) process that now, as in ancient Greek societies, is not esoteric but exoteric, that is, public." Braun, "Introducing Religion," 490.

> As I understand it, the field of religious studies took shape to provide a comfortable place in a hostile environment, for those who had either religious commitments of their own, or religious desires of their own, that they felt were unwelcome in the American academy…and I understand that. It's not the way I feel. It's not my biography. At some human level I can empathize. But I don't think it's an academic disposition. I don't think that's study. I think that's a support group. I think that's therapy. I think [that's] an attempt to make a home in a hostile world. And I think the purpose of intellectual activity is to make people uncomfortable, not to make them comfortable. I don't like feel-good stories. I don't like reassuring philosophies. I think the world is a difficult and troubled place. And I think intellectuals have the obligation to think long and hard about what's most difficult and to reach disquieting, rather than stabilizing conclusions. Religion is a really powerful force in world history, and a very complicated entity. I think it's in need of serious critical study that isn't eager to put the best face on the phenomenon, that doesn't want to assert coherence, meaning, beauty, and comfort—but that is prepared to see contradiction, ideology, self-interest, social and political forces of [a] less than wholesome nature, as at least part of the complex entity that is religion. If my colleagues would be willing to pay serious attention to that side of things, I'd be comfortable saying 'yeah, it also does a lot of good things and there are some lovely aspects to religion. And it's capable of a wide spectrum.' But I don't hear many colleagues in that discipline treating it in what I take to be a critical fashion. And to my mind, religion as an object of study, not an object of commitment or affection, but as an object of study, deserves a very different kind of engagement.[88]

I understand Lincoln's remarks here simply as a reflection of his allegiance to the critical approach to the study of religion.[89] It is an approach that I endeavour to follow. This is not to suggest in any way that I am free from bias, of course. On the contrary, any fidelity to the critical approach to the study of religion, and the lack of a particular theological investiture, *is* a reflection of bias.

But while this attitude, or bias, is a fundamental component of how I understand "method" here, I do not view it as something that threatens to undermine this study, or as something that is inherently negative. Rather, a certain attitude, bias, or prejudice is simply a universal precondition for engaging in any study. Again, as Gadamer points out, "prejudices…are simply conditions whereby we experience something—whereby what we

[88] Bruce Lincoln, "The Critical Study of Religion," The Religious Studies Project (13 April, 2015), http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/the -critical-study-of-religion/.
[89] Again, the term "critical" here is intended in the fashion outlined by Braun. Braun, "Introducing Religion," 490.

encounter says something to us."[90] And given the inextricable nature of bias, or how prejudices "constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience,"[91] it is only sensible to explicitly embrace and acknowledge our biases, or attitudes.

In stating (or I suppose confessing) all of this, I do not, however, intend to suggest that my angle of vision here is to be equated or identified with a skeptical "postmodern" position, and would raise two additional points in this regard. First, the mere acknowledgement of different "regimes of truth," as Lincoln puts it, does not mandate the suspension of judgment concerning those regimes.[92] On this point, I am influenced by Willi Braun:

> I am a modernist who stands to be corrected. And as such, I am suspicious of any invocation of postmodernism where I sense that it is employed either as a rhetorical device to place some taste, preference, practice, belief, or self-representation beyond criticism, or as an incantation of the dubious premise of what Ernest Gellner calls the 'egalitarianism of all thought-systems' as the basis for an uninterrogatable admission of 'whatever' into venues of critical thought (see Gellner 1992, 55). This is simply a kind of vulgar liberalism turned into compost for growing things that I find very frightening, not only because of what they bode for thought itself, but also what they imply socially and politically.[93]

Braun's citation of Gellner warrants a turn to Gellner himself, who succinctly summarizes three epistemological positions:

> Fundamentalism, which believes in a unique truth and which believes itself to be in possession of it; relativism, in a variety of formulations, which forswears the idea of unique truth, but tries to treat each particular vision as if it were none the less true; and a position of which I am more or less an adherent, which retains the faith in the uniqueness of truth, but does not believe we ever possess it definitively, and which uses, as the foundation for practical conduct and inquiry, not any substantive conviction but only a loyalty to certain procedural rules.[94]

I would suggest my own attitude, and in turn this study, can be placed within Gellner's third category. For as a "modernist who stands to be corrected," I am, in the words of Braun, "[r]iding

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[90] Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 9.
[91] Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 9.
[92] Lincoln, "Theses on Method": 227.
[93] Braun, "Introducing Religion," 489-490.
[94] Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), viii.

like a bat out of hell…on the track (academy) to test the limits of machine (theory) and rider (scholar)."[95] In this case, the "theory" involves the assertion that all Pauline studies occur within the confines of a vital (yet frequently unacknowledged) set of ground rules, tacitly set out by us as readers of Paul.

At the same time, the preceding discussion should make it evident that I am endeavouring to pursue this project with a certain level of self-awareness about my epistemological commitments, my use of certain *technai,* and the prejudices, or "attitude," that condition my engagement with the subject matter. That being the case, I should also be clear in affirming that in a sense, this study is ultimately another metanarrative about Paul, or rather a metanarrative about the *study* of Paul.[96]

[95] Braun, "Introducing Religion," 488. Braun's remarks here build upon Smith's plea for "some measure of monomania if I am to get anywhere. I can't do my work when I have to stop and entertain every other opinion under the sun." Smith, "Afterward: The Necessary Lie Duplicity in the Disciplines," 80. The remarks of Braun and Smith reflect a sentiment similar to that contained in Hegel's rebuke to the position of skepticism: "if the fear of falling into error sets up a mistrust of Science, which in the absence of such scruples gets on with the work itself, and actually cognizes something, it is hard to see why we should not turn round and mistrust this very mistrust. Should we not be concerned as to whether this fear of error is not just the error itself?" Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, § 74.

[96] In stating this, I am adapting the words of Bruce Lincoln in connection to his study on "myth." Lincoln writes, "[i]n the following pages, my chief goal is to tell a story about the stories others have told about myth, and my point is that one should treat all these narratives and metanarratives with considerable care and caution." Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), ix.

CHAPTER 2

CANONS AND COLLECTIONS: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FORMATION OF A NORMATIVE PAULINE ARCHIVE

The Paul of Canon

It would seem that Paul wrote a lot. Indeed, Paul's literary contributions to the New Testament dwarf those of any other figure. This state of affairs sets the stage for reflecting on questions that occasion what Horrell rightly describes as the "small mountain"[97] of scholarly work on Paul. In particular, there are two questions that animate the discussion in this chapter: Is our sustained interest in Paul the product of some special insight or quality that he possessed—or that we *think* he possessed—and is worth trying to understand? Or rather, is it perhaps simply propelled by the sheer volume of work attributed to him in the New Testament—a collection that itself possesses a seemingly unabated aura of theological, literary, or cultural value?[98]

In formulating the questions in this manner, there is admittedly a sense in which the inquiries are circular. For on the one hand, our ability to respond to the former question (whether Paul had some special insight) is informed entirely by data culled from the latter (the Paul of the New Testament). Yet on the other hand, our use or interpretation of material from the latter is guided by our intuitive views on the former. For example, while our interest might be predicated on Paul's inherent theological "genius" (among other reasons), our ability to form any conception of that genius whatsoever is conditioned primarily through material selected from the New Testament—and vice versa. This circularity is precisely what Friedrich Schleiermacher

[97] Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, xiii.

[98] This is not to suggest, however, that our interest in Paul is linked *only* to these questions. I would not deny that there are others. For example, interest in Paul can be framed in terms of broader historical issues concerning the historical development of Christianities around the world. This implicates Paul in at least two ways. First, it leads back to the notion of Paul having some kind of special insight, one integral to Christian theology. Second it can be related to Paul's status as a missionary to the gentiles. That is, Paul's relevance to the history of Christianity can also be framed in terms of the relationship between the historical growth and development of Christianities, and Paul's own status as a commissioned proselytizer.

points to in noting that "[o]ne must already know a man in order to understand what he says, and yet one first becomes acquainted with him by what he says."[99] In the specific case of Paul, this same sentiment is contained in the earlier-noted remark by Hans Lietzmann, i.e., that "[o]ne has to know Paul to be capable of understanding him."[100] While Lietzmann's statement certainly bears a romantic or rhetorical flourish, there is nonetheless an underlying verity and candor in it. Indeed, it aligns with a chief underlying thesis of this study, namely, that a proto-*Paulusbild*, or a pre-understanding of Paul, paradoxically subsists as a precondition to all of our engagements with the Pauline material.

Now on the face of it, one would think that with the study of Paul, we are better positioned than we are with the study of Jesus. Indeed, as outlined in the previous chapter, the fundamental distinction between the two is that the historical Paul apparently speaks, while the historical Jesus is mute. As Adolf Deissmann writes, "[t]he historic personality of Jesus is not easy for research to grasp...Paul stands nearer and is more easily accessible to us."[101] Yet even though Deissmann's assertion intuitively seems on the mark, Paul as "nearer" and "more easily accessible" does not equate to him being a more properly understood figure—to paraphrase the words of Hegel noted at the beginning of this study, Paul may well be familiar, but because he is familiar, he is not cognitively understood.[102]

Our familiarity, or overfamiliarity with Paul, is based primarily on the thirteen epistles in the New Testament whose authorship was traditionally attributed to him (Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor,

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[99] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. Heinz Kimmerle, trans. James Duke and Jack Forstman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 56.
[100] Van Eysinga, "Early Christian Letters," 313.
[101] Deissmann, *Paul*, 4.
[102] Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, § 31. Relatedly, Deissmann's assertion might evoke for some the opening words of Friedrich Hölderlin's "Patmos": "Near is / And difficult to grasp, the God." Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 463.

Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 Thess, 2 Thess, 1 Tim, 2 Tim, Titus, and Phlm).[103] Contemporary Pauline scholarship tends to view the matter differently, though it can be argued that this view has also become "traditional" in a sense. Typically, New Testament scholars are discriminatory, to varying degrees, when it comes to identifying which works were or were not truly authored by Paul. Consequently, Pauline scholars tend to distinguish between the canonical Pauline corpus, on the one hand, and what Raymond Collins refers to as the "critical Pauline corpus," on the other:

> The canonical Pauline corpus (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews) is the product of the consensus judgment of various local churches toward the end of the fourth century. During the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent proclaimed that these fourteen books belonged to the canon of the New Testament. The critical Pauline corpus is the result of the consensus judgment of recent and contemporary biblical scholarship. To the critical Pauline corpus belong Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, works whose Pauline authorship is upheld by virtually all biblical scholars.[104]

Among the letters in this critical Pauline corpus, Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, and Galatians, share a particularly privileged status, being identified as the main letters, or *Hauptbriefe*, a term attributed to Ferdinand Christian Baur. As Baur writes, "[t]here has never been the slightest suspicion of unauthenticity cast on these four Epistles, and they bear so incontestably the character of Pauline originality, that there is no conceivable ground for the assertion of critical doubts in their case."[105] While the validity of Baur's claim will to some degree be tested later on in this study, I raise the important distinction between the "canonical Pauline corpus" and the "critical Pauline corpus" to emphasize the need for critical self-reflection on the study of Paul.

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[103] Some go even further, identifying Paul as the author of Hebrews, thus increasing the number of canonical Pauline works to fourteen.
[104] Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 245.
[105] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine: A Contribution to the Critical History of Primitive Christianity*, 2 vols., ed. Eduard Zeller, trans. Allan Menzies (London: Williams & Norgate, 1876), 1:246.

For hearkening back to Luke's project, in which he expressed a desire to construct an orderly account, and also giving consideration to the prominent role that Paul plays in the second part of Luke's narrative, i.e. Acts, it is clear that contemporary studies of Paul bear some resemblance to Luke's project—indeed, Pauline scholars are essentially Luke's successors.[106]

This realization, however, is but a small part of a greater issue that demands attention. For apart from recognizing a certain kinship between Luke and contemporary Pauline scholars, the greater implication here is that all Pauline readers have a certain relationship with the primary canonical data that informs various constructions of Paul or his theology. Consequently, our encounters with Paul should involve some level of introspection in relation to the selection and use of the source material.

Taken seriously, this kind of introspection involves a myriad of issues, including the legitimacy and authoritative status of various sources as repositories of Paul's authentic thought, the nature or genre of the contents in the Pauline corpus, and the question of authorial intentionality as it pertains to the Pauline literature. All of these issues might be placed under a general umbrella topic: the formation of a "Pauline archive." In this chapter, exploration of this topic involves two interrelated questions: which texts are admissible authorities for determining what Paul thought or did, and what are some of the considerations and assumptions involved in selecting and analyzing those texts?[107] In the course of addressing these questions, it is perhaps worth beginning not with the *Pauline* canon specifically, but rather with the concept of *canon* in general.

The Concept of Canon

[106] William Arnal makes virtually the same observation in the context of scholarship on Jesus, noting that "much Jesus scholarship has just been gospel writing done anew." Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus*, 50.
[107] In some respects, this question is akin to Gregory Fewster's interest in examining Paul's letters as "a letter archive, that is, a conceptual and material centre of interpretation." Gregory Fewster, "Archiving Paul," *Archivaria*, 81 (2016): 115.

The notion of a "canon" is something that ranges from being a passing curiosity for some, to a point of vital theological importance for others. For despite divergent views about its relevance, on a variety of levels—e.g., theological, historical, literary, or socio-political—the Judeo-Christian bible,[108] or the Christian canon, remains deeply entrenched in the western psyche.[109]

The word "canon" is derived from the Greek term *kanṓn*, which referred literally to "a straight rod," and in turn came to denote more generally a criterion, standard or rule. The term had a broad range of uses in the ancient world, and was by no means reserved exclusively to the ecclesiastical context. Aristotle, for example, advocated for an understanding of *kanṓn* that was distinct from the concept of *nomos*, or law. In Aristotle's view, a *kanṓn*, or rule, was something more malleable than law:

> [T]here are some cases for which it is impossible to lay down a law, so that a special ordinance becomes necessary. For what is itself indefinite can only be measured by an indefinite standard, like the leaden rule used by Lesbian builders; just as that rule is not rigid but can be bent to the shape of the stone, so a special ordinance is made to fit the circumstances of the case.[110]

This use of the term is particularly interesting, as Aristotle's conception of a mutable *kanṓn* of course stands in stark contrast to the contemporary understanding of biblical canon as something utterly incapable of being modified, and thus ultimately closed.

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[108] I am referring here to "bible" in a generic sense, recognizing of course that its precise contents are by no means agreed upon universally by various Christianities. For the purposes of this particular study, however, the issue need not be dwelled on, as all iterations of the present-day Christian bible include the same Pauline material.

[109] In making this assertion, I believe I am echoing a sentiment similar to that stated by Burton Mack, who expresses some surprise at this state of affairs: "[o]ne might have thought that the western history of intellectual enlightenments, social revolutions, scientific discoveries, and industrialized technologies would have outgrown an archaic myth-ritual system created in a bygone age of cultural class and experimental social formations. That, however, has not happened." Burton L. Mack, *The Christian Myth*, 178.

[110] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926), 1137b. For an interdisciplinary overview of the varied historical functions of "canon," see Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London: Athlone, 1991). The notion of a "special ordinance" might be related also to the term *psēphisma*, which was an ordinance of the people, or plebiscite. Writing with respect to the terms *nomos* and *psēphisma* in fourth-century BCE Athens, Mogens Hansen writes, "*Nomos* is used when the emphasis is on the contents of a rule whereas the enactment of the rule is stressed by the word *psephisma*." Mogens Herman Hansen, "*Nomos* and *Psephisma* in Fourth-Century Athens" *GRBS* 19 (1978): 316.

Yet even in the context of early Christianities, the term *kanṓn* had a range of applications, being used to refer to particular ecclesiastical rules or norms, to clergy who were associated with certain churches or *ekklēsiai,*[111] and eventually to a list of authoritative writings.[112] However, as Bruce Metzger notes, this last use of the word was "late in developing; so far as we have evidence, it was not until the second half of the fourth century that *κανών* [standard or rule] and its derivatives *κανονικός* [regular or usual] and *κανονίζειν* [to regulate] were applied to the Scriptures."[113] Ultimately, however, it is this latter chronological sense of *kanṓn* that is of primary relevance here. For it *this* notion of *kanṓn* that bears the closest synonymity with the contemporary use of the word canon as referring to "the definitive, closed list of the books that constitute the authentic contents of scripture."[114]

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[111] In the Pauline letters, the word "church" is generally used to translate the Greek term *ekklēsia* (ἐκκλησία), though the latter is more literally translated as those who are "called out." The word appears frequently in the Pauline letters, particularly in reference to the intended recipients of the letters (e.g. 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). Regardless, while the word "ecclesiastic" and it cognates obviously derive from the word *ekklēsia*, it is worth contrasting the meaning of "ecclesiastic" in the modern sense with the term *ekklēsia* as it was used in the classical period, where the term could be taken to refer to the Athenian public assembly. As R.K. Sinclair, notes, "[t]he Athenian Ekklesia decided on a vast range of matters from high matters of state to minor administrative details. It was open to all adult males of citizen birth: membership was not dependent on a property qualification such as pertained in oligarchic states. The Demos as embodied in the assembly held sovereignty or power (kratos)." R.K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 19. Insofar as many of us (as contemporary readers) possess a deep-rooted and anachronistic preconception of the word "church," I will employ the term *ekklēsia* here, in the interests of trying to sidestep this preconception. In making this decision, however, I am both conscious of and sympathetic to the utility of simply employing the term "association" as a taxonomic category in the study of early Christianities. See, for example, Richard Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2012). Nonetheless, my use of the word *ekklēsia* in this study is premised largely on its explicit and frequent presence in the Pauline correspondence.

[112] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 290-292. Notably, the word only appears twice in the New Testament, with both occurring in the Pauline correspondence: Gal 6:16 and 2 Cor 10:13-16.

[113] Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 292. Harry Gamble concurs on this point, noting that "the word 'canon' did not begin to be applied to Christian *writings* until the mid-fourth century. The earliest known use of the term in this connection is furnished by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in his *Decrees of the Council of Nicaea*, written soon after 350. There he describes the document known as *the Shepherd of Hermas* as 'not of canon' (*mē ōn ek tou kanonos*)." Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 17.

[114] Eugene Ulrich, "The Notion and Definition of Canon," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2002), 34. However, as Lee Martin McDonald suggests, it is also worth noting that "the term 'canon' was not regularly used in reference to a closed collection of scriptures until David Ruhnken used it thus in his 1768 *Historia critica oratorum Graecorum.*" Lee Martin

The immutability of this closed list, and its significance as an authoritative repository for Christian thought, is attested to in thirty-ninth Festal Letter of Athanasius, dated 367 CE:

> [O]ne should not hesitate to name the books of the New Testament. For these are the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; then after these, Acts of the Apostles and seven letters, called catholic, by the apostles, namely: one by James; two by Peter; then three by John; and after these, one by Jude. After these there are fourteen letters by Paul, written in this order: first to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; and after these, to the Galatians; and next to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians and to the Colossians; and after these, two to the Thessalonians; and that to the Hebrews; and additionally, two to Timothy, one to Titus, and finally that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John.
>
> These are the springs of salvation, so that someone who thirsts may be satisfied by the words they contain. In these books alone the teaching of piety is proclaimed. Let no one add to or subtract from them.[115]

It is worth noting that these last words by Athanasius's Festal Letter echo the concluding remarks of Revelation (and ultimately the Christian bible), where the author issues a stern admonishment: "I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Rev 22:28-19). In its immediate context, the injunction is obviously restricted in scope, referencing only the text in Revelation, not the canon as a whole. Yet functionally, by its position in the Christian bible, it becomes a pronouncement with far broader application, conveying both the legitimacy and immutability of the canonical contents in their entirety—including, of course, any Pauline material. Thus, by the latter part of the fourth century, a particular notion of canon in Christianity had been rather firmly established.

McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1995), 16.

[115] Quoted in David Brakke, "A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon," *HTR* 103, 1 (2010): 60-61. The thirty-ninth Festal Letter survives in both Greek and Coptic, though the opening lines of the letter are lost. Brakke's translation takes into account a Coptic fragment of the text first published in 1994 (though at the time of its initial publication, the text was not recognized as a part of the Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter). See also David M. Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria*: *Bishop, Theologian, Ascetic, Father* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 152-153.

As Adolf Jülicher put it, "[t]he canon is the norm to which everything in the Church accommodates itself; to canonize means to recognize as part of this norm. The Christian of *c.* 400 felt at the mention of the word 'canonical' precisely as we do when we say divine, holy, infallible, absolutely authoritative."[116]

The Formation of a Pauline Canon

Recognizing that the final canonical product carries with it weighty notions of immutability and legitimacy,[117] the *formation* of the canon was a gradual process, one that was in part rooted simply in the construction of a literary archive.[118] And while the development of the canonical archive at large involves a variety of complicated questions and contested answers, my focus here is not so much with the canon as a whole, but rather the formation of a Pauline canon. For an investigation of the Pauline data archive relates not just to the formation of a canonical archive, but also to the creation of the archive *within* the canonical archive. Put differently, my concern is with the canon within the canon, or the archive within the archive, so to speak. How is it that the Pauline texts came to be candidates within the greater canonical archive?

A reasonable starting point for such a discussion can be identified in the Muratorian fragment, an eighty-five-line Latin document regarded as the oldest known list of texts that comprise the New Testament canon. The fragment, named after an Italian archivist, Ludovico

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[116] Quoted in *New Testament Apocrypha*, *vol. 1*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), 23-24. See Adolf Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 7th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931), 555.

[117] As H.M. Vos rightly points out with respect to the latter, "[w]ritings and documents acquire a stamp of authentication when they are acknowledged as being canonical." H.M. Vos, "The Canon as a Straitjacket," in *Canonization and Decanonization*, ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Torn (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 352.

[118] The notion of canon formation as a gradual process implies a certain tension. For if the (Christianized) notion refers to an *immutable* set of authoritative writings, how then does one account for the dialectical process that led to the establishment of that canon? While the topic is much too complicated to delve into here, as there are no doubt an array of considerations in this regard, I suspect that an apologetic stance could (among other things) involve an appeal to natural law: any protracted dialectic over the contents of canon can ultimately be explained simply as the implementation of human reason that was necessary to determine the immutable canon. In other words, the canon was *always* (and inherently) fixed and immutable—it just took time for humankind to properly determine its content.

Muratori, who discovered it in 1700, attests to the instructive utility of what were eventually-deemed canonical works, including Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and 1 and 2 Timothy.[119] For the most part, the fragment has been dated by scholars to the latter part of the second century, though this dating has been challenged by some who argue that its composition is more plausibly placed in the fourth century.[120]

Another document of relevance in this regard is the Papyrus Chesty Beatty II, or P46, one of the oldest surviving New Testament manuscripts. The manuscript includes all of Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and Hebrews, virtually all of 1 and 2 Corinthians, the last eight chapters of Romans, and two chapters of 1 Thessalonians.[121] While certain outlier theories exist, scholars tend to date P46 to ca. 200 CE.[122]

Regardless, while the Muratorian fragment and P46 are typically dated to the later second or early third centuries, it is nonetheless evident that collections of Paul's letters had been circulating earlier. Accordingly, the collection of various Pauline epistles can be seen, in itself, as a microcosmic process of canonization within the greater macro-level canon. This point is

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[119] See Eckhard J. Schnabel, "The Muratorian Fragment: The State of Research," *JETS* 57, 2 (2014): 231.

[120] The usual dating of the canon is in part premised on its internal reference to Pius (died ca. 155) as a contemporary of the fragment's author. Those challenging this dating in part point to the difficulty in identifying a contextual locale for its creation in the west during that time period, arguing that the fragment does, however, possess features that would support a fourth-century composition in the east. See Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., "Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *HTR* 66 (1973): 1-41. See also Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Although later datings are taken seriously by some scholars (see, for example Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 291, fn. 30), they have not gained much traction in scholarship. As Gamble notes, "[w]hile the claims of Sundberg and Hahneman have been persuasive to many, many recent studies continue either to ignore or flatly to reject them and reaffirm the traditional view." Harry Y. Gamble, "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2002), 270.

[121] David Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 16.

[122] See, for example, Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection*, 13; and Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 132. Don Barker has more recently argued for a broader range of dates between 150 and 250 CE. Don Barker, "The Dating of New Testament Papyri" *NTS* 57: 581. Perhaps the most notable outlier theory is that proposed by Y. K. Kim, who argues that P46 can be dated to the later part of the first century. Y.K. Kim, "Palaeographical Dating of P46 to the Latter First Century," *Biblica* 69 (1988): 248-257. Kim's argument has received little support.

cogently articulated by Harry Gamble, who notes that "the history of the canon is not a single and undifferentiated process in which individual documents were separately in play, nor is it to be understood as a selection of some documents from a larger pool. Rather, the canon is, in the main, a collection of collections, indeed of rather disparate collections that arose at different times and places under the force of different motives and agents."[123] Yet bearing in mind the long period of development leading to the establishment of the canon reflected in Athanasius's Festal Letter, it is also reasonably clear, as Wilhelm Schneemelcher notes, that "[t]he decisive period in the history of the canon is from ca. 140 to 200," as it is in that timeframe that "sources flow more copiously."[124]

With the exception of Acts, the canonical Pauline material consists entirely of epistles. Thus, in the case of the Pauline corpus, the development of a canon within a canon was essentially a letter compilation project. In itself, such a project was by no means novel—there were collections of letters assembled in antiquity for the purposes of widespread dissemination, regardless of whether the original author(s) was involved.[125] The collection of Cicero's correspondence is perhaps the most famous example of such a collection, at least in terms of a compilation that existed within a reasonable temporal proximity to the Pauline literature.[126]

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[123] Gamble, "The New Testament Canon," 275. Gamble suggests, rightly in my view, that the New Testament canon is essentially comprised of three smaller collections: the four gospels, the Pauline letters, and the catholic or general epistles.

[124] Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 31.

[125] Notwithstanding any questions about authorship or pseudonymity, a few other letter collections of note in this regard include those whose authorship is attributed to Plato, Epicurus, Aristotle, and Apollonius of Tyana. See Michael Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology, with Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1926), 25-26. The question of pseudonymity in antiquity will be explored in chapter 3.

[126] Cicero is particularly notable for his involvement, or at least intentions, in putting together a letter collection. Michael Trapp notes that while "Cicero himself contemplated publication, from the archive kept by his secretary Tiro, supplemented from that also kept by Atticus…he did not live long enough to see the project through." Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters*, 13.

In the case of Paul, a general consensus suggests that a collection of letters had begun to circulate by the close of the first century.[127] This assertion, however, is ultimately rather speculative, as tangible evidence for a first-century collection is entirely lacking.[128] Moreover, what is even less clear is how or why such a collection took shape—in other words, how does one account for the occasion, or motivation, for putting together a Pauline canon?[129] While there exist a variety of theories, we need only concern ourselves with three of the most prevailing: the snowball (or gradual collection) theory, the personal involvement theory, and the neglect (or lapsed interest) theory. For given that any study on Paul relies first and foremost on material culled from the canonical epistolary archive, questions concerning the *development* of this archive ought not be ignored, regardless of whether they can be answered.[130]

The Snowball Theory

While a number of Pauline letter-collection theories were initially developed by nineteenth-century scholars, one of these has in more recent years acquired a somewhat colourful name. The "snowball" theory, or the more blandly-named "gradual collection" theory, posits that the development of a Pauline epistolary archive involved a slow and gradual process.[131] While some

[127] Gamble, for example, suggests that "[t]he collected letters of Paul must have been available by the late first century or early in the second." Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 41. Similarly, Pervo writes that "[t]he evidence suggests that by the close of the first century, a substantial collection of probably ten letters had begun to circulate." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 230.

[128] Neither Pervo nor Gamble, for example, provide any substantive evidence for their claim concerning the existence of a first century collection, and seem to simply be regurgitating long-held suppositions on this issue. This is especially detectable in the work of Gamble, as he notes elsewhere that both Zahn and Harnack argued for the existence of "an early edition of the corpus dating between 80 and 100." Harry Y. Gamble, "The Redaction of the Pauline Letters and the Formation for the Pauline Corpus," *JBL* 94, 3 (1975): 405.

[129] See Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 39.

[130] For a few substantive treatments of this issue, see, for example, Harry Y. Gamble, "The Pauline Corpus and the Early Christian Book," in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, ed. W.S. Babcock (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 265-280; Stanley E. Porter, ed., *The Pauline Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); and Donald Guthrie, *The New Testament Introduction,* 4th edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 986-1000.

[131] It appears that Harry Gamble is responsible for coining this the "snowball" theory. See Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 36. Stanley Porter also identifies this as the "gradual collection," or the "Zahn-Harnack" theory,

have suggested that this occurred rather early—by the end of the first century, certainly[132]—others argue that the process was much more protracted, occurring largely in the second century CE.[133]

Although the theory has been seriously considered, it is not uniformly followed among scholars. Stanley Porter summarizes one of the most significant criticisms of it:

> There are a number of arguments that can be raised against [the snowball theory]. One is the apparent discrepancy between those who posit a short period of time for the collection, such as Zahn and Harnack, and those who posit a much longer period, such as Lake and Streeter—but each by appealing to the same body of evidence often in much the same way. Further, for those who accept the shorter period of time, the evidence marshalled by those who argue for the longer period of time might be thought damaging, especially as none of the lists of the second and third centuries seems to know all of the Pauline letters. For example, according to Lake, Marcion's, the Muratorian canon's, Tertullian's and Origen's lists are all different in length and in order. In fact, however, the latter two only include eight letters, whereas the earlier two include ten.[134]

In addition to the above, questions linger about whether the second century activity of Marcion was in some manner relevant to the formation of the canon referred to in the Muratorian fragment. Indeed, some maintain that it was in fact Marcion who first formulated a canon—this is a topic that will be addressed further below.[135] In any event, given the sort of criticism outlined

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referencing Theodor Zahn and Adolf von Harnack, two nineteenth-century scholars who are strongly associated with its formation. Stanley E. Porter, "When and How was the Pauline Canon Compiled?" in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 99. Similarly, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor refers to this as the "evolutionary theory," in contrast to what he calls the "big bang theory" (i.e. that a collection of letters formed rather quickly). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 114-116.

[132] As noted above, speculations in this regard are lacking in evidentiary foundation (e.g. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 41, and Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 230). While the theory is most certainly plausible, it persists as a largely unsubstantiated assumption embedded in the conscience of many Pauline scholars.

[133] See, for example, Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul: Their Motive and Origin* (London: Rivingtons, 1911), 356-359. See also B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 159-162.

[134] Porter, "When and How," 101.

[135] John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). See also Jason D. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament: Marcion's Scriptural Canon* (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 2013).

by Porter, the snowball theory is plausible, but ultimately quite speculative, as it is "without a firm foundation established as to how such a process actually occurred."[136]

The Personal Involvement Theory

A second theory of note is referred to as the "personal involvement" theory, which typically implicates a particular actor, or actors, when it comes to the collection of the epistles.[137] For example, C.F.D. Moule suggests that "the considerable link, in respect of vocabulary, contents, and outlook, between the Pastoral Epistles and Luke-Acts lends some plausibility to the suggestion that Luke was the collector, editor, and augmenter of the Pauline *corpus*."[138] Donald Guthrie, in contrast, relies largely on statements drawn from 2 Timothy in suggesting that "Timothy probably retained…parchments after Paul's death and possession of them may have stimulated the desire to make a fuller collection of Paul's writings."[139] A third possibility is

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[136] Porter, "When and How," 103. Pervo similarly remarks that while the snowball theory is "logical…little evidence can be introduced in its support." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 55.

[137] While I will not dwell on it here, David Trobisch's particular iteration of this theory suggests that Paul himself compiled the letters. See Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection*. Trobisch's view has found virtually no support in scholarship—as Pervo notes, Trobisch "is almost alone in arguing that Paul was directly responsible for generating the collection." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 56. See also Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 118-120. Gamble, however, suggests that while "[i]t is generally assumed that Paul had no part in the collecting of his own letters and that those who drew up the earliest editions of the collection did so by gathering copies or partial collections of copies…It seems unlikely that Paul would have written the kinds of letters he wrote without retaining copies." Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 100-101. Gamble's basis for this particular assertion is entirely unclear, though he is of course correct in noting, in general, that the copying of letters occurred from time to time in antiquity. In any event, issues relating to the "publication" of the epistles, and Paul's possible intentions in this regard, will be discussed in chapter 4.

[138] C.F.D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1981), 265. In the lead up to this assertion, Moule speculates, "[w]hat if it was after the writing of the Acts, and after Paul's death, that Luke himself—who must have known about the letters although he had not written about them—began to revisit the Pauline centres which he had described, and to look for the letters there? No one knew better than he the fact that they were written. It is entirely in keeping with his historian's temperament to collect them." Moule, *Birth of the New Testament*, 264. In connection to Moule's reference to "Luke-Acts," it is worth noting here the apparent origins of that phrase. Henry J. Cadbury is credited with coining the descriptor "Luke-Acts" to describe the two-volume work, noting that "in order to emphasize the historic unity of the two volumes addressed to Theophilus the expression 'Luke-Acts' is perhaps justifiable." Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1968), 11. See also Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 79.

[139] Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 999. The reference to parchments here hearkens back to a statement in 2

proposed by Goodspeed, who speculates that the collector was Onesimus, the slave referenced in the letter to Philemon. While Goodspeed's suggestion lacks any evidentiary basis whatsoever, it is nonetheless one that resonates with him emotionally: "I don't know how this mere conjecture may strike the reader, but it fills my eyes with tears. The emancipated slave lives to build his protector a monument more enduring than bronze!"[140]

Regardless, most Pauline scholars have found none of these proposals particularly compelling. With respect to the theory of a Lukan collection, the most significant problem is that it appeals to an inextricable authorial link between Luke and the authorship of the pastoral epistles that has never gained substantive support.[141] Moreover, the chronological implications of this theory do not align with more recent scholarship about the dating of Luke-Acts; as will be discussed below, there is mounting scholarship that places the composition of Luke-Acts well into the second century. The proposed identification of Timothy is comparably suspect, given that it rests heavily on the contents of 2 Timothy, an epistle that is frequently identified as a pseudonymous work composed in the second century.[142] Goodspeed's proposal is surely the least

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Timothy: "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments" (2 Tim 4:13). This leads Guthrie to ask, "although we can only conjecture what these were, is it quite out of the question that they were copies in note form of some of the apostle's communications?" Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 999.

[140] Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Key to Ephesians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), xv. See also Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Christianity Goes to Press* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), 57-58. Goodspeed's view develops the earlier theory of John Knox, who draws on Ignatius's letter to the Ephesians in suggesting that the Onesimus in Philemon was also Onesimus, the bishop of Ephesus (ca. 110), and that "he was at Ephesus when a corpus of Paul's letters was published; indeed, that publication would probably have been done under his oversight." John Knox, *Philemon Among the Letters of Paul: A New View of Its Place and Importance* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), 107. See also Stanley E. Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," in *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective,* ed. Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 180-181, fn. 39. Were there merit to the Goodspeed/Knox theory, the wordplay on Onesimus's name in 1:11 of the letter (*Onēsimus* meaning "profitable or useful") of course becomes even more profound: if he were the compiler of the Pauline correspondence, Onesimus would have proven very useful indeed.

[141] Porter, "When and How," 111.

[142] Raymond Brown estimates that "*between 80 to 90 percent of modern scholars would agree that the Pastorals were written after Paul's lifetime, and of those the majority would accept the period between 80 and 100 as the most plausible context for the composition*." Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 668 (emphasis in original).

persuasive of these three possibilities, as it involves no evidentiary grounds whatsoever. Rather (and in fairness to Goodspeed), his view of Onesimus as the collector of Paul's letters is presented more as an imaginative sentimental wish than a seriously-formulated hypothesis.

In any event, what surely animates these sorts of theories is a subconscious desire to account for the collection of the Pauline epistles in a manner that augments both the legitimacy of the letter-collecting process, and by extension the letters themselves, through proposing the involvement of actors with relational ties to Paul as the original author. Bearing this in mind—and notwithstanding our understandable and persistent desire for what Luke would call an "orderly account"[143] (or perhaps simply a "good report," i.e. *euangelion*, if one can put it in such terms)—these particular theories ultimately remain rather romantic speculations that have by and large garnered little support.

Porter, however, stands as a notable exception. According to him, "[t]here is much of merit in such personal involvement theories, since any gathering process seems to demand the involvement of individuals, whether they are named or not, recognized or anonymous, singular or more than one."[144] On the one hand, Porter's sympathy to any particular iteration of the personal involvement theory is suspect, given, again, that there is scant evidence for these.[145] On

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The first assertion strikes me as correct, but the second does not. While the authorship of the pastorals will be discussed further in chapter 4, suffice it to say that many view these as mid second-century productions, and it bears noting, as Dennis Ronald MacDonald points out, that "[w]e have no external evidence of the letters before the last quarter of the second century; therefore they could have been written as late as the middle of that century but more probably sometime between 100 and 140." MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 54.

[143] More precisely, Luke states that his intent is to write (*grapsai*) in an orderly fashion (*kathexēs*), based on close or diligent (*akribōs*) attention to everything that has occurred (Luke 1:3).

[144] Porter, "When and How," 111.

[145] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor also criticizes Porter on this front: "Porter feels free to speculate airily that Paul himself, or a close associate such as Luke or Timothy, was at the origin of the collection of his letters. They would have been the only ones 'who would have had access to the many copies produced by his scribe' (p. 125). The undeclared assumptions boggle the mind." Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Book Review: *The Pauline Canon*," *JTS* 57, 2 (2006): 678. Interestingly, Murphy-O'Connor goes on to deride Porter's edited volume on the whole as "a potboiler designed to provide work for an editor and revenue for a publisher." Murphy-O'Connor, "Review: *The Pauline Canon*": 679. Porter seems to have taken the critique of his article (if not the volume) to heart, though it is unclear as to whether he is referencing Murphy-O'Connor's review specifically in stating that he was "admittedly

the other hand, in a very opaque sort of way, Porter is quite right: any gathering process, would, of course, "demand the involvement of individuals." Yet ultimately, his conclusion offers nothing of substance, and is really nothing more than an axiomatic observation: the collection of the Pauline epistles was in some form or other the product of *human* agency. As such, unless one is inclined to appeal to the *divine* as the agent behind the collection of Paul's letters, Porter's conclusion here tells us absolutely nothing substantive; it is about as obvious and as helpful as commenting on the wetness of water.

The Neglect Theory

A third theory, referred to at times as the neglect or lapsed interest theory, suggests that Paul's letters were for some time forgotten or ignored, until being "rediscovered" following the dissemination of Acts.[146] Often linked to the work of Goodspeed, this theory claims that it was Paul's appearance in Acts that largely inspired the initiative to form a collection of his epistles.[147] Following from this initiative, Goodspeed's hypothesis is that the Pauline corpus was developed

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disappointed that in a review of the volume in which [the] essay appeared…[the essay] was treated as essentially a (admittedly, valuable) compendium of thought on the issue, rather than a piece of constructive analysis." Stanley E. Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," 173-174. It seems that Porter thus called a "mulligan," of sorts, on the first essay: "Paul and the Process of Canonization" is essentially a second take on the very same topic, which draws substantively from "When and How," and makes the same bland observation that there is "much of merit in…personal involvement theories, since any gathering process seems to demand the involvement of individuals." Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," 184-185. Porter goes on to argue, ostensibly with more specificity, that "there is reasonable evidence to see the origin of the Pauline corpus during the latter part of Paul's life or sometime after his death, almost assuredly instigated by Paul and/or a close follower or followers." Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," 202. While Porter considers the possibility of Luke or Timothy being involved in the compilation, his conclusion is ultimately the same as his earlier thesis: that a collection was formed after Paul's death, by an agent (or agents) invested with an interest in ensuring the survival of a set of letters.

[146] Murphy-O'Connor refers to this as the "big bang theory," in colourful contrast to his identification of the "evolutionary theory," i.e. the snowball theory. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer,* 116-118.

[147] See Edgar J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937). See also Edgar J. Goodspeed, *New Solutions of New Testament Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927).

in Ephesus, "with Ephesians, an encyclical letter that drew widely upon the entire Pauline corpus, as the introduction."[148]

Given that Goodspeed identifies the production of Acts as a motivating force behind the collection of the Pauline letters, the implications of the neglect theory—or at least Goodspeed's iteration of it—really depend on what dating one adopts for the composition of Acts. While this issue will be addressed in more detail later, suffice it to say that Goodspeed dates it to a point no later than 90 CE, noting that the subsequent collection of the Pauline letters occurred at around that same time.[149] Thus, for Goodspeed, at least, any neglect of Paul's letters was not long lasting.

In any event, the neglect theory is one that has dwindling support in contemporary scholarship. One reason for its fading popularity is its fundamental reliance upon a certain dating of Acts. As noted, there are a number of scholars that place the composition of Acts well into the second century. If one adheres to such a view, then the plausibility of the Goodspeed hypothesis is significantly diminished. An even more significant critique relates to the notion that Ephesians stands at the head of the Pauline corpus as an introduction. No substantive evidence exists for

[148] Porter, "When and How," 105. As Pervo writes, Goodspeed's theory "presumed that the appearance of Acts led to interest in Paul, and, in due course, in his letters, which were collected by a diligent admirer and published with Ephesians, composed by the collector, as a preface." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 55. A somewhat comparable theory, referred to as the Anti-Gnostic or Schmithals theory, suggests that a principal editor worked on the letters with a view to publishing a seven-letter collection "as a weapon in the struggle against the spreading Gnostic heresy." See Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 263. While I will not delve into the Schmithals variant here, it has found virtually no support in scholarship. Indeed, Schmithals's curious fixation on the ubiquity of gnostic opposition in early Christianity goes hand in hand with the palpable sense of derision commonly seen in references to his work. For example, referring specifically to Schmithals's letter-collection theory, Murphy-O'Connor offers a biting remark that is characteristic of the attitude often exhibited towards Schmithals: "[Schmithals's] dissection of the letters is in no way restrained by objective evidence. Its entirely arbitrary character is of a piece with his erroneous judgment that Gnostic influences had major impact on Paul's communities." Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 118. Similar rejection of Schmithals's theory pervades most scholarship in substance, though perhaps not invective. See, for example, Porter, "When and How," 107; and Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 56.

[149] Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament*, 32. See also Goodspeed, *New Solutions*, 94-103.

this claim, nor are there any manuscripts that place Ephesians as the first letter in the Pauline corpus.[150]

References to Paul by Early Church Fathers

Given the rather speculative, vague or simply unconvincing nature of the above theories, it would seem that Gamble is quite right in asserting that "the early history of Paul's letters and the process by which they were collected are very obscure."[151] Yet despite this unsatisfactory state of affairs about our knowledge of the *collection* of the Pauline epistles, it is possible to take a slightly different tack. For any questions about the collection of the letters relate very closely to the *use* of them at or around the time they are believed to have been collected. Thus, rather than dwelling on the "obscure" collection theories, it is instead worth discussing some of the earliest express or implied references to the Pauline correspondence. In other words, how and when were Paul's letters employed in the time leading up to their canonization? The "neglect theory" in fact provides an entry point for such a discussion.

Somewhat comparable to the "neglect theory," which concerns the collection of the Pauline epistles, the so-called "Pauline captivity" theory, or narrative, contends that for a certain period of time, Paul fell into disuse among the early church fathers. The reason for this, according to the theory, is that Paul had been appropriated by the early church fathers' opponents, most notably Marcion of Sinope (ca. 85-160).[152] Referencing the seminal work on

[150] As Porter points out by way of comparison, "Marcion seems to have had Galatians at the head, P 46 has Romans, and the Muratorian canon refers to Corinthians." Porter, "When and How," 106-107.
[151] Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 36.
[152] Marcion, however, was by no means the only opponent. Others included figures or groups associated with various iterations of gnosticism, including, for example Valentinus (ca. 100-160), whose theology involved a monadic, rather than dualistic form of gnosticism. Like Marcion, Valentinus is particularly notable for his reliance on Pauline correspondence in the development of his theology. As Elaine Pagels notes, "Valentinian exegetes attempt systematically to disclose to the initiate the hidden 'logos' of Paul's teaching, separating it from the metaphors that serve to conceal it from uninitiated readers." Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul* (London: Continuum,

Marcion by Adolf von Harnack, White puts the matter thus: "the proto-orthodox (Justin in particular) faced a certain embarrassment over (though having no lack of fondness for) Paul because of the ease by which their opponents made use of him. The Apostle was, in this sense, held captive by the other side."[153] This appropriation of Paul led early church fathers to perceive him as a figure who possessed diminished theological utility—at least for a time. For the Pauline captivity theory *also* posits that the collection of the Pauline letters into a reasonably stable archive was largely the product of a mid-second-century contest between Marcion and his followers, on the one hand, and proto-orthodox thinkers such as Irenaeus (ca. 130-202) on the other.[154]

The Pauline captivity narrative is not entirely devoid of merit. For even though one can locate apparent references to Paul or Pauline ideas among early church fathers who either precede, or are contemporaneous with Marcion, "[t]he problem with these catalogues of supposed allusions to Paul is that they rarely involved any substantive or distinctive ideas of Paul, but rather merely metaphors he employs, or images he draws upon, or rhetorical turns of phrase he uses."[155] In other words, *explicit* references to Paul are by and large lacking in the

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1992), 7. On the difficulties with our use of the category "gnosticism," see Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Michael Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[153] White, *Remembering Paul*, 31. C. Leslie Mitton, for example, adopts this position, which he summarizes thus: "it may well have been that [Paul's letters] were at first overlooked, and then rescued from general neglect by a bold act of collection and publication. Even then, though exercising a powerful influence, they were not accorded universal approval. Marcion, however, forced the Church to abandon any attitude of hesitation and to…give her full approval to the letters, though probably with additions that made the enlarged edition more acceptable to the temper of that day than the earlier and smaller collection, which had been championed by Marcion." C. Leslie Mitton, *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters* (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), 29.

[154] White, *Remembering Paul*, 28-29.

[155] Jason BeDuhn, "The Contested Authority of Paul in the Second Century," *Westar Institute Spring 2017 Seminar Papers* (2017), 44. https://www.westarinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BeDuhn-Contested-Authority.pdf. A similar point is conceded by Donald Guthrie, who states that "[p]revious to the time of Marcion the evidence [of Pauline citations] is very scrappy. It consists chiefly of isolated citations from the works of the apostolic Fathers. When these are tabulated certain epistles are found to be cited earlier than others and the real problem centres round the interpretation of these data." Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 988.

writings of early church fathers of the late first and early second centuries.[156] Without delving into all of the relevant figures in this regard, it is worth touching on this interesting phenomenon in relation to writings attributed to five early church fathers: Clement of Rome (ca. 30-100), Ignatius (c. 35-107), Polycarp (ca. 69-155), Papias (ca. 60-130), and Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165).

The epistle known as 1 Clement is a letter written from the *ekklēsia* in Rome to that in Corinth, and is generally dated to the last decade of the first century.[157] The writer of the epistle is not specifically identified in the letter, though its authorship is traditionally ascribed to Clement (seemingly the same Clement referred to as a co-worker of Paul's in Philippians 4:3).[158] The letter includes a summary of Paul's activity in chapter five:

> Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West…and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.[159]

Later in the letter, Paul is identified again by the author, who encourages the Corinthians to "[t]ake up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle."[160]

Views on the significance of this epistle vary, in terms of what it can tell us about the appeal of the Pauline correspondence in the late first century (assuming, of course, that the letter

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[156] In fact, as Eugene Lovering notes, "among the 'orthodox' writers, it is difficult to find explicit quotations with 'appropriate' formulas prior to Irenaeus." Eugene Harrison Lovering, Jr., "The Collection, Redaction, and Early Circulation of the Corpus Paulinum" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1988), 225. By "appropriate" formulas, Lovering refers essentially to unequivocal signals that the author is quoting directly from the Pauline epistles.

[157] Andreas Lindemann, "Paul's Influence on 'Clement' and Ignatius," in *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9. See also W.C. van Unnik, "Studies on the so-called Epistle of Clement. The Literary Genre," in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement*, ed. Cilliers Brytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn, trans. L.L. Welborn (Brill: Leiden, 2004), 118.

[158] Perhaps the most notable signal concerning Clement's authorship comes from Irenaeus. See Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.3.3. See also Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.15.

[159] *1 Clem*. 5. Of note, the reference to *seven* imprisonments is not evidenced in the New Testament. See Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 1:6.

[160] *1 Clem*. 47. Reference to "the epistle" here quite clearly points to 1 Corinthians.

is correctly dated to that time). Lindemann, for example, argues that while "1 Clement tells us little about the influence of Pauline *theology* in the Roman church in the last years of the first century," it "does show that Paul was of great importance for the church of Rome, both as an apostle and as a teacher of the church, even several decades after Paul's death."[161] A much more guarded appraisal is offered by van Unnik, who states:

> Whether a certain theological "timidity" is at work here, I do not venture to say. In any case, it is clear that, with a few rare exceptions, the letter has been considered almost exclusively with an eye on developments within the Christian church, and that there has been no satisfactory reckoning with the cultural "context" of the author. Clement has been viewed as a Christian, but not sufficiently as a Christian in antiquity.[162]

The position of van Unnik is borne in part from an inability to match the contextual situation of the letter with a corresponding historical situation in the late first century, and also from his identification of the letter as more of a treatise than an occasional piece of writing.[163] While this has not necessarily led to a firm ruling about the letter's spuriousness, there are some who would indeed posit that 1 Clement is a later composition than commonly believed.[164] Accordingly, even apart from the very limited references to Paul's correspondence in 1 Clement, we are also faced with concerns over whether the letter is, in fact, truly a late first century composition.

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[161] Lindeman, "Paul's Influence," 16.
[162] Van Unnik, "Studies on the Epistle of Clement," 129.
[163] See also Laurence L. Welborn, "The Preface to 1 Clement: The Rhetorical Situation and the Traditional Date," in *Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement*, ed. Cilliers Brytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn (Brill: Leiden, 2004), 197-216. With respect to van Unnik's former point, Welborn notes that the letter's reference to recent persecution of the Roman *ekklēsia* does not align with any such activity under the reign of Domitian. As Brian W. Jones has pointed out, "[n]o convincing evidence exists for a Domitianic persecution of the Christians." Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London: Routledge, 1992), 117. With respect to the latter point, van Unnik states that "[i]t is obviously a truism to say that this is a letter; the opening and the closing words permit not the least doubt on this point. But at the same time, this letter displays many of the characteristics of a treatise." Van Unnik, "Studies on the Epistle of Clement," 128. The relevance of this type of distinction will become more evident later, particularly in connection to Adolf Deissmann's work on the epistolary genre.
[164] Welborn, for example, notes a wide range of dates for its composition, placing it anywhere between 80 and 140 CE. Welborn, "The Preface to 1 Clement."

In the case of Ignatius, one finds two references to Paul in his letters.[165] In his epistle to the Ephesians, he describes the recipients of the letter as being "associates in the mysteries with Paul,"[166] while in his letter to the Romans, he writes that he did "not enjoin [the Romans], as Peter and Paul did."[167] Yet as with 1 Clement, these references to Paul do not include much detail, and thus the extent of Ignatius's knowledge of Paul's biography or writings is by no means certain.[168]

The situation with Polycarp differs to some degree. We possess a single letter by Polycarp, his epistle to the Philippians, which is generally regarded as authentic.[169] The dominant scholarly view on the letter, however, is that it is in fact a composite, comprised of a brief type of covering note, contained in what are now chapters thirteen and fourteen of the letter, along with chapters one to twelve as a separate piece of correspondence. This theory, championed most notably by P.N. Harrison, holds that "Polycarp wrote to the Philippians at two different times two letters, which were copied out at an early date on to the same papyrus roll, and so fused into one."[170] One of the primary justifications for this theory is summarized by Kenneth Berding, who notes that "ch. 9 lists Ignatius among other martyrs (indicating that they knew he had died),

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[165] While the authenticity of these letters is sometimes disputed, the authorship of the letters to the Ephesians and the Romans is sometimes buttressed on the relatively early citation of them by Origen (ca. 184-253).
[166] Ign. *Eph*. 12.
[167] Ign. *Rom*. 4.
[168] Carl Smith, for example, very modestly suggests that "Ignatius is clearly aware of the facts that Paul died as a martyr and that he penned more than one letter." Carl B. Smith, "Ministry, Martyrdom, and Other Mysteries: Pauline Influence on Ignatius of Antioch," in *Paul and the Second Century,* ed. Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 38. Much bolder is the view of William Inge, who writes that Ignatius "must have known [1 Corinthians] by heart…echoes of its language and thought pervade the whole of his writings in such a manner as to leave no doubt that he was acquainted with the First Epistle to the Corinthians." William R. Inge, "Ignatius," in *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. The Oxford Society of Historical Theology (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), 67.
[169] Berding, *Polycarp and Paul*, 12. The letter was originally composed in Greek, but we do not have the Greek version of it in its entirety. A complete Latin translation however, survives. For a detailed study of the epistle, see Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and its Allusions to New Testament Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).
[170] P.N. Harrison, *Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 15.

whereas the last sentence of ch. 13 indicates that Ignatius is or may still be alive."[171] As for the date of composition of the work(s), views on this issue are ultimately somewhat broad. Berding, for example, suggests a date around 120 CE, but concedes that dating the letter is "difficult to determine," and ultimately places it "some time in the first half of the second century." [172] Somewhat similarly, Adolf von Harnack offers a range between 100-155 CE,[173] while Harrison argues that the bulk of the epistle (i.e. chapters one to twelve) was composed around 133 CE, in opposition to the teachings of Marcion.[174]

Dating aside, it is worth taking stock of specific references to Pauline writings in Polycarp's letter. One notable reference can be identified in chapter 11 of the epistle, in which Polycarp writes, "*know we not*, *that the saints shall judge the world,* as Paul teacheth?"[175] While the statement includes no explicit citation of Corinthians, the sentiment seemingly derives from 1 Cor 6:2 ("Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?"). Accordingly, it is suggested that Polycarp had knowledge of this particular piece of Pauline correspondence, among others.[176]

Later in the letter, Polycarp writes, "as it is said in these scriptures, *Be ye angry and sin not*, and *Let not the sun set on your wrath*."[177] This passage is also noteworthy, on account of a couple of considerations. One point of interest lies in the origin of the quotes themselves. The first segment ("if you get angry do not sin") derives from Psalms 4:4, which is itself cited, and

[171] Berding, *Polycarp and Paul*, 16.
[172] Berding, *Polycarp and Paul*, 15.
[173] Adolf von Harnack, "Lightfoot on the Ignatian Epistles: II. Genuineness and Date of the Epistles," *The Expositor*, 3rd series, vol. 3 (1886): 185.
[174] Harrison, *Polycarp's Two Epistles*, 268. Similarly, Pervo estimates 130-135 "as a reasonable time-frame for both the single and the two-letter hypotheses." Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 85.
[175] Pol. *Phil*. 11.
[176] Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 100.
[177] Pol. *Phil*. 12.

elaborated on, in Ephesians: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26).[178]

A second notable feature of this passage lies in its prefatory reference to scripture, i.e. *graphē*, or *scriptura*. The question, however, is what is meant here by the term "scripture"; for as R.P.C. Hanson notes, one must exercise some caution in interpreting the term:

> English speakers are apt to be misled when they translate this word *graphe* as 'Scripture,' for the word 'Scripture' has for them a special meaning, exclusively confined to the Bible, whereas the word *graphe* to all Greek-speaking Christians meant 'writing' or 'document' as well as Scripture. Those who wanted to refer to special, peculiar and sanctified Scripture could use the phrase 'holy Scripture,' or 'inspired Scripture,' as the author of II Timothy does, referring, no doubt, to the Old Testament. No doubt most of the cases of the use of 'Scripture' for the New Testament…mark an increasing respect for these documents and a movement towards their canonization, but we cannot regard the phrase as decisive.[179]

Recognizing this, one might argue that this particular reference to scripture is not intended to confer or affirm a privileged authoritative or canonical status on the texts cited. Indeed, as discussed earlier, the formation of a canon was at this time only in its most embryonic stages. Yet at the same time, it would appear that reference to "these scriptures" is, in fact, connected to a preceding remark by Polycarp, in which he suggests to the Philippians that they are "well educated in the *sacred writings* [*sacris literis*]."[180] Accordingly, some take this to suggest that Polycarp intends to reference *both* Psalms and Ephesians as "sacred literature."[181] Conversely, other argue that Polycarp's citation, and the implied reference to Ephesians as a sacred writing, is

[178] A similar sentiment is noted by Plutarch in relation to the practice of the Pythagoreans. Plutarch writes, "[w]e should…pattern ourselves after the Pythagoreans, who, though related not at all by birth, yet sharing a common discipline, if ever they were led by anger into recrimination, never let the sun go down before they joined right hands, embraced each other, and were reconciled." Plutarch, *Mor.* 6.488c.
[179] R.P.C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 207.
[180] Pol. *Phil*. 12.
[181] See, for example, Charles Merritt Nielsen, "Polycarp, Paul and the Scriptures," *ATR* 47 (1965): 201.

simply borne out of a misunderstanding on his part, as Polycarp was under the erroneous assumption that the *entire* quote derived originally from Psalms.[182]

Regardless, one must also contend here with another issue: the authenticity of Ephesians. While the issue of authenticity will be addressed in more detail in the following chapter, suffice it to say that scholarly views concerning the authenticity of Ephesians are at best mixed, and many view the letter as a pseudonymous composition.[183]

A comparable conundrum can be found elsewhere in Polycarp's letter, where he writes that "*[b]ut the love of money is the beginning of all troubles*," an apparent allusion to 1 Tim 6:10 ("For the love of money is the root of all evils").[184]

As the case with Ephesians, the citation here is accompanied by questions over authorship. (In the case of 1 Timothy, and the pastorals generally, we shall see in the next chapter that these texts are more often than not viewed as pseudonymous). Pervo, for example, dates them to c. 125, and suggests that there is even merit to reading the pastorals and Polycarp's letter in conjunction, on account of their similarities and contemporaneous composition.[185] In

[182] Nielsen, "Polycarp": 201-202. Nielsen refers to Helmut Köster, Albert E. Barnett, and Walter Bauer, as advocates of this view. See Helmut Köster, *Synoptische Oberlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 113; Albert E. Barnett, *Paul Becomes a Literary Influence* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1941), 170; and Walter Bauer, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Polykarpbrief*, ed. Hans Lietzmann (Tübingen: Verlag Von J.C.B. Mohr, 1920), 297.

[183] Brown suggests that "*about 80 percent of critical scholarship holds that Paul did not write* Eph." Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 620. The reasons for this view relate generally to the following themes: the author's elevated view of apostleship (in a manner unseen elsewhere in the Pauline corpus), the presence of a literary style and vocabulary that are markedly different from other letters (apart, that is, from Colossians, which is also suspect), and a universal, rather than particular status that is afforded to the notion of the church, i.e. *ekklēsia*. See also Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 71 (Pervo dates the composition of the epistle to c. 90-100); and Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 150. As Collins points out, initial skepticism over the authorship of the epistle was raised by Edward Evanson in 1792. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 133.

[184] Pol. *Phil*. 4. The passage continues: "Knowing therefore that *we brought nothing into the world neither can we carry anything out*, let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness, and let us teach ourselves first to walk in the commandment of the Lord." As Pervo notes, "[t]he sentiment is widespread, but the second clause, introduced with a citation formula, derives from 1 Tim 6:7," adding further that "Polycarp seems to improve the construction." Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 92.

[185] Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 94.

fact, Hans Von Campenhausen went so far as to posit that Polycarp himself was the author of the pastorals, a view that Pervo remarks upon:

> Campenhausen and others have shown that the PE and PolPhil come from a similar environment, exhibit similar understandings of ecclesiology and ethics, hold a common view of tradition, a similar orientation to the Christian past and to the pastoral task. If Polycarp wrote several decades after the Pastor [i.e., the author of 1 and 2 Tim], he was remarkably out of date. Avant-garde he was most certainly not, but for him, as for the Pastor, the good old days were the apostolic era.[186]

In any event, we cannot yet move on from Polycarp without making note of one further passage in his letter, one also referenced at the very outset of his study: "neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul."[187] This, I would suggest, underscores the modest usefulness of Paul at the time of Polycarp's letter. Granted, Paul was most certainly lauded by Polycarp, and was clearly viewed as an authority figure. But in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, Paul's standing in this regard appears to be based more on his position as the *founder* of the Philippian *ekklēsia* than it is on his status as an important and readily understood literary figure.

Shifting from three early church fathers who referenced Paul's writings only tangentially, or sporadically, it is worth considering two others who make no mention of him at all. The first of these is Papias, who is described by Irenaeus as "an ancient man who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp."[188] Although only parts of Papias's writings survive (through their

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[186] Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 84. See Hans von Campenhausen, "Polykarp von Smyrna und die Pastoralbriefe," in *Aus der Frühzeit des Christentums* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963), 197-252. While Pervo maintains that a certain relation between the texts is detectable, he ultimately does not appear to share Campenhausen's view about the pastorals being composed by Polycarp. Indeed, Campenhausen's thesis has not found much support in scholarship. One exception in this regard is R. Joseph Hoffman, who asserts that "if…the Pastorals form a 'third' section of Luke-Acts, itself conceivably an anti-Marcionite offering from Johannine circles in Ephesus, then we must contend with the idea that the 'problem' which unifies this literature—namely the heresy of Marcion—also points in the direction of Polycarp as the likeliest author." R. Joseph Hoffman, *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984), 284.

[187] Pol. *Phil*. 3.

[188] Irenaeus, *Haer*. 5.33.4. For a helpful overview of Papias's life, see Monte Allen Shanks, *Papias and the New Testament* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 65-104.

presence in the work of Irenaeus and Eusebius), there is nonetheless enough of substance for Calvin Roetzel to remark that "given [Papias's] millenarian beliefs, the absence of a single remark about Paul is astonishing."[189] John Knox also views this absence as somewhat mystifying, stating that "[t]his silence, especially as it seems deliberate, can most naturally be interpreted to mean that in some churches at least Paul was under suspicion."[190] Thus, even bearing in mind the paucity of information concerning Papias's writings, at least some scholars have still puzzled over his lack of any reference whatsoever to Paul.

The second church father of note in connection to early Pauline references, or lack thereof, is Justin Martyr, known particularly for his *First Apology*, in which he defended Christianity in an epistle addressed to emperor Antoninus Pius.[191] Outlining the practices of Christians in this apology, Justin writes that "on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read."[192] Justin's mention of the "memoirs of the apostles" is by no means viewed as a statement that would include reference to the Pauline correspondence; rather, it is quite clearly a reference that is limited to the gospels.[193]

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[189] Roetzel, "Paul in the Second Century," 227-228. Roetzel also concedes, however, that "our knowledge about Papias is scanty." Roetzel, "Paul in the Second Century," 240, fn. 7.

[190] Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament*, 115. Charles Nielsen takes this silence even further, suggesting that Papias deliberately avoided any mention of Paul, in an effort to ensure that the status of Paul's writings was *not* elevated. Charles Merritt Nielsen, "Papias: Polemicist Against Whom?" *TS* 35 (1974): 530-32.

[191] Notably, there is little evidence of significant Christian persecution under Antoninus Pius. As Paul Kerestez writes, "Christians, in spite of strong anti-Christian violence in the Greek East and a handful of martyrdoms in Rome, enjoyed a relatively peaceful existence under Antoninus Pius—thanks, perhaps, in part to the relatively peaceful times under this emperor and his repeated measures to stop mob violence and irregular procedures against the Christians in the provinces of the East." Paul Keresztes, "The Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Christians," *JEH* 22, 1 (1971): 17.

[192] Justin, *1 Apol*. 67.

[193] Justin states as much in the previous chapter, as he writes that "[t]he apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them." Justin, *1 Apol*. 66. See also Oskar Skarsaune, "Justin and His Bible," in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 71-72.

Indeed, nowhere in Justin's work do we find any specific references to Paul whatsoever. Yet despite this, scholars tend to assume that Justin must certainly have had some knowledge of him. White, for example, notes that "Justin is particularly important because he would have certainly known the Pauline letters, living in Rome at the time of Marcion and Valentinus, both of whom, according to later proto-orthodox writers, considered themselves to have been devotees of the Apostle."[194] Comparably, Rodney Werline suggests that with respect to one of Justin's other works, the *Dialogue with Trypho*, it is evident that the underlying substance of the argument exhibits knowledge of Pauline theology, even if the form of the writing does not.[195] Nonetheless, Justin's omission of any explicit references to Paul remains, leading scholars such as Ferdinand Christian Baur to puzzle over why, "in Justin's writings, in many passages of which we should so naturally expect to hear of the apostle Paul, the name never occurs…His strange silence about the apostle Paul and his Epistles certainly suggests to us very forcibly that he meant to ignore them."[196]

On the one hand, keeping in mind our more general interest in the *collection* of Paul's letters, it is fair to say that there is little in the writings of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, or Justin that would clearly indicate that the Pauline writings had been, or were being compiled. Moreover, while 1 Clement and Polycarp's letter to the Philippians make references or allusions

[194] White, *Remembering Paul*, 29.
[195] Rodney Werline, "The Transformation of Pauline Arguments in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*," *HTR* 92, 1 (1999): 79-80. See also Skarsaune, "Justin and His Bible," 74-75.
[196] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 3rd ed., trans. Allan Menzies (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878), 88. Baur also remarks that it is "striking" that Justin "nowhere gives any express recognition of Pauline Christianity. It is said to be beyond a doubt that [Justin Martyr] borrowed his view of the faith of Abraham from the Epistle to the Romans, and wished, by laying stress on the righteousness that is by faith, to represent himself as a Paulinist. If this be so, it is certainly remarkable that he never once mentions even the name of the apostle Paul…If he be a Paulinist in fact, he does not wish to be one in name." Baur, *The Church History*, 146-147.

to certain Pauline epistles, these letters give no indication of any push or injunction to read multiple epistles, i.e. a *collection* of them.[197]

On the other hand, it is difficult to make very much of the presence of vague allusions or limited references to Paul in the writings of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, or the absence of any direct Pauline references in the writings of Papias and Justin. Indeed, drawing any strong conclusions in this regard involves at least a certain degree of speculation, for a few reasons. First, in the case of Justin at least, we are dealing with a work that is apologetic in nature, and not directed to an audience that would by any means be persuaded by rhetorical appeals to Paul. Indeed, it is entirely possible—even likely—that Antoninus Pius had no knowledge whatsoever of Paul (assuming, of course, that the intended recipient of the correspondence was truly Antoninus Pius).[198] Second, available data from these figures is ultimately quite limited, and in the case of Papias even fragmentary. Accordingly, one can easily allow for the possibility that any of these figures did, in fact, discuss Paul or the letters of Paul in more detail elsewhere, in writings that did not survive. Finally, while the writings of these early church fathers rarely cite the Pauline correspondence directly, this by no means requires us to therefore logically conclude that they had no knowledge of any such correspondence (particularly in the case of Polycarp). On the contrary, as Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett point out, "[a]ppeals to an image of the apostle or to his ideas need not reflect direct literary dependence on his letters."[199] Given

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[197] Indeed, in the greater context of Clement's discussion in *1 Clem*. 47, it is clear that he is speaking only of earlier correspondence to the Corinthians, specifically 1 Corinthians.

[198] Rodney Werline advances a similar argument in connection to the *Dialogue With Trypho*, noting that "Paul...is not an authority figure for Trypho, and, consequently, it is futile to cite him." Werline, "The Transformation of Pauline Arguments," 81.

[199] Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett, "Reflections on Method: What Constitutes the use of the Writings that Later Formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers?" in *The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80. For a clear and cogent summary of various Pauline passages that possess similarities in stylistic or theological content to the writings of various early church fathers, see Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2007), 387-394.

such considerations, it is arguable that,"[t]here is certainly no basis for the notion that Paul was forgotten or unimportant in the (wing of the) church in which 'Clement,' Ignatius and Polycarp did their work."[200] Further, David Rensberger has convincingly argued that while a certain "failure to use the epistles of Paul may be something that needs to be explained," there is a sustainable explanation for such a failure:

> The most obvious and most general explanation is that it is only relatively late in the second century that we find widespread treatment of Paul as on a level with authoritative and normative Christian writings, namely the Old Testament. Prior to the entry of a writing into the sphere of the normative—and most particularly an occasional writing, like a letter, making no claim to be a divine revelation—there is no real reason why later authors should always have felt obliged to show themselves in agreement with it or acquainted with it, or to busy themselves with it at all, whoever its author may have been and however they may have regarded him.[201]

Rensberger's statements contain much material worth considering. For our purposes, however, what is perhaps most important here is that he provides a plausible explanation for *why* references to Paul among the early church fathers were sporadic. Furthermore, Rensberger's assertion has helped to displace, or at least temper, scholarly appeals to the previously-mentioned Pauline captivity narrative, which holds that Paul's limited presence in the writings of early church fathers was largely the product of Paul's appropriation by Marcion and other antagonists of these fathers. Indeed, following from the work of Rensberger and others, White even suggests that the Pauline captivity narrative no longer holds nearly as much sway in scholarship:

> Recent scholarship on "Paul in the second century" has produced…several trends. First, a broad consensus has emerged that views Paul's legacy in the second century as a complex set of fragmented trajectories. From the beginning, the Pauline tradition developed neither in a singular and straight line, nor in a hot-potato style handoff from one group to another (contra the Pauline Captivity narrative), but along a variety of

[200] Lindemann, "Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers," 45.
[201] David K. Rensberger, "As the Apostle Teaches: The Development of the Use of Paul's Letters in Second-Century Christianity," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1981), 331. See also White, *Remembering Paul*, 46, and Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 7.

> trajectories among a variety of communities, each of which incorporated Paul's letters, as well as stories about the Apostle, into their prior network of theological authorities.[202]

Yet despite this state of affairs, and notwithstanding both the cogency of Rensberger's explanation, and the ensuing impression that Marcion's "alleged importance in the development of a 'New Testament' seems to have been much exaggerated,"[203] it remains evident that Marcion stands as a noteworthy figure in relation to both the development of canon generally, and the development of a Pauline canon in particular. For this reason, it is worth giving some further consideration to him, and the way in which he is viewed in connection the formation of a Pauline canon.

Marcion's Relevance to the Pauline Canon

As the above demonstrates, views about Marcion's impact on developments in early Christianity fluctuate in contemporary scholarship. On the one hand, much literature on Marcion identifies him as a pivotal figure in the formulation of both a so-called "orthodox" Paul, and the creation of a stable canon of authoritative Christian literature. Pervo, for example, notes that "Marcion's contributions to catholic Christianity were…considerable. He forced serious reflection upon Pauline soteriology and gave considerable impetus to the formation of a collection of Christian sacred writings."[204] Similar, but perhaps more reserved, are the remarks of Metzger, who writes that we should understand Marcion's activity, and more precisely his canon of authoritative literature, as "accelerating the process of fixing the Church's canon, a process that had already

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[202] White, *Remembering Paul*, 66-67.
[203] John Barton, "Marcion Revisited," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 343. The essential character of the Pauline captivity narrative is effectively summarized by Knox, who writes that "the more conservative churches (and this means Rome principally) in the middle of the second century were confronted with the necessity of a crucial choice as far as Paul is concerned: either they must canonize him or repudiate him (or at least seriously discredit him)." Knox, *Marcion,* 115.
[204] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 207.

begun in the first half of the second century. It was in opposition to Marcion's criticism that the Church first became fully conscious of its inheritance of apostolic writings."[205] Views such as these are relatively common, and there remains a general sentiment in New Testament scholarship that Marcion's impact on the development of the New Testament canon was rather significant, even if the Pauline captivity narrative presents an oversimplified account of how a Pauline canon developed.

On the other hand, some view Marcion as a figure of marginal relevance. For example, John Barton asserts not only that Marcion's relevance is "exaggerated," but also that "[t]he documents which Christians accumulated and transmitted as the literary part of their religious heritage seem on the whole to have developed independently of Marcion."[206] This leads Barton to conclude that Marcion was in fact "not a major influence on the formation of the New Testament."[207] To some extent, at least, Barton's contrarian view is not entirely justified by his argument. For given that there is most certainly a distinction between tracing a genealogical literary history of a "religious heritage," and developing an authoritative canon, it is by no means clear that Marcion's purported absence in the former lineage renders him irrelevant to the occurrence of the latter.[208] Despite this, Barton's critique has some weight, as the inclination to regard Marcion as a seminal figure in early Christianity does seem at times overstated. Jason BeDuhn, articulates a more temperate position:

> Several researchers have argued that the rapid formation and dissemination of [a] four-gospel "canon" between the time of Justin and that of Irenaeus suggests a deliberate conscious decision by the leaders of the non-Marcionite party in the western Roman Empire, with Marcion's activities there serving as the catalyst. But in fact the process of

[205] Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 99.
[206] Barton, "Marcion Revisited," 354.
[207] Barton, "Marcion Revisited, "354.
[208] Barton's argument is clearly impacted by the dating of the Muratorian fragment, a point that he concedes. For Barton's argument to succeed, it is necessary for him to deny the commonly-held view that the fragment reflects a situation that is near or shortly after the activity of Marcion. In doing so, he follows those that argue for a fourth-century dating of the fragment.

> canonization within non-Marcionite circles appears to have been a slow one, and we must wait two hundred years to find one as formally defined as Marcion's.[209]

BeDuhn is quite correct in describing the New Testament canonization process as a "slow one," a point evidenced in part by the date of the earlier-mentioned Festal Letter of Athanasius. Yet at the same time, it is clear that to a certain degree, at least, Marcion was indeed one catalyst for this gradual development. Thus, some further consideration of this figure is warranted, especially on account of his relevance to the collection of the Pauline epistles.

Marcion's life and activity is commonly located around ca. 85-160 CE, and he is believed to have been preaching from around 110 to 150 CE.[210] Yet for our purposes, Marcion's relevance relates simply to the collection and eventual canonization of the Pauline epistles. For it was Marcion who was the first person to put forward a (surviving) list of authoritative Pauline epistles. In short, he was the first to organize a canon, or rather a proto-canon. In Marcion's case, this proto-canon was comprised of an edited version of Luke (the *Evangelikon*) and ten of Paul's letters (the *Apostolikon*), ordered as follows: Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans (i.e. Ephesians), Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.[211] Moreover, the dating of Marcion's canon can be established with at least some level of comfort. As BeDuhn notes, "[w]e know the name of the individual responsible for the first New Testament, the circumstances of his work in compiling it, and even a date that relates to his

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[209] BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 26-27.

[210] For an example of this traditional dating of Marcion's life, see Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 202. BeDuhn estimates a slightly later range between 95-165 CE. See BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 13. Writing before BeDuhn, yet consistent with his dating, Tyson places the beginning of Marcion's activity at around 115-120 CE. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 31.

[211] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*. 29. See also Gamble, "The Pauline Corpus and the Early Christian Book," 271. As BeDuhn points out, while "[t]he order of Paul's collected letters remained in flux throughout the first several Christian centuries…the relatively unusual order in the *Apostolikon*, with Galatians first, was long considered to have been ideologically motivated." BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 207. The epistle to the Laodiceans is often, though not always, viewed as being similar in content to Ephesians, and is thus sometimes referred to as Ephesians. Pervo, for example, suggests that "Marcion knew canonical Ephesians as 'the letter to the Laodiceans.'" Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 31.

momentous decision to establish a textual foundation for the fledgling Christian communities of his time: 144 CE."[212]

Marcion's thought involved a dualistic theology in which the God of the Old Testament, referred to as the "demiurge,"[213] was opposed by the true, yet unknown or alien God, a supreme God who sent Jesus, and was identified by Paul (in Marcion's view at least) as distinct from the God of Israel. Accordingly, Marcion recognized the Judaic God, but only insofar as he played a role in his dualistic theology.[214] The Judaic God was inferior to the true, unknown God—as Pervo comically puts it, "Marcion's creator god is like the god of Woody Allen, an underachiever."[215] Thus, while the books of the Old Testament contained accurate historical information, they unsurprisingly held no authoritative theological value in Marcion's canon.[216]

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[212] BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 3. The date is established by Tertullian's remark that "from Tiberius to Antoninus Pius, there are about 115 years and 6-1/2 months. Just such an interval do they place between Christ and Marcion." Tertullian, *Marc.* 1.12.2. As BeDuhn notes, this is a date that is "remembered in the Marcionite community itself, and therefore not suspect as a polemical invention…The point of reference with Christ can scarcely be anything else than the date given in the first verse of the Evangelion: the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, 29 CE. The calculation yields a date in mid-July 144 CE, even if the exact event commemorated by this date is not clear." BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 12.

[213] The word demiurge derives from the Greek term *dēmiourgos*, which is frequently translated as "craftsman" or "artisan." In Marcionism and various strands of gnosticism it refers essentially to a "creator." In Plato's *Timaeus*, the *dēmiourgos* is the entity responsible for fashioning the material world, which, although imperfect, is not a creation that carries with it any nefarious intentions. Thus, in contrast to the way in which gnosticisms viewed the demiurge, the being in the *Timaeus* is regarded as benevolent, an understanding consistent with the etymology of *dēmiourgos*—it is a compound word comprised of the terms *dḗmios* ("public") and *érgon* ("work"). See Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1949).

[214] While this has led some to identify Marcion as an anti-Semitic thinker, there is certainly recent scholarship that criticizes that view, arguing that Marcion's theology—despite its patent disjunction with Judaic theology—bears no evidence of an underlying anti-Semitic motivation or bent. See Sebastian Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 60; and Glen Jody Fairen, "Revelations of Lesser Gods: The Heresy of Christian Anti-Judaism and the Logic of a Demiurge for Nostalgic Israel," (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2015). Likewise, Tyson notes that "it is a misreading of history to think of [Marcion] as the arch-anti-Semite of the early Church. On the contrary Marcion's insistence on the literal interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures potentially created a bond of understanding between him and at least some Jews that his opponents could not have achieved." Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 131.

[215] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 203.

[216] It is worth noting that even though Marcionism is sometimes associated with gnosticism, some scholars are quick to point out that Marcion's thought is distinguishable. Pervo, for example, notes that "Marcion's creator cannot be attributed to Gnostic thought. Marcion did not claim that humans contained a spark of the divine, a key feature of systems categorized as 'Gnostic.'…Marcion's thought can be compared to Gnosticism and related to philosophical concepts, but in its fundamentals it was independent." Pervo, *The Making of Paul,* 206. Further, as noted earlier, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the term "gnosticism" is itself notoriously vague, and at times applied indiscriminately to a wide array of theologies in classical antiquity. See King, *What is Gnosticism*?; and Williams,

From this brief sketch, it is rather easy to detect that Marcion's views certainly appear "unorthodox" or even "heretical," at least in contrast to contemporary Christian theologies. But bearing in mind the time of Marcion's activity, any appeals to notions of "orthodoxy" or "heresy" are ultimately anachronistic. William Arnal cogently outlines this point:

> Heresy requires an orthodoxy, and both phenomena assume a fixed ideological standard against which to evaluate ideas, whereas no such standard actually existed—at least for the "religious" beliefs of the Jesus-people—in the first or even second centuries, in which the churches were instead radically diverse and lacking in any central authority to impose theological conformity. The retrojection of much *later* standards of acceptable belief is poor historical method.[217]

Thus, even though it is common enough to see references to Marcion as a "heretic"— or as Sebastian Moll identifies him, "the *first actual heretic*"[218]—Arnal is right in noting that in the first couple of centuries of Christianity, there was no *fixed* ideological standard against which to valuate such ideas.[219] Rather, what we find in the early centuries of Christianity (or Christianities) is multiple dialectical encounters, whose gradual resolutions culminate in the formulation of a fourth century "orthodox" Christian identity (though even this iteration of "orthodox" identity was by no means absolute or immutable). In other words, contests in the early centuries of Christianity evidence not the *a priori* existence of a fixed ideological standard, but rather the gradual fix*ing* of an ideological, or theological standard.

Rethinking "Gnosticism."

[217] William Arnal, "Doxa, Heresy, and Self-Construction: The Pauline Ekklēsiai and the Boundaries of Urban Identities," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 50-51. In general terms, this sentiment is one that evolves in part from the work of Walter Baur. See Walter Baur, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins, ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1996).

[218] Moll, *The Arch Heretic*, 44. Interestingly, Moll rejects the contemporary view of scholars concerning orthodoxy and heresy, arguing that the categories can in fact be applied to contests in that period. I think Moll is wrong in this regard, and concur with the assessment of Arnal in "Doxa, Heresy, and Self-Construction."

[219] As Arnal points out, while we can locate in the letters instances of the term "that later come to mean 'heresy'—*hairesis*—in 1 Corinthians 11:19 and Galatians 5:20…We can hardly regard these uses of the term, however, as being invested with its later significance, and thus cannot speak of Paul engaging in a discourse of 'heresy' within his own *ekklēsia*." Arnal, "Doxa, Heresy, and Self-Construction," 52, fn. 7.

These underlying dialectical moves towards mainstream orthodoxy reflect a somewhat Hegelian process, in which there subsists a necessary relational tension between subject and object, as one requires the other in order to generate *any* notion of identification, or identity.[220] Alternatively, a perhaps better analogy might be drawn from the work of Thucydides, who claims that "Hellenic" identity was something that developed gradually over time, pointing to an earlier period when there was no distinction between Greek and barbarian, as "the same manner of life was anciently universal."[221] Comparably, with the categories "orthodoxy" and "heresy," one can identify various Christianities involved in contests over which theology was accurate (orthodoxy), or inaccurate (heresy). The relevance of these contests was thus two-fold, in terms of their impact on identity formation: they fostered the ability of diverse groups to eke out various theological identities between themselves, and also led, gradually, to the formation of an intermittently stable and normative Christian orthodoxy.

While a discussion on orthodoxy, heresy, and Hegel may seem to digress somewhat from a discussion on Marcion's relation to the collection and eventual canonization of the Pauline epistles, the former is in fact quite relevant to the latter. For just as the move to orthodox Christianity involved a dialectical process, so too did the move to an orthodox "Paul." And in the case of Paul, a notable stimulus in the process was Marcion, whose creation of a list or collection

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[220] As Hegel notes, "[p]hilosophy must give the separation into subject and object its due. By making both separation and the identity, which is opposed to it, equally absolute, however, philosophy has only posited separation conditionally, in the same way that such an identity—conditioned as it is by the nullification of its opposite—is also only relative. Hence, the Absolute itself is the identity of identity and non-identity; being opposed and being one are both together in it." See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: State of New York Press, 1977), 156. In connection specifically to the issue of heresy and orthodoxy, John Henderson remarks that "[t]he propaganda of the victorious, it seems, must include an account of both self and other, of orthodox as well as heretical; for the former positions and defines itself by reference to the latter, even arises and develops historically by constructing an inversion of the heretical other." John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 2. Similarly, Jacques Berlinerblau writes, "orthodoxy is not—as the orthodox would always have it—in singular possession of an invariable 'truth.' Rather, its contents are to be construed as fluid, as developing in a dialectic with heterodoxy." Jacques Berlinerblau, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and *Doxa*," *HR* 40, 4 (2001): 332.

[221] Thucydides, *P.W.* I.5.3.

of authoritative writings led to important questions in early Christianities: which iteration, or interpretation of Paul is ultimately correct? And what epistles, or other sources on Paul's thought, are reliable sources? Conversely, which sources are of dubious value? These are all questions that became more pressing on account of Marcion's activity.

Yet even though it was "the challenge of Marcionism and other heresies that led Irenaeus to his convictions about the need for a definite church structure and canon,"[222] there are no complete works by Marcion that survive. Rather, all of the extant information about him derives from the work of his attackers, particularly Irenaeus and Tertullian.[223] Consequently, prudent scholarship on Marcion recognizes that the information is delivered through the filter of early church fathers such as these.[224]

Being cognizant of the second-order nature of the evidence on Marcion, it is nonetheless worth touching a bit more on his *Paulusbild*. While Marcion produced the first known list of Pauline epistles, his opponents argued that his versions of the texts were not entirely authentic. As Irenaeus puts it, Marcion "dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world." [225] In other words, Marcion's opponents claimed his version of the Pauline epistles contained interpolations, or at least redactions.[226]

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[222] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 39.
[223] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 24.
[224] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 25. As BeDuhn notes "[o]ur ability to reconstruct the First New Testament [i.e. Marcion's canon] is hampered by the nature of our sources, all of which are polemical attacks on Marcionite views written by leaders of other forms of Christianity." BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 34. See also Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scriptures in the Second Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 7-9.
[225] Irenaeus, *Haer*. 1.27.2. See also Tertullian, *Praescr. 38*; *Marc.* 5.3.3; 5.21.
[226] To be sure, this claim is by no means a novel one in Pauline scholarship—the issue of interpolations or editorial activity in the Pauline letters is a topic that will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Irenaeus's claim was not altogether unfounded: it is certainly clear that Marcion excised material from the epistles that cast the God of Israel in a positive light.[227] Yet at the same time, recognizing of course Marcion's own theological motivations, he nonetheless viewed his editorial activity as a *bona fide* attempt to recover the Pauline epistles in their pristine form—as Joseph Tyson writes, Marcion believed that he "had a duty to purge Paul's letters of these sections, so that readers would not be misled by them."[228] The seeming sincerity behind Marcion's position was not lost on Tertullian, who reflected soberly on the dilemma (as well as a possible solution):

> I say that *my* Gospel is the true one; Marcion, that *his* is. I affirm that Marcion's Gospel is adulterated; Marcion, that mine is. Now what is to settle the point for us, except it be that principle of *time*, which rules that the authority lies with that which shall be found to be more ancient; and assumes as an elemental truth, that corruption (of doctrine) belongs to the side which shall be convicted of comparative lateness in its origin.[229]

While Tertullian's solution might seem appealing, it is virtually impossible for modern scholars to carry out the proposed exercise. For apart from the methodological issues that flow from even the best attempts to reconstruct Marcion's work, we are faced on the other side with a lack of comprehensive data concerning the form of the Pauline epistles *prior* to Marcion—indeed, this point is evidenced by the previous discussion on the paucity of Pauline references among the early church fathers.[230] Given that a solution to the dilemma appears impossible, one could even conceivably speculate, as Tyson does, that "[i]n some cases the Marcionite texts [i.e. Paul's letters] may be more original than those used by his opponents."[231]

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[227] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*. See also Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 38. As Tyson notes, a number of sections from Romans were excised by Marcion; Rom 1:19-21; Rom 3:31; Rom 4:25; Rom 11:29.
[228] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 38.
[229] Tertullian, *Marc.*4.4.1.
[230] See, for example, BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*.
[231] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 36. In stating this, however, Tyson is also quick to add that "in other cases it is evident that Marcion edited the texts he received." Of further interest here, however, are the words of Tertullian, who claimed that Marcion himself believed he was restoring Paul's epistles to their original state. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.4.1.

In any event, Marcion's importance here relates not to our contemporary judgments concerning the quality, or accuracy, of the Paul that he presented. Rather, his relevance in this study relates to his endeavour to form an authoritative collection of the Pauline epistles. In short, Marcion's "gospel" evidences the first unequivocal instance of a Pauline archive. With Marcion, we find the first incontrovertible evidence of a robust, functional Pauline Archimedean point.

This, however, is hardly the end of the story concerning Paul's canonization. On the contrary, one might better view it as a key part of the beginnings. For in response to Marcion's Paul, one finds altogether different iterations of Paul, with further texts added to the Pauline archive. Indeed, some scholars argue that certain texts were specifically used—and possibly even produced—in an effort to counteract the challenge of Marcionism. One such text is Acts, the second volume of Luke's gospel.

Acts

While the Pauline captivity narrative arguably overemphasizes the dearth of Pauline references in pre-Marcionite literature, it is nonetheless evident, as Tyson points out, that "[a] most difficult aspect of Marcion's challenge had to do with Paul…[after Paul's lifetime] there seems to have been a long silence about him. Little attention seems to have been paid to him, except by Marcion and his followers."[232] Thus, in part as a response to the activity of Marcion, there is little doubt that post-Marcionite thinkers grew more interested in appropriating or reconstructing Paul. At the very least, early Christian thinkers increasingly recognized Paul's utility as a theological or doctrinal legitimizer.

In the wake of this "ecclesiastical rehabilitation" of Paul, as Gamble describes it, one finds two trajectories of thought: "first…adding to the Pauline collection the letters to Timothy

[232] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 48.

and Titus, which depict an episcopal Paul concerned to establish authoritative teaching and to secure its proper transmission in the church; and second…employing the book of Acts, which integrates and indeed subordinates Paul in the larger apostolic ranks and so deprives him of autonomy and pre-eminence."[233] It is this latter trajectory that I wish to discuss here—not so much in terms of its function as a countermeasure to Marcionism, but rather in terms of its relation to the Pauline archive generally, and its contemporary appeal as a repository of reliable data about Paul. For as Lee MacDonald and Stanley Porter point out, "[i]t is not often recognized how much of what is tacitly assumed to be reliable knowledge of Paul is dependent upon the book of Acts."[234]

When it comes to assessing the utility of Acts in Pauline studies, the basic challenge is succinctly formulated by F.F. Bruce: "if the author of Acts...has for purposes of his own distorted the lineaments of the Paul whom he knew, or has invented a Paul of whom he had no personal knowledge, then the Paul of Acts will not be the real Paul."[235] This challenge seems reasonable enough, even if the thought of Luke 'distorting' material might seem odd on its face. For at the very least, it is certainly contrary to Luke's *own* expressed intentions—as he indicates in his first volume, he is well aware of other narrative accounts (*diēgēsin*) about "the things which have been accomplished among us," and stresses that his own desire is to provide an "orderly account," having "followed all things closely" (Luke 1:1-4). In short, Luke portrays himself as a historian. Yet as R.J. Collingwood reminds us, the activity of a historian is hardly passive:

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[233] Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 45.

[234] *Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and Stanley E. Porter (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 337. I should add, however, that my citation of McDonald and Porter on this point is likely at odds with their underlying views on Acts as a reliable resource for information—on the part of Porter, at least, it is clear that he views Acts as an entirely reliable source of data on Paul, one that can be harmonized with the content of the Pauline epistles. See, for example, Stanley Porter, *Paul in Acts* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 205-206.

[235] F.F. Bruce, "Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?" *BJRL* 58 (1976): 282. In a wonderfully pithy remark that illustrates both his sympathetic view of Luke and his admiration of Paul, Bruce notes later that "Luke, like Paul, was a theologian, even if he was not a theologian like Paul." Bruce, "The Paul of Acts": 299.

> Every historian is aware that on occasion he does tamper...with what he finds in his authorities. He selects from them what he thinks important, and omits the rest; he interpolates in them things which they do not explicitly say; and he criticises them by rejecting or amending what he regards as due to misinformation or mendacity.[236]

The significance of Collingwood's reminder here is two-fold. First, it is essentially a macro-level formulation of a point alluded to earlier: all Pauline scholars are, in a sense, Luke's successors. And similar to Luke, our efforts to apprehend Paul's life or thought involve scrutinizing the existing data on the topic—in our case, appeals to a Pauline canon (or portions of it) that engender our own particular archives of Pauline data to draw from.[237] Second, Collingwood's remarks function as a necessary, if hackneyed, reminder that like all historical productions, Luke-Acts is not—regardless of what it presents itself as—a neutral or objective account of "the things which have been accomplished."

This second point also aligns well with a general comportment in contemporary scholarship on Luke-Acts, in which "'Luke the historian'" has given way to 'Luke the artist and theologian.'"[238] This vein of scholarship, which focusses largely on Luke-Acts as a literary work, owes much to the commentary of Ernst Haenchen, who views the author of Luke-Acts in a particular light: "Luke firmly believed that this story of Christian beginnings was edifying in itself, but to present it as such he had had to employ a special technique and offer his readers history in the guise of stories. Everything he knew concerning apostolic times, or thought himself

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[236] R.J. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*: *With Lectures 1926-1928*, ed. Jan van der Dussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 235. Writing with particular attention to the context of archivists and librarians, Heather MacNeil and Bonnie Mak similarly note that "[e]vidence is not simply presented to the tribunal for consideration; it is selected and shaped by the parties to conform to a particular narrative about what happened and why." Heather MacNeil and Bonnie Mak, "Constructions of Authenticity," *Library Trends* 56, 1 (2007): 42. In any event, Collingwood's general point has certainly been picked up in the field religious studies. For example, writing in the context of Islamic studies, Aaron Hughes asserts that "it is necessary to be aware that data discovered do not simply exist naturally in the world waiting to be discovered…data emerge through questions asked (or not) of material deemed to be significant (or again not)." Aaron W. Hughes, *Situating Islam: The Past and Future of an Academic Discipline* (London: Equinox, 2007), 115.

[237] Recalling Luke 1:1-4, it is worth noting that Luke's reference to "having followed all things closely" clearly denotes a rigorous effort, as he claims to have undertaken a close or diligent (*akribōs*) investigation (*parēkolouthēkoti*) in an orderly fashion (*kathexēs*).

[238] Richard I. Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2008), 25.

entitled to infer, he had to translate into the language of vivid and dramatic scenes."[239] Accordingly, Haenchen formulated a noteworthy insight about the relationship between the Paul of Acts and any real Paul:

> [T]he representation of Paul in Acts—not to mention the overall picture of missionary beginnings—shows that here [in Acts] we have no collaborator of Paul telling his story, but someone of a later generation trying in his own way to give an account of things that can no longer be viewed in their true perspective. That this writer venerated Paul and sought in every way to bring his achievements to light, to make them "tell," that much is evident from every line he devotes to the Apostle—and quite half of Acts is concerned with Paul. Yet it is no less evident that the real Paul, as known to his followers and opponents alike, has been replaced by a Paul seen through the eyes of a later age.[240]

Building upon Haenchen's foundational work, some Lukan scholarship has delved further into the form or literary nature of Acts, as well as the occasion of its production.[241] As an example of the former, Marianne Palmer Bonz outlines thematic and structural similarities between Luke-Acts and classical epics (particularly Virgil's *Aeneid*), leading her to conclude that "Luke-Acts appears to have drawn inspiration from heroic epics in the manner in which it creates its story as the fulfillment of divine prophecy and the accomplishment of a divine plan."[242] As an instance of

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[239] Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 103. As Pervo summarizes, Haenchen's study revealed "Luke the highly competent narrator who is also Luke the utterly incompetent historian," and that "[t]his two-headed author was a logical outcome of Haenchen's critical appreciation of effective narration and his critical disdain for Acts as history." Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts*, 25. While Pervo's summation is substantively accurate, his rhetorical presentation suggests a causticity in Haenchen's work that is not actually present. For even though Haenchen casts a critical eye upon the Lukan narrative as a neutral and unadulterated historical work, he nonetheless recognizes and appears to genuinely appreciate the purpose, or narratival value of elements that are historically dubious. Haenchen's presentation of Luke thus aligns with how David Aune describes the general ethos of the Greco-Roman historian: "[i]n general, every Greco-Roman historian wrote with three combined purposes, though the emphasis could vary greatly. History ought to be *truthful, useful,* and *entertaining*." David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1989), 95 (emphasis in original). Aune does add, however, that in the opinion of some ancient historians, at least, "it should not be entertaining at the expense of truth or utility." Aune, *The New Testament*, 95. This latter admonishment accords with the words of the rhetorician Aelius Theon (c. 50-100 CE), who notes that "'Virtues' (*aretai*) of narration are three: clarity, conciseness, credibility. Best of all, if it is possible, the narration should have all of these virtues." See George Alexander Kennedy, trans. "The *Exercises* of Aelius Theon," in *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, trans. George Alexander Kennedy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 29.

[240] Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 116.

[241] For a thorough overview of such scholarship up to approximately 2004, see Todd Penner, "Madness in the Method? The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study" *CBR* 2, 2 (2004): 223-293.

[242] Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000),

the latter, Tyson compellingly demonstrates—building on John Knox's views on the dating of Acts[243]— that the contextual backdrop for the production of Acts can be located in the early to middle of the second century, and that the work was crafted in part as a response to Marcion's gospel (i.e. an edited version of Luke and ten of Paul's letters). In Tyson's view, evidence of this is found in how Paul is portrayed in Acts: contrary to Marcion's construction of Paul, the Paul of Acts is an obedient Jew who acts harmoniously with Peter and the other apostles in Jerusalem. Thus, as Tyson writes, "[t]he author of Acts has made use of the characterization of Paul to produce an engaging narrative that responds, almost point by point to the Marcionite challenge."[244] Consequently, in a pithy summation of such trends in scholarship, Mark Wheller asserts that the work of Bonz, Tyson, and others, demonstrates "that what we find in Acts is not 'Christian history,' but rather one of the earliest narratives *about* 'Christian history."[245] In essence, Acts is one of the earliest hagiographies.

A by-product of these recent developments is that one finds a greater divergence of opinions when it comes to ascertaining a date of composition for Acts. Recognizing this significant divergence, Tyson helpfully classifies the varying theories under three general periods, or "nodal dates," within which scholars place the composition of Acts.[246] The earliest of these locates the production of Acts in the early 60s. While this earliest dating is not widely

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[243] See Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament*. Arguing that Acts could be dated as late as 125 CE, Knox later affirmed his fidelity to the views he had originally espoused in *Marcion and the New Testament*, asserting "[t]he general thesis of the book is in my judgment still defensible and I am persuaded of its truth: that Marcion appropriated and revised as 'the first Christian Scripture' the collected letters of Paul and a primitive Gospel substantially equivalent to what later became the first volume of Luke's work, and that this action stimulated, and determined the definitive form of, both Luke-Acts and the ecclesiastical canon of the New Testament." John Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (London: SPCK, 1968), 287, fn 8.

[244] Joseph B. Tyson, "Wrestling with and for Paul: Efforts to Obtain Pauline Support by Marcion and the Author of Acts," in *Contemporary Studies in Acts*, ed. Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 27.

[245] Mark Wheller, "Christ as Ancestor Hero: Using Catherine Bell's Ritual Framework to Analyze 1 Corinthians as an Ancestor Hero Association in First Century CE Roman Corinth," (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2017), 1. See, for example, Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*. See also Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*.

[246] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke*-Acts, 2-3.

accepted, it is premised in no small part on two observations: (a) the ending of Acts, which concludes with Paul's house arrest in Rome; and (b) the traditional dating of his martyrdom in 65 CE.[247] Thus, according to this conservative theory, Acts was in fact composed *prior* to Paul's death, i.e. in the early 60s CE.[248]

In contrast to this first nodal dating, a more common view places the composition of Luke-Acts somewhere in the later part of the first century, ca. 80-100 CE.[249] Indeed, this was the dominant view in twentieth century scholarship, and arguably remains the majority view among contemporary New Testament scholars.

The work of Tyson and Pervo has lead the contemporary charge to push the authorship of Luke-Acts into a third nodal dating, one that lies in the second century.[250] In Pervo's view, the content of Acts betrays knowledge of Josephus's *Antiquities*, which in itself would preclude a date of composition any earlier than 93-94 CE, being the date that Josephus completed his

[247] Among other arguments for this earliest dating are claims that Luke's description of the fall of Jerusalem (see Luke 19:43-44 and 21:20-24) is not entirely consistent with the circumstances of the Jewish War in 66-70.
[248] See, for example, Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebek, 1989), 403. See also John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1976, 116. Stanley Porter also appears sympathetic to this dating, asserting that "[a] date of around A.D. 63 has, in my opinion, the most to commend it, even though it is not as widely held as the intermediate [i.e. ca. 80-100 CE] view." Stanley Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus: How an Idea Got Lost in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 78.
[249] James R. Edwards, for example, places the authorship of Luke-Acts in the late seventies. James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 12. Luke Timothy Johnson seemingly would favour a date in the early 80s, presenting a rather sentimental and speculative argument for such a view: "nothing in the writing prohibits composition by a companion of Paul who was eyewitness to some events he narrates. If a thirty-year-old man joined Paul's circle around the year 50, he would still be only sixty in the year 80, young enough to do vigorous research, yet old enough and at a sufficient distance to describe the time of beginnings with a certain nostalgia." Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 2. Other examples that place the composition of Acts in this second nodal dating abound. See, for example, Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), xxxiii. See also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 54. See also Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 62.
[250] It bears noting, however, that the second-century dating theories of Pervo and Tyson are by no means entirely novel. For example, the Tübingen master Ferdinand Christian Baur argued that Acts was in part the product of an attempt to reconcile Jewish Christianity (affiliated with Peter) and Gentile Christianity (affiliated with Paul), and placed its date of composition in the middle of the second century. See Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*.

work.[251] In further support of his views, Pervo locates a number of passages in Acts that seemingly evidence knowledge of a Pauline letter collection (consisting of ten letters, i.e. Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon), a collection which arose, in Pervo's estimation, not earlier than around 100 CE.[252] These factors form part of a "long and often tedious study of terms and concepts, including institutional organization, theologoumena, and polemical issues" that led Pervo to locate the composition of Acts somewhere between ca. 100-130 CE.[253] While the further particulars of Pervo's argument will not be canvassed here, the general complexion of his position involves a tack comparable to Tyson's earlier-mentioned focus on a contextual setting for composition. Yet whereas Tyson situates the composition of Acts in a Marcionite milieu, Pervo determines, in a manner not necessarily at odds with Tyson, that "Acts suits the world of the Apostolic Fathers, the Pastoral Epistles, and the beginnings of apologetic."[254] At minimum, then, both of these scholars view a second-century date as a highly fitting historical and theological context in which Acts would have been written.

While there remains a diversity of opinion on the issue, and a rather wide gulf between the aforementioned date ranges, John T. Townsend's assertion nonetheless serves as a sobering realization about the production of Acts: "There is no conclusive evidence that Luke-Acts was written in the first century. In fact, it is not before the last decades of the second century that one finds undisputed traces of the work."[255] And although the dating of Acts is not, independently, of

[251] Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2006), 343.
[252] Pervo, *Dating Acts*.
[253] Richard I. Pervo, "Acts in the Suburbs of the Apologists," in *Contemporary Studies in Acts*, ed. Thomas E. Phillips (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 36.
[254] Pervo, "Acts in the Suburbs," 36.
[255] John T. Townsend, "The Date of Luke-Acts," in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminary*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 47. The "undisputed traces" that Townsend refers to here are contained in Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* (c. 180), particularly book three, which draws

critical relevance to its placement within a Pauline archive, *per se*, issues about its dating, occasion of composition, and genre, pertain directly to another matter that *is* of vital import here: the reliability of Acts as a repository of information about Paul or his thought.

To be sure, there is much scholarly debate concerning the reliability of Acts as a historical account. Such arguments over its historicity generally involve, as Charles H. Talbert notes, three types of claims: (1) that Acts is unreliable because it contains errors or anachronisms that do not align with its purported historical setting;[256] (2) that Acts is unreliable on account of its presentation of events in a non sequential order;[257] and (3) that it is unreliable on account of its events (or at least some of them) lacking a level of internal integrity, and being unconfirmed by external evidence.[258]

When it comes to the historicity of Acts in relation to Paul's work and activity, the manifestation of these general critiques is buttressed by an overriding curiosity detected in Luke's second volume: Acts contains no citations from the Pauline correspondence, nor any mention of Paul's literary activity at all. While scholars have varying views on the relevance (or

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extensively from Acts. Townsend is careful to add, however, "[t]hat some earlier writers did allude to Luke or Acts is possible but far from certain. The most obvious example is Marcion, whose gospel certainly bears a literary relation to canonical Luke. However, Marcion's gospel is not canonical Luke and may well have preceded canonical Luke." Townsend, "The Date of Luke-Acts," 47. See also Tyson, *Marcion and Luke Acts*, 10.

[256] Talbert provides a few examples in this regard, including odd or erroneous geographical details in the narrative. Perhaps more notable, however, is Gamaliel's speech in Acts 5:33-39, in which Gamaliel refers to a movement led by Theudas. The problem with this reference is that this movement did not exist until after the time of Gamaliel's speech. See Charles H. Talbert, "What is Meant by the Historicity of Acts?" in *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 200-201.

[257] A notable example is the account of Paul's involvement with the pillars of Jerusalem in Acts 11 and 15 versus Galatians 1 and 2. This will be touched on further below. See Talbert, "Historicity of Acts," 206.

[258] As an example of this, Talbert notes the account of Paul's visit to Corinth in Acts 18, discussing whether it conflates multiple visits and externally attested historical events into a single one. Ultimately, Talbert concludes that "[a]ny successful argument [for or against the historicity of Acts] must involve all three levels of evidence: accurate contemporary color, sound historical sequence, and confirmed facts and individual episodes with integrity. Even then the argument is incomplete. This is because the matter of Acts' historicity also involves three specific issues: (1) the speeches, (2) the portrait of Paul, and (3) the miracles." Talbert, "Historicity of Acts," 210.

irrelevance) of this observation,[259] it does—or should—lead to the type of methodological reflection summarized by Leander Keck: "[b]ecause the Paul of Acts is the Paul most people know best, one should guard against assimilating the Paul of the Letters to the Paul of Acts."[260] Indeed, the divergence between these sources is striking when it comes to the presentation of Paul, or Pauline thought. Drawing in part from the earlier-noted work of Haenchen, Talbert summarizes the major discrepancies:

1) In Acts, Paul is a great miracle worker. In the epistles, he is a suffering apostle (e.g., 2 Cor 12:10).

2) In Acts, Paul is an outstanding orator. In the epistles, he is called a feeble speaker (2 Cor 10:10).

3) In Acts, Paul is not on an equal footing with the Twelve. In the epistles, he is an apostle of equal standing with the Twelve (1 Cor 9:1; 15:1–11).

4) In Acts, Jewish opposition to Paul is due to his teaching about the resurrection from the dead. In the epistles, Jewish opposition is over the law (Gal 2:11–16).

5) In Acts, natural theology is used to portray Greco-Roman culture as a true preparation for Christianity. In the epistles, natural theology is used to hold the Gentiles responsible before God (Rom 1–3).

6) In Acts, Paul is an advocate of the Jewish law. In the epistles, he wages an anti-Jewish polemic against the law.

7) In Acts, Paul's Christology is adoptionistic. In the epistles, Paul holds a Christology of preexistence.

8) In Acts, Paul does not hold to an imminent eschatology. In the epistles, there is an imminent expectation.[261]

Without belabouring the point, there are two aspects of Talbert's summary that I would be immediately inclined to resist, or at least qualify. First, I believe Talbert's third point requires a

[259] Mikeal C. Parsons, for example, does not view this point as particularly noteworthy, suggesting that "[t]he focus on Paul as epistolary author is a modern preoccupation." Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 129-130.
[260] Leander Keck, *Paul and His Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 3.
[261] Talbert, "Historicity of Acts," 212.

caveat, or should be reframed: it is not that the epistles evidence that Paul is "an apostle of equal standing with the Twelve"; rather, it is more precisely the case that the letters contain claims or arguments for Paul's equal standing as an apostle (e.g. 1 Cor 9:1; Gal 2). Second, for better or worse, Talbert's sixth point is largely out of step with contemporary work on Paul that in fact *highlights* the Judaic elements of his thought.[262]

Regardless, different Pauline scholars might be prone to debate varied permutations of the above-noted discrepancies. Moreover, it is plain enough that hermeneutic wrangling with the texts can of course produce a plethora of results, ostensibly "proving" either consistency or divergence between Acts and the Pauline correspondence.

In any event, scholars continue to debate the relation between the Pauline letters and Acts, with particular attention to the former's possible influence on the latter.[263] On the one hand, some argue that if Luke had substantive knowledge of the letters, such knowledge would be more explicitly evidenced in his narrative. As William O. Walker notes, "Luke fails to include a great deal of important information about Paul that, in the judgment of many, he surely would have included had he been aware of it e.g. the episode involving the question of Titus' circumcision (Gal. 2-5), the confrontation with Cephas in Antioch (Gal. 2.11-14), the problems

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[262] The work of E.P. Sanders is often viewed as foundational in this regard. See E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). See also Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds. *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2015); and Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[263] It is impossible to affirm Werner Georg Kümmel's suggestion that "by nearly universal judgment [among scholars] the author of Acts does not know the letters of Paul." Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1975), 186. Contrary to this position, Pervo, for example, argues that Luke's own archive included material from Josephus and a collection of Paul's letters. See Pervo, *Dating Acts*; and Pervo, "Acts in the Suburbs." It should again be kept in mind that an underlying point of relevance here is the relation between one's position on the question of *literary* influence, on the one hand, and the *dating* of Acts on the other. The view that Luke did *not* have the Pauline correspondence available to him certainly aligns better with an earlier dating of Acts, i.e. a composition of the work that predates any wider dissemination of the corpus of letters. Gamble, for example, suggests that "[t]he silence of Acts about letters of Paul is due to the fact that when Acts was composed the collection was still in its early stages and not generally known." Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, 39. Bearing this in mind, those who support a later dating of Acts are more inclined to affirm some Lukan knowledge of the letters.

of the Church in Corinth, Paul's catalogue of his own sufferings (2 Cor. 11.23-33), the story of Onesimus (Philemon)."[264] On the other hand, one also finds the basic argument that (a) Luke must certainly have *known* about Paul the letter-writer, and (b) the contents of Acts evidence at least a "general" familiarity with elements of the Pauline corpus. Jervell, for example, states that "I do not for a moment doubt that the author of Acts knew Paul well, if not personally."[265] Yet even though one can certainly locate a number of ideas or episodes in Acts that are reasonably consistent with the content of the letters,[266] John Knox's assertion nonetheless remains apt: "the effort to demonstrate Luke's use of Paul with actual evidence fails, as all efforts to do this have previously failed, because every instance of his alleged dependence on the letters can be explained almost, if not quite, as plausibly by the hypothesis of his access to some independent tradition."[267]

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[264] William O. Walker, Jr., "Acts and the Pauline Corpus Reconsidered." in *The Pauline Writings*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 55, fn. 3.

[265] Jervell, "Paul in the Acts," 72. In making this assertion Jervell permits himself to use "[t]he Lukan portrait of Paul…[as] part of the unknown Paul from the Pauline letters. We have to be aware of the fact that the letters conceal aspects of the genuine Paul. They hide the uncontroversial Paul, what he had in common with all other Christians, especially that which connected Paul and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem." Jervell, "The Unknown Paul," 57. Jervell's approach here clearly betrays an interest in harmonizing Acts and the letters. Yet at the same time, his views are of course fundamentally rooted in the oft-debated "we" passages in Acts (16:10-18; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; and 27:1-28:16). While some suggest that these evidence the author's presence as a participant in the events being described, others argue that the author relied on another source altogether, and incorporated first person plural elements into his own narrative. As Pervo notes, "Luke and Acts have at least two narrators. The extradiegetic narrator of the prefaces takes the familiar stance of a researcher. The bodies of the two books, however, present an omniscient narrator who can enter closed rooms, overhear private conversations, read minds, and so forth." Richard I. Pervo, "When in Rome: The Authorship of Acts in the Late Second Century," *BR* 60 (2015): 29-30. The purported connection between Paul and Luke also draws from Col 4:14 and Philemon 24, where a "Luke" is referenced.

[266] Examples in this regard include: a quarrel between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40; contrast Gal 2:13); Jesus's first appearance to Peter/Simon/Cephas (Luke 24:34; contrast 1 Cor 15:5); the description of Paul's treatment of Christians by reference to the verb *porthein*, i.e. to destroy or ravage (the term only occurs in Acts 9:21 and Gal 1:13, 23—it is found nowhere else in the New Testament); and the account of Paul's time in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17; contrast various events in 1 Cor).

[267] Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," 281. Notwithstanding this view, Knox immediately goes on to acknowledge that "it is all but incredible that such a man as Luke, writing in any one of the later decades of the first century about Paul and his career, should have been 'totally unaware that this hero of his had even written letters." Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," 281. Of note, Nils Alstrup Dahl argues that "[t]he possibility, that [the author of Luke-Acts] knew, but consciously ignored [Paul's letters], has to be taken seriously. The fact that the letters were written on particular occasions and for particular destinations, may at least have provided one of his reasons for doing so." Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church," in *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullman zu seinem 60*

Regardless of where one stands on Luke's knowledge of a Pauline letter collection, there remains the task of reconciling the seeming differences between the two sources—Acts versus the letters. Some attempts are more compelling than others.[268] For the purposes of this study, however, the point is not to attempt to adjudicate the various issues and arguments and make a pronouncement on the value of Acts as a repository of accurate information on Paul and his theology. Rather, my discussion of Acts is aimed simply at drawing attention to issues or problems easily overlooked in the frequently reflexive identification of Acts as a source of data on Paul. Indeed, many studies on Paul habitually use Acts in constructing Paul's biography, giving little to no substantive attention to its own literary purpose or genre, or the accompanying implications concerning its historicity.[269]

In New Testament scholarship, this phenomenon manifests itself in various iterations. At an extreme end, one can find scattered instances in which Acts is actually given priority *over* the letters. Klaus Haacker, for example, asserts that "[h]istorical knowledge of the life of Paul comes

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Geburtstag überreicht, ed. W.C. Unnik (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962), 266. In my view, Dahl's explanation in this regard holds some allure. The issue of the occasional nature of Paul's letters will be addressed further in chapter 4.

[268] Talbert offers arguments against each of the aforementioned discrepancies. While I will not delve into an extended discussion of the particulars here, Talbert raises two specific responses that are worth commenting on. First, I think that Talbert offers a compelling response to the purported anti-Judaic remarks in the epistles versus Paul's outlook towards Judaic tradition in Acts: "In Acts, Paul expresses reservations about the soteriological value of the Law (Acts 13:39) at the same time that he, as a Jewish Christian, lives by its rules amidst Jews (18:18; 21:23-24). This is similar to the Paul of the epistles who is critical of the law's soteriological role (Gal 2:19-21) at the same time that he lives by its tenets when necessary (1 Cor 9:19-23)." Talbert, "Historicity of Acts," 214. On the other hand, I am unconvinced by Talbert's reconciliation of Paul the miracle worker in Acts with Paul the "suffering servant" in the epistles. While Talbert suggests that Paul's letters do in fact contain references to miracles, the epistolary references are entirely vague, and certainly lacking in the precision that one finds in Acts, where Paul renders an opponent blind (Acts 13:8-11), exorcises demons (Acts 16:16-18; Acts 19:11-12), performs various healings, (Acts 14:8-10; Acts 19:11-12; Acts 28:7-9), shakes off the bite of a venomous snake without a scratch (Acts 28:3-6), and even raises a person from the dead (Acts 20:9-12). None of these specific miracles are mentioned in the letters.

[269] Magnus Zetterholm, for example, specifically acknowledges that "[i]n Acts, the historiography is totally subordinate to the theological message," and that "it is sometimes difficult to harmonize particulars in Acts with notices in the letters of Paul." Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 13. Yet despite this acknowledgement, Zetterholm nonetheless references Acts at various points to construct a biographical portrait of Paul(!). Another example of a reflexive type of appeal to Acts can be found in the work of Anthony Blasi, who simply suggests that "since the ["we"] passage is written in the first person plural ('we'), I take it to be based on personal recollection." Anthony J. Blasi, *Making Charisma: The Social Construction of Paul's Public Image* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 28. Consequently, Blasi has no difficulty whatsoever in using portions of Acts for the purposes of formulating an understanding Paul.

almost entirely from the New Testament, most from the Acts of the Apostles as the only narrative source, *supplemented* by a number of autobiographical passages or remarks in the letters of Paul."[270] A much more common approach, however, reverses this relation, as Acts functions as a supplement to Paul's letters. As described by F.F. Bruce: "[w]ithout Paul's letters we should have a very inadequate and one-sided impression of him, but thanks to Luke's portrayal we have a fuller understanding of Paul's place in the world of his day and of the impact he made on others than if we were dependent on his letters alone."[271] Jervell is similarly candid in asserting that "[t]he Lukan Paul, the picture of Paul in Acts, is a completion, a filling up of the Pauline one, so that in order to get at the historical Paul, we cannot do without Acts and Luke."[272]

While Bruce and Jervell are at least explicit in holding that Acts is fundamental to formulating a "fuller" understanding of Paul, one more often finds a more casual or tacit reliance upon Acts. In some cases, of course, this reliance includes at least some defence of Acts, in terms of its purported consistency with the Pauline corpus. Porter, for example, concludes that "the standard arguments marshalled in defense of the differences between the Paul of Acts and of the letters regarding his person and work, once analyzed in detail, simply do not point to significant and sustainable contradictions."[273] For Porter, any distinctions are simply a product of "the use of the different genres—narrative versus letter—and their clearly different literary purposes—that

[270] Klaus Haacker, "Paul's Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20 [emphasis added]. While Haacker concedes that neither source is "free of tendencies to stress certain aspects and to leave out others," it is nonetheless clear that he is quite comfortable with his prioritization of Acts as a source of biographical information.
[271] Bruce, "The Paul of Acts": 305.
[272] Jervell, "Paul in the Acts," 70. A similar sentiment is more fully articulated by Arnal: "presenting Paul in terms of both a collection of letters and the narrative characterization in Acts is an important innovation. The effect is to expand generously the image of Paul...the retention of Acts incorporates the figure of Paul as an actor, a narrative player and hero of the apostolic church." William Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition' and the Second-Century Invention of Christianity," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 205. To be clear, however, Arnal is simply providing an account of the appeal of Acts as a source of information. Unlike Jervell, he is by no means advocating for this as a sound methodological approach to garnering information about the historical Paul, or the real Paul.
[273] Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 205.

of telling the story of early Christianity and that of addressing problems in a local church congregation."[274] From this vantage point, Porter views any lingering reticence over the use of Acts in historical scholarship as essentially passé, suggesting that "[t]he portrait of the Apostle Paul gleaned from the book of Acts from his letters is not the item of serious contention that it once was among scholars."[275]

Porter's assertion in this regard is disconcerting, as it betrays an ignorance that is entirely inconsistent with his level of erudition on the subject of Pauline studies. Indeed, contrary to his claim, Todd Penner suggests that *Porter's* views stand as a noteworthy exception to the general contemporary attitude in scholarship on Acts and Paul:

> [S]cholars generally postulate a fairly different view of Paul in the Lukan portrayal than in the Pauline letters (but not Porter 1999), an insight into Lukan method, which is, however, not applied to other characters in the narrative (as if they would be immune from a similar fate). An interesting thought experiment would be to query what our image of Paul would look like if we only had Acts with which to work. Would we find/recognize the Paul of the letters? There would definitely be some broad patterns of agreement (Paul was a missionary to the Gentiles; Paul had a connection to Antioch), but it is not evident that we would have the same fundamental (especially theological) conception of Paul that we now do.[276]

Penner's words relate to the earlier-noted statements by Bruce and Jervell. For what Acts offers is the promise of substantive information on Paul, such that we can produce a "fuller" account of him. Bearing in mind the rather limited amount of Pauline data otherwise available, how can we refuse such a promise? Instinctively, it seems we often cannot. And to some extent, the impulse is understandable, as it is simply borne out of our ineluctable desire to generate a robust, cogent account of an object of inquiry— in this case, Paul. Consequently, it is difficult to fathom the prospect of generating an account of Paul without the use of Acts, on the one hand, or the letters

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[274] Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 206.
[275] Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 185.
[276] Penner, "Madness in the Method?": 247. The citation of Porter here specifically refers to Stanley Porter, *The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999). The work was later reprinted as Stanley Porter, *Paul in Acts*.

on the other. The result of this, as Penner suggests, is that "it is impossible to read Acts and think about early Christian origins without the Pauline extratexts prompting one to fill in the gaps, as well as to correlate and harmonize the stories in both directions."[277]

While I think Penner is more or less correct in his assertion, his description of the current state of affairs should not be mistaken for what is prescriptively desirable for sound Pauline scholarship. The value or usefulness of Acts depends in part on the aims of one's particular study. If, for example, one is attempting to synthesize Acts and the Pauline correspondence for the purposes of presenting a general Christian theology, then Acts plainly *must* be part of the data set. Likewise, if there is any particular element of the Acts narrative, or its production, that is the focus of inquiry, clearly the text is integral. Put simply, the text is legitimately employed in a plethora of research endeavours.[278] Yet at the same time, the placement of Acts into the Pauline archive, as a source of information for *Paul's* life, or *Paul's* thought, is one that is fundamentally problematic. At minimum, it is a placement that clearly comes with methodological caveats and epistemic perils. Consequently, it is incumbent on Pauline readers to reflect diligently upon the risks in using Acts in formulating an understanding of Paul, both in terms of the text's inherent value, and its comparative value (in relation to the Pauline epistles).

Indeed, while the canonical location of Acts perhaps imbues the text with an ingrained air of legitimacy, it is clear that the task of reconciling the contents of Luke's second volume with the contents of the Pauline epistles is an onerous and perhaps even impossible one.[279] Consequently, when it comes to contrasting the authority of Acts with that of the Pauline

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[277] Penner, "Madness in the Method?": 247.
[278] These include, for example, various literary, rhetorical, theological inquiries relating in whole or in part to Acts. See Penner, "Madness in the Method?"
[279] Recognizing that some scholars (e.g. Porter) minimize the difficulty of such a task, I do not think that it is hyperbole to describe it as onerous or even impossible. As Talbert notes, "the complexity of the problems and the extent of the knowledge from multiple fields required to deal with the issues are so threatening as to make scholars look to less demanding areas of study." Talbert, "Historicity of Acts": 197.

epistles, Talbert outlines an underlying presumption that is operative in at least some Pauline scholarship: "Paul's letters are primary sources for a knowledge of Paul; Acts is a late secondary source. Of the two sources, Paul's letters are obviously the more trustworthy."[280] Nonetheless, when it comes to formulating our Archimedean points for the study of Paul, it is unsurprising that Acts frequently finds a place there. For our constructions of a Pauline archive are premised on the same underlying goal as Luke: the desire for an "orderly account."

[280] Talbert, "Historicity of Acts": 205. Talbert goes on, however, to note how in some respects, a first-person narrative can reveal more bias than that of a third person—here he specifically references Gal 1-2 and Paul's account of events with those "reputed to be pillars" in contrast to what is narrated in Acts 11 and 15.

CHAPTER 3

THE PAULINE ARCHIVE AND THE PROBLEM OF PSEUDONYMITY

By and large, the value of Acts as a repository of accurate information on Paul is viewed by scholars as subordinate to the value of Paul's letters, in which Paul purports to speak with his own voice. Paul's letters, then, are often the standard by which the contents in Acts are measured. Yet, as Jervell recognizes, this formulation of the situation in fact involves its own quandary: "[i]n order to evaluate the Lukan Paul we must have an idea of the Pauline Paul first of all. When we compare the Lukan Paul with the Pauline Paul, as it is regularly done, is it actually the Pauline Paul we are dealing with?"[281] This paradox leads back to the heart of the present inquiry: the underlying problem of a Pauline Archimedean point, and our role in its production.

Following from the previous discussion on the formation of the canon, the collection of the Pauline correspondence, and the use of Acts, I wish to shift now to particular questions or problems that impact the use of the letters in the Pauline archive: pseudonymity, genre and intentionality, and authority. The focus of this chapter relates to the issue of pseudonymity.

Pseudonymity can manifest itself in a myriad of ways—at the level of an *entire* work whose authorship is attributed to a particular figure, a particular *portion* of that work (i.e. an interpolation), or even at the level of a *collection* of works associated with a single figure. In antiquity, for example, a number of letters or letter collections were pseudonymously attributed to noted classical thinkers such as Apollonius of Tyana, Aristotle, Diogenes, Euripides, Heraclitus, Hippocrates, Plato, Pythagoras, and Socrates.[282] As Michael Trapp notes, "it has been

[281] Jervell, "Paul in the Acts," 69.
[282] See Michael Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology, with Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 27.

generally (and rightly) accepted that the vast majority [of these letters] are not what they claim to be, but instead the work of later authors impersonating these great figures of the past (hence 'pseudepigraphic'), involving a false or lying attribution."[283]

In the case of the Pauline writings, the issue of pseudonymity has been an acute concern over two broad but distinct periods—the first few centuries of the common era (during which the development of a canon occurred), and in more contemporary scholarship, beginning largely in the nineteenth century. With respect to the latter period, the basic progression of the problem is effectively summarized by Werner Georg Kümmel:

> After the beginning of the nineteenth century, questions were raised about the Pauline origin first of the Pastorals, then of those to the Thessalonians, Eph, Phil, and Col. F.C. Baur and the Tübingen school considered only the four so-called chief letters—Gal, I and II Cor, Rom—to be authentic documents of the apostle, because only these letters could be understood as witnesses for the struggle of Paul against '"judaizing" [*sic*]. But it soon became evident that by this approach the historical picture of early Christianity was placed in too narrow a frame. The representatives of the "radical criticism" denied the apostle even these four main letters, and explained them as being the precipitate of antinomian currents from the period *ca*. 140 A.D. But this view faded out, as did later reconstructions, a result of untenable literary presuppositions and forced historical constructs.[284]

This state of affairs grounds the current paradigm, which tends to posit a more or less unassailable seven-letter corpus (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon), with varying opinions about the authenticity of Colossians,

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[283] Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters*, 27. See also Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15. This position finds significant foundation in the frequently-cited work of Richard Bentley, who concluded that the letters attributed to Phalaris, Themistocles, Socrates, and Euripides were inauthentic. See Richard Bentley, *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris* (London, 1697). See also M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr., *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 28-30. While Bentley's seminal work focussed specifically on classical Greek letters, his views ultimately influenced broader ranging work on the epistolary genre. In fact, Bentley maintained an interest in the New Testament, and intended to produce a critical edition of it, through carefully scrutinizing various extant manuscripts. The project never came to fruition, however, and there is no indication that Bentley's concerns over the authorship of classical texts extended also to authorship of the New Testament epistles. See R.C. Jebb, *Bentley* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1902), 157-171. Nonetheless, one wonders about the degree to which Bentley's foundational work inspired, or had some impact on the 19th century interest in New Testament pseudepigraphy, particularly with respect to the Pauline corpus. To date, however this topic has not garnered scholarly interest.

[284] Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1975), 250-251.

Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians, and a general consensus that the pastorals (1-2 Timothy and Titus) are pseudonymous.

Yet, interestingly, concerns over the pseudonymity of certain Pauline writings were also evident in the first few centuries of the common era. Indeed, they were seemingly apparent even around Paul's own time, as his Thessalonian *ekklēsia* was urged to be wary of a "letter purporting to be from us" (2 Thess 2:2).[285] However, bearing in mind the very concerns that occasion this study—namely, the various issues involved in the formation of our Pauline Archimedean points—one might immediately (and somewhat ironically) be led to question the authenticity of this assertion itself. Bart Ehrman describes the rather circular conundrum engendered by this passage:

> [T]here is a terrifically interesting irony connected with this passage...Is 2 Thessalonians itself a forgery in Paul's name? If so, why would it warn against a forgery in Paul's name? There can be little doubt about the answer: one of the "tricks" used by ancient forgers to assure readers that their own writings were authentic was to warn against writings that were not authentic. Readers naturally assume that the author is not doing precisely what he condemns.[286]

[285] As Harding notes, "[i]f 2 Thessalonians is a genuine letter of Paul, at least one Pauline pseudepigraphon is circulating in the mid first century, in the apostle's lifetime!" Harding, "Disputed and Undisputed Letters of Paul," 145.

[286] Bart Ehrman, *Forged* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 19-20. Similarly, Gregory Fewster notes how the presence of a purportedly authenticating signature does not, in and of itself, automatically dispel any doubt over authorship: "the signature is a point of release from the signer and is not itself a guarantee of its own authenticity…The authorial signature necessarily includes within itself the possibility of imitation and of forgery." Gregory Fewster, "Can I Have Your Autograph?" *Bulletin for the Study of Religion*, 43, 3 (2014): 35. Further, as Roetzel interestingly notes, "[w]e have no instance of a pseudonymous letter being written in the name of a living person." Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 156. Somewhat relatedly, Richard Pervo states that "[t]he possibility of forged letters (2 Thess. 2:2) motivates the writer to provide an authenticating signature (3:17) ['I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write']. Identifying signatures (*sphragis* in Greek) are found in Gal. 6:11, Philemon 19, and 1 Cor. 16:21. Such defensiveness provokes suspicion...The phrase 'in every letter' (3:17) intimates a collection, but 2 Thessalonians presents itself as *the* letter to Thessalonica, rather than as a sequel to 1 Thessalonians." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 80.

While there exists "strong support"[287] among scholars for viewing 2 Thessalonians as an authentic epistle, perhaps the most significant argument *against* its authenticity extends the irony even further: it is the eschatological content in 1 Thessalonians that leads many to cast doubt on the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians.[288] For whereas 1 Thessalonians references an imminent *parousia*, in which Christ is expected to return without advance warning, like "a thief in the night" (1 Thess 5:2), 2 Thessalonians presents a more complicated eschatological picture. There one reads that the day of the Lord "will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess 2: 3). For those who argue against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians, its compositional milieu is often viewed as being partly aimed at quelling the temporal immediacy of the *parousia* that is implied in 1 Thessalonians.[289]

What 2 Thessalonians certainly demonstrates, if nothing else, is that some concerns over the pseudonymity of the Pauline writings arose—albeit temporarily—at a rather early stage. Contemporary Pauline scholarship has simply revisited and developed these concerns.[290] Yet despite a persistent worry over the legitimacy of the literary data, virtually all Pauline studies assume that the New Testament canon contains at least *some* of the historical Paul's authentic

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[287] Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 155. Comparably, Pervo notes that "[a]mong the disputed epistles, there remains more scholarly support for the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians than for any of the others." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 77.

[288] As Raymond Collins puts it, "the problem with 2 Thessalonians is 1 Thessalonians." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 209. Similarly, Ernest Best writes, "if we only possessed *Second Thessalonians* few scholars would doubt that Paul wrote it; but when *Second Thessalonians* is put alongside *First Thessalonians* then doubts appear. There is a great similarity between the two; this is not only one of words, small phrases and concepts but extends to the total structure of the two letters which is in addition different from what is taken to be the standard Pauline form. At the same time the second letter is alleged to be less intimate and personal in tone than the first, and in some of its teaching, particularly in relation to eschatology, to conflict with the first." Ernest Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 37. Of course, recognizing the constantly mutable and developing nature of one's thought, one explanation for the apparent conflict is that the eschatology in 2 Thessalonians simply reflects a change in Paul's views.

[289] Collins outlines a variety of other issues related to concern over the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, including the style of the letter (linguistic elements that differ from other Pauline correspondence) and its more formal tone (in contrast to the tone in 1 Thessalonians). See Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 214-223.

[290] In this regard, the early nineteenth-century work of Friedrich Schleiermacher on 1 Timothy is often viewed as foundational. This will be addressed in more detail below.

thought. Thus, combinations of canonical Pauline texts—or certain portions of these texts, in some cases—comprise the primary archival data for Pauline scholarship.[291]

Yet even though this observation is rather self-evident, its significance is under-analyzed in the study of Paul. For it is important to recognize that Pauline scholarship does not operate on a homogenous playing field, in terms of its underlying data set. On the contrary, scholarship on Paul involves many textual variables. In one respect, this has been addressed already, in connection to the use or placement of Acts in the archive. In the case of Acts, it is clear that conscientious scholars of Paul ask, or at least *should* ask: is Acts a reliable source of information when it comes to apprehending the life and theology of Paul? A similar question is asked in relation to some—and in the rarest of instances even *all*—of the Pauline epistles.[292]

Views on Pseudonymity in Antiquity

A number of divergent positions exist in Pauline scholarship when it comes to the formulation of a reliable Pauline archive. And clearly, one of the primary concerns in determining whether to permit or reject one source or another relates to the issue of pseudonymity, a perennial issue in

[291] In referencing "canonical" texts here, I refer not only to the Pauline letters in the New Testament, but also Acts.
[292] With respect to the more radical position, i.e. that Paul authored none of the letters attributed to him, this position, or iterations of it, are often associated with the so-called "Dutch radicals" (e.g. Allard Pierson, Willem Christian van Manen, Abraham Dirk Loman, Samuel Naber, Rudolf Steck, and their predecessor, Bruno Bauer). For a survey of the work of some of the Dutch radicals, see R.J. Knowling, *The Witness of the Epistles: A Study in Modern Criticism* (London: Longmanns, 1892) (especially Chapter 3, "Recent Attacks upon the 'Hauptbriefe'"); and Gustaaf Adolf van den Bergh van Eysinga, "Early Christian Letters," trans. Frans-Joris Fabri and Michael Conley, *JHC*, 9, 2 (2002): 294-317. Van den Bergh van Eysinga (1874-1957) himself is sometimes identified among the original Dutch radicals, though his work is later than that of the original group. The Dutch radical 'spirit,' so to speak, has been taken up by a limited number of contemporary scholars, or the "new Dutch radicals," several of whom were associated with the now-defunct *Journal of Higher Criticism* (1994-2003), which served as a sort of haven for radical criticism. See, for example, Hermann Detering, "The Falsified Paul: Early Christianity in the Twilight," trans. Darrell J. Doughty (2003), http://www.egodeath.com/TheFabricatedPaul.htm; Darrell J. Doughty, "Pauline Paradigms and Pauline Authenticity," *JHC* 1, 1 (1994): 95-128; and Robert M. Price, *The Amazing Colossal Apostle: The Search for the Historical Paul* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2012). Price's own iteration of the new Dutch radical position is summarized thus: "[i]f there was a historical apostle Paul, which seems likely enough, his figure has retreated behind the pseudepigraphical epistles attributed to him by various Marcionite and Gnostic members of the Pauline School." Price, *The Amazing Colossal Apostle*, 194. I will return briefly to the Dutch radical position further below.

Pauline studies. Again, however, it is vital to bear in mind that the issue is by no means unique to Pauline studies. The presence of pseudonymity in classical antiquity is well attested to. As Donald Penny notes, "pseudepigraphy are numerous from the Hellenistic period on...Philosophical writings falsely appeared in the names of the great teachers, expanding the corpuses of those who had written in their own names (Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus) and creating corpuses for those who had not (Pythagoras, Socrates)."[293]

Yet despite the ubiquity of the pseudonymity problem in ancient literature, there is something especially nagging about it in relation to the Pauline writings. Plato serves as a helpful figure for comparison in this regard. With Plato, the authenticity of both his epistles[294] and even certain dialogues[295] is in some cases questioned. Yet be that as it may, there is still a robust and unassailable corpus of Platonic writings—particularly in the genre of dialogues—that are consistently identified as authentic. Consequently, when it comes to debates over the authenticity of the "disputed" Platonic corpus, the stakes are somewhat limited. The issue of pseudonymity in the Pauline literature is of a different character, owing to a variety of factors—notably, their deep entrenchment in the canon and Christian lore, as well as their literary genre. Yet prior to delving further into the particulars of pseudonymity in the Pauline epistles, it is worth examining the notion of pseudonymity in general, and some varying theories on how it was viewed in antiquity.

While the point may seem pedantic, it is first important to recognize a technical distinction between pseudonymity and pseudepigraphy. For as Kent D. Clarke notes, "[a]t least part of the difficulty inherent to any discussion of pseudonymity arises from the problem of

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[293] Donald Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters of the First Two Centuries," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1979), 26.

[294] As indicated earlier, T.H. Irwin notes that "[t]he long controversy about the authenticity of the Platonic *Letters* is still not settled. I am inclined to agree with those who reject all of them." T.H. Irwin, "Plato: The Intellectual Background," 78, n. 4.

[295] This point also was referenced earlier—Alican presents a table summarizing a dominant view of Platonic scholars on the issue of the authenticity of various dialogues, identifying twenty-four "genuine" dialogues, six "dubious" dialogues, and twelve "spurious" dialogues. See Alican, *Rethinking Plato*, 134-135.

definition. Even distinguishing between the terms 'pseudonymity' (from the Greek *pseudōnymos* meaning 'under a false name' or 'falsely called') and 'pseudepigraphy' (from the Greek *pseudepigraphos* meaning 'false inscription' or 'falsely inscribed') has proven to be complicated."[296]

In the case of the Pauline literature, only Hebrews can be technically classified as *pseudepigraphy*. The text itself does not claim authorship by Paul; rather, authorship was later attributed to Paul by others.[297] In every other New Testament Pauline letter, however, any question about authorship is correctly framed as an issue of pseudonymity, rather than pseudepigraphy. For with all of these remaining epistles, the texts themselves attest to having been authored by Paul, either with or without the acknowledged assistance of an amanuensis.[298] In fact, depending on the degree to which an amanuensis was involved, one might reasonably ask, "[i]f an amanuensis gives us something quite unlike Paul, what right has anyone to call it Paul's?"[299] While the question is most certainly an interesting one, I do not wish here to delve into the complicated contours of how the involvement of an amanuensis affects the question of

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[296] Kent D. Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity in Biblical Literature and Its Implications for Canon Formation," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2002), 440. Despite this theoretical distinction between the two terms, Clarke asserts that "[m]ost contemporary literature regards the terms as synonyms and uses them interchangeably...Both terms refer to the use of false titles—one being assumed by the author and the other being ascribed to the literature—and in this sense are equivalent." Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 441. Consistent with Clarke's remark in this regard is the work of Martin Rist, who simply views pseudepigraphy as being equivalent to pseudonymity. See Martin Rist, "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren*, ed. David E. Aune (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 75.

[297] While early writers such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) and Origen (ca. 184-253) understood the theological content of Hebrews to be largely Pauline, they viewed the style of the work as distinguishable from other Pauline correspondence. Nonetheless, as Pervo writes, "[l]ingering doubts [over its Pauline authorship] eventually vanished, so that for a millennium Hebrews had a secure place in the Pauline corpus, until its authorship was challenged in the period of the Renaissance and Reformation." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 120. During the Reformation period, Martin Luther, on the one hand, had "relegated the epistle to the Hebrews...to an appendix in his...German translation of the Bible." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write,* 19. On the other hand, in 1546, "the Council of Trent decreed that the list of sacred books included fourteen letters of the apostle Paul and that this list included the epistle to the Hebrews." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 19.

[298] Paul is identified as the author at the very outset of each epistle: Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1, Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Titus 1:1; Phil 1:1. Evidence of assistance from an amanuensis can be gleaned from various passages: Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17.

[299] Morton, *Literary Detection*, 166.

authorship.[300] Rather, my focus here is limited to the issue of more patent pseudonymity, where express authorial claims are manifestly deemed to be erroneous.

Contemporary scholarship does not agree on how the notion of pseudonymity was viewed in in antiquity.[301] While some scholars suggest that the practice was an acceptable one, others insist that it was a "dishonourable (illicit) device practiced with guile and deception."[302] To a certain extent at least, judgment on the practice in the classical period was related directly to the function, or literary purpose of the pseudonymous work. And insofar as scholarship has accounted for a number of these functions or purposes,[303] it is worth considering some of them in connection to the issue of pseudonymity and the Pauline corpus.

Clarke makes a notable taxonomical distinction, one that identifies two basic divergent purposes of pseudonymity in antiquity. In his view, pseudonymous works are occasioned either by malicious or self-serving motives on the one hand, or pure or pietistic motives on the other. In the case of the former, the pseudonymous author *intends* to deceive, and is motivated by

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[300] With respect to these contours, E. Randolph Richards, for example, argues for essentially four ways that an amanuensis, or secretary, could function: 1. as one who simply copies precisely what is dictated by the true author; 2. as one who makes editorial alterations to the grammar or style of the original author; 3. as a co-author who makes material contributions to the ideas expressed in the work; 4. as one who fully produces the written form of the work, but based on the ideas of the author. See E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991). Richards relies rather heavily on the work of Cicero in his study, which in part has led to some doubt concerning whether his third and fourth ways, in particular, are evidenced at all in the Pauline epistles. See, for example, Ehrman, *Forged*, 137-138. See also Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 6-19. Following in part the work of Richards, Murphy-O'Connor concludes that "the mention of those associated with Paul in the address should be explained in terms of the letter; that is, he selected them to play a role in the creation of the epistle as coauthors." Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 19. While I will not dwell on it here, there is no doubt that the involvement of an amanuensis adds a very relevant variable to the issue of authorship. Among other things, the activity of an amanuensis can serve as an explanatory mechanism for rationalizing seeming inconsistencies in the Pauline correspondence. Taking the pastorals as an example, Collins makes note of some scholars who argue that "Paul's secretary was ultimately responsible for the linguistic and theological differences between the pastorals and the other Pauline epistles." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 91. The appeal of such a position, of course, is that it permits one to rationalize the seemingly un-Pauline elements of the pastorals while simultaneously maintaining their overall "authenticity."

[301] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 465.

[302] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 465. In some pseudonymous writings, the practice is nonetheless justified as a "'white lie,' i.e. that their noble ends justified their dubious means." Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 42.

[303] Clarke, for examples, outlines twelve categories, or functions, of pseudonymity (some of which are closely related). See Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity." Metzger, in contrast, identifies eight categories. See Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigraphy," *JBL* 91, 1 (1972): 3-24.

"financial interests, promotion of ideas, or the slander of one's enemies."[304] In the latter case, the "deception may be secondary," as the pseudonymous author is motivated by "personal modesty, or love and respect for the attributed personage."[305] These divergent motives, however, do not alter the underlying presence of a deception, i.e. the fact that a work is pseudonymous. Thus, Clarke's distinction here appears oriented towards either imposing or eradicating moral culpability on the part of a pseudonymous author.

In any event, it is worth considering a few particular examples under each of the two categories described by Clarke. Under the first category, as noted, pseudonymity could be motivated out of financial interests, promotion of ideas, or the slander of one's enemies. A fascinating example of the former is presented by Metzger, who notes that "when the kings of Egypt and of Pergamum sought to outdo each other in their efforts to increase the holdings in their respective libraries...Monetary rewards were offered to those who would provide a copy of some ancient author, and, in consequence, many imitations of ancient works were composed and palmed off as genuine."[306] As an example of the latter, Clarke points to the work of Diotimus the Stoic, who "produced fifty letters of obscene content under the name of Epicurus...thus tarnishing his character."[307]

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[304] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 447-448. Metzger refers to this as a "genuine forgery," which involves a "calculated attempt to deceive." Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 4.
[305] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 447-448.
[306] Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 5-6. See also Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 76-77. See also Stirewalt Jr., *Ancient Greek Epistolography*, 33-34. A relevant anecdote in this regard involves the ancient physician Galen, who composed a work, *On His Own Books* (*De libris propriis*), in which he describes "the unauthorized circulation of his writings, adding remarks on the *spuria* that crept in among them. He complains that there are persons who 'use them for teaching purposes as if they themselves had written them,' in one case even adding a proem of their own." Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena: Questions to be Settled Before the Study of an Author or a Text* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 126-127.
[307] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 451. Metzger offers the example of Anaximenes of Lampsacus who, writing in the name of his rival, Theopompus of Chios, composed works that slandered Greece, Athens, Thebes and Sparta. Believing the works to be genuine, these cities no longer welcomed Theopompus. See Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 6-7. See also Pausanias, *Descr.* 6.18.5

Under the second category, ones finds references to pseudonymous works composed purportedly out of respect for a beloved teacher.[308] As Metzger writes, "the desire to honor a respected teacher and founder of a philosophical school prompted the Neo-Pythagoreans to attribute their treatises to Pythagoras himself, who had lived many centuries earlier."[309] In the case of Paul, a frequently-cited example of this is referenced in Tertullian's account of an Asiatic presbyter who confessed to legitimizing his own work, *The Acts of Paul*, through the use of Paul's name, an act that lead to the presbyter's removal.[310] Yet strictly speaking, the situation with *The Acts of Paul* differs from the pseudonymity I am concerned with here. Internally, *The Acts of Paul* does not claim to be composed *by* Paul. Rather, Paul is inserted as an authoritative figure in a story, and is characterized in a manner suited to the author's own purposes. Thus, the

[308] Penny refers to this as the "master-disciple relationship," in which "[t]he special relationship between teacher and pupil...bound them so closely together that out of love and respect the pupil published his own works under the name of the master." Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 39-40. In the Christian context, Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* (4.5) is sometimes cited as a justification for the practice ("[i]t is permissible for the works which disciples published to be regarded as belonging to their masters"). This, however, is a misreading of Tertullian. For as Lovering rightly notes, "pseudepigraphy is not the issue [there]…Tertullian has nothing to say about what the disciple writes being claimed as the master's, but only of its rightfully being so regarded. He is referring to the Gospels which went under the names of Mark and Luke and which were deemed to carry the authority of their authors' masters, Peter and Paul respectively." Lovering, "Collection," 166.

[309] Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 7. See also Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 77; and Clark, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 450. As Holger Thesleff makes clear, the issue of composition and pseudonymity in the case of the Pythagorean corpus is incredibly complex, as he presents a variety a classes and subclasses of Pythagorean works, composed at divergent locations over a wide range of dates. See Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi), 1961.

[310] See Tertullian, *Bapt.* 17.5: "But if the writings which wrongly go under Paul's name, claim Thecla's example as license for women's teaching and baptizing, let them know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing, as if he were augmenting Paul's fame from his own store, after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office. For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a *woman* even to *learn* with over-boldness, should give a *female* the power of *teaching* and of *baptizing*! 'Let them be silent,' [Paul] says, 'and at home consult their own husbands.'" See also Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 454. Given the role of Thecla as Paul's co-protagonist in the Acts of Paul, the text is a particularly noteworthy one when it comes to the role of women according to Paul, and also within early Christianities generally. The composition of the Acts of Paul and Thecla is often dated to the second century, albeit not later than c. 200, i.e. Tertullian's reference to it. The work is sometimes referred to simply as the Acts of Paul, and a Coptic version of the work reveals that it was comprised of a number of components: The Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul, the Third Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Martyrdom of Paul. The epistles are of course also viewed as spurious. Pervo suggests that the work "appeared in the second half of the second century, between c. 160 and c. 190." Richard I. Pervo, *The Acts of Paul: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2014), 41. MacDonald, similarly, dates the work to somewhere between 150 and 190 CE. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 14.

issue with *The Acts of Paul* is more precisely described by A. Hilhorst in this manner: "The presbyter is found guilty, but of what? Writing *AP* is no mistake in itself, nor is trying to promote Paul. The real offence is implied in the fact that the *AP* do not deserve that name…Paul could not have allowed women to teach and baptize, since he did not even permit them to ask questions to the teacher; consequently, a document relating teaching and baptizing by a woman cannot be authentic."[311]

Nonetheless, while Hilhorst is technically correct to distinguish *The Acts of Paul* from truly pseudonymous writings, the compositional milieu behind the work is akin to the authorial motivation that Pervo identifies with the Pauline letters that he (and others) view as pseudonymous. As Pervo notes, the composition of 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians "[represent] a continuation of the Pauline practice of managing conflict *in absentia*. The author is a follower of the historical Paul in so far as s/he utilizes convictions about the future as pointers to how one should behave at the present time."[312] Thus, with pseudonymous Pauline works, one frequently finds the accompanying suggestion that the work was ostensibly produced in an effort to honour Paul, and to maintain a fidelity to his ideas in an ever-changing environment.

Relatedly, rhetorical schools in antiquity at times had students compose speeches in the name of famous orators. As MacDonald writes, "pseudonymity was a school exercise whereby a student attempted to demonstrate a mastery of the style, vocabulary, and philosophical perspectives of a venerated author."[313] Interestingly, Pervo remarks that the spurious Correspondence Between Paul and Seneca "possess[es] some of the features of a school

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[311] A. Hilhorst, "Tertullian on the Acts of Paul," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 156.
[312] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 82-83. Pervo supplements this notion elsewhere, noting that "[a]ll the Deutero-Paulines look back upon authentic letters, and all make use of one or more of them. These later epistles testify both to the success of Paul's chosen form and to the requirements to keep him up to date." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 117.
[313] MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 55. See also Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 8-9; Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 77; and Stirewalt Jr., *Ancient Greek Epistolography*, 20-24.

exercise,"[314] though it entirely unclear as to how the results of a "school exercise" would have found their way into a collection of purportedly genuine literature.

A further motivation for writing in another's name is on account of modesty, where the pseudonymous author writes under a pseudonym, so as to not draw unwarranted attention.[315] The problem with this, however, is that if undue attention is the author's chief concern, one would think that a more viable course would be to write anonymously, rather than pseudonymously.[316] Thus, as Penny rightly notes, "even where a school tradition or master-disciple relationship is admitted, it is not always the case that the pseudonymity stems out of the innocent motivation of admiration or modesty."[317]

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[314] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 112. The Correspondence Between Paul and Seneca is comprised of fourteen letters, and has the ideological allure of placing Paul in dialogue with (and even gaining a sympathetic hearing from) one of his esteemed Greco-Roman contemporaries. While the purported dates for the correspondence place it in the late 50s and early 60s, the actual date of composition has been pushed by some into the fourth century. Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 115. See also Harding, "Disputed and Undisputed Letters of Paul," 143.

[315] Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 8. An example of this is elaborately described by Alfred Haefner, who provides an account of a fifth century epistle purported to have been authored by Timothy, and the ensuing confession of the pseudonymous author who had to account for his actions. When called upon to defend himself, the pseudonymous author, a priest name Salvian, referenced his own authorship in third person, claiming that "the author wisely selected a pseudonym for his book for the reason that he did not wish the obscurity of his own person to detract from the influence of his otherwise valuable book." Quoted in Alfred E. Haefner, "A Unique Source for the Study of Ancient Pseudonymity," *ATR* 16 (1934): 13-14.

[316] Indeed, this is precisely what Ehrman asks: "[i]f an author who was writing out of humility did not want to mention his own name, why didn't he simply write anonymously?" Ehrman, *Forged*, 120.

[317] Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 41. While not entirely applicable to the present study, Penny outlines another interesting form of pseudonymity, which he identifies as "genuine religious pseudepigraphy." Genuine religious pseudepigraphy involves a situation "in which a god, angel, hero, mythical figure, or divine man is represented as author. These are writings of revelatory character (apocalypses, oracles, prophecies, letters from heaven, messages from the transcendent world) which are marked by visions, prophetic speech, and other forms of inspiration. The author so strongly identifies with the inspiring force that he disappears behind it and really considers his work to be that of the heavenly person. Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 38. See also Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, 15. In this regard, both Penny and Donelson draw on the work of Wolfgang Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (Munich: Beck, 1971). Speyer distinguishes between three forms of religious pseudepigrapha: genuine religious pseudepigraphy (described above), forged religious pseudepigrapha (where the work is written under another name for the purposes of intentional deception), and fictitious religious pseudepigraphy (works written under another name for the purposes of an aesthetic or literary exercise). As Speyer and others argue, there are in fact no examples of type one and three in Christian literature. See Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy*, 15. See also Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 76. With respect to fictitious religious pseudepigraphy, however, it would appear that Pervo, at least, is prepared to classify the Correspondence Between Paul and Seneca under this category.

Pseudonymity and New Testament Scholarship

When it comes to New Testament studies and pseudonymity, one can frequently identify a kind of defence-mechanism in scholarship, as "[a] surprising number of scholars have claimed that even though the Bible may contain forgeries, these forgeries were never meant to deceive anyone. According to this view, ancient authors who assumed a false name were not trying to lead their audiences astray."[318] Consequently, there is little consensus in scholarship on whether any "pseudonymous Paul" ought to be regarded as "literary fraud" or an "innocent pseudonymous impersonation."[319] Yet despite this lack of consensus, it is nonetheless evident that the scholarly preoccupation with moral culpability, or the question of whether or not a work was *intended* to deceive, is a somewhat curious phenomenon in itself.

The work of Metzger perhaps stands as a noteworthy example in this regard. Metzger formulates a rather strange analytical model, involving a distinction between pseudepigraphy and literary forgeries: "[a] literary forgery is essentially a piece of work created or modified with the intention to deceive. Accordingly, not all pseudepigrapha (that is, works wrongly attributed to authors) are to be regarded as forgeries. In the case of genuine forgery (if this oxymoron may be permitted) the attribution must be made with the calculated attempt to deceive."[320] Metzger's model is for all intents and purposes an iteration of the earlier-mentioned categories adopted by Clarke, who distinguishes between pseudonymous work that is produced with malicious motives and pseudonymous writing occasioned by "pure" motivations.

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[318] Ehrman, *Forged*, 119. William G. Doty, for example, notes, that "[s]ince Paul came to be considered the role model for those in authority over dispersed church communities, his model as a letter writer was similarly copied. Identification with Paul went to the extent that later authors felt that they were extending Paul's own work. Hence, there was nothing strange about actually writing in Paul's name." William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 67.
[319] Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 441-442.
[320] Metzger, "Literary Forgeries": 4.

In any event, Metzger's theory is flawed in one respect, and representative of an odd scholarly impulse in another. First, it bears noting that Metzger's preoccupation is with works that purport to be by a particular author. Accordingly, keeping in mind the technical distinction between the terms pseudepigraphy and pseudonymity, the issue here is not really one of the former, but rather the latter.

Second, and in my view more important, Metzger's fixation on the issue of intentional or calculated deception betrays an underlying preoccupation with the moral implications of pseudonymity.[321] This preoccupation leads to the construction of a dualistic notion of the issue: to Metzger, there are both morally innocent and morally culpable forms of pseudonymity. This, it seems, is the product of an endeavour to locate some sort of middle ground, one where Pauline pseudonymity (and New Testament pseudonymity generally) can be acknowledged in a way that simultaneously immunizes it from any normative pronouncement about its (im)morality. As Penny puts it, "the concern about pseudepigraphy has been related primarily to the ethical question. How can the fact of pseudonymous writings within the New Testament be reconciled with canonical inspiration or with a sense of morality, honesty, and integrity?"[322] Metzger's model stands as one such method of reconciliation, as it functions to mitigate any residuary unpleasantness associated with pseudonymity. This phenomenon is aptly summarized by Penny:

> Frequently when a critic judges a New Testament document inauthentic, he hastens to add a justifying remark designed to minimize any offense the reader might feel: it was a common practice; it was more modest for a disciple to give credit to his master; a later writer recalls the church to the apostolic teaching by writing in the apostle's name what he would have said in the same situation; the content is more important than the name of the writer; the literary standards of antiquity were unacquainted with the modern concept

[321] Ehrman similarly finds the preoccupation to be a curious one: "Sometimes I think it is a bit strange that when some scholars refer to books with false authorial claims *outside* the New Testament, they have no qualms calling them 'forgeries,' but when they refer to such books *within* the New Testament, they call them 'pseudepigrapha.'" Ehrman, *Forged*, 118.
[322] Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 29.

> of literary property; etc...Such dismissals are made too quickly and with too little consideration of the actual facts of the case.[323]

While I think Penny is right to question the pervasive tendency to sanitize the intentions of a pseudonymous author, this reflexive inclination in New Testament scholarship is to some extent unsurprising, given the sheer volume of pseudonymous works in Christianity, particularly in connection to Paul.[324] Granted, the implications of pseudonymity can be limited in many instances—with Paul, for example, little turns on the fact that the Correspondence Between Paul and Seneca, the Epistle to the Laodiceans, the Third Epistle to the Corinthians, the Prayer of the Apostle Paul, and the Apocalypse of Paul are all pseudonymous.[325] The reason for this is straightforward enough: their non-canonical status, combined with the universal categorization of them as pseudonymous works, renders them relatively benign.

In fact, to digress on this point briefly, I would suggest that the issue of apocryphal Pauline works could be framed in another fashion, one that appropriates the language of former United States Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld. In Rumsfeldian terms, the pseudonymous nature of the aforementioned works can be viewed as "known knowns," or "things we know we

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[323] Penny, "The Pseudo-Pauline Letters," 29. Similarly, Lovering remarks that "[t]here is no support for early Christian approval of pseudepigraphy, and when one looks more broadly, one can hardly fail to be impressed with how singularly little there is anywhere." Lovering, "Collection," 166.

[324] The remarks of Collins evidence how frequently the issue arises: "[t]he practice of composing forged letters for rather base motives could easily be subject matter for a chapter in early Church history. Heretics frequently found a means of gaining credibility for their doctrines by publishing them under a false name. According to one forged letter, Jerome is alleged to have attributed the translation of the Bible into Latin (the Latin Vulgate edition) to the folly of his youth. A faulty exposition on the Trinity was included in a collection of Cyprian's letters. These and other examples of blatant falsification come from a period in the history of the early church when it had already become customary for Christian writers to acknowledge their own writings." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 81.

[325] See MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 55. The authoritative status of apocryphal works certainly varied among Christian writers. For example, Athanasius (c. 296-373 CE) writes rather dismissively of such works, noting that the they are "an invention of heretics, who write these books whenever they want then generously add time to them, so that, by publishing them as if they were ancient, they might have a pretext for deceiving the simple folk." Quoted in David Brakke, "A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon," *HTR* 103, 1 (2010): 61. Interestingly, however, there are some books that Athanasius concedes as having instructive value, even though they are not canonical—in this regard, he specifically points to the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, the Teaching of Apostles, and the Shepherd of Hermas. See Brakke, "A New Fragment": 61.

know." Beyond this, one might further argue that any so-called "lost" letters (see 1 Cor 5:9, 2 Cor 2:4, 2 Cor 7:8, and Col 4:16) are "known unknowns"—we ostensibly "know" that the letters were written, but their actual contents are unknown.[326] Added to this is Rumsfeld's infamous third category of "unknown unknowns." In Paul's case, there could well be other undiscovered Pauline epistles (genuine or pseudonymous), or epistles that we "don't know we don't know."[327]

In any event, while the "known knowns" (i.e. the pseudonymous Pauline works) are certainly fascinating objects of study for a variety of reasons—literary, socio-historical, theological, etc.—they do not possess the kind of authoritative panache associated with canonical works. Nor are they ever identified as texts that reliably reflect Paul's life or thought. Rather, they are unanimously and uncontroversially relegated to a category of texts that are identified as post-Pauline. With the canonical Pauline letters, on the other hand, the situation is much different. Owing largely to their canonicity, and to their entrenchment as reliable repositories of Paul's thought, there is much at stake when it comes to the question of pseudonymity and the canonical Pauline epistles. Viewed in this light, the issue of Pauline pseudonymity is not so much one of morality, but rather of authority. For as Pervo notes, "prior to modern printing and copyrights, the attribution of a text to a certain person had more to do with the authority invoked than with authorship."[328]

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[326] I would hasten to add here, however, that there is hardly universal agreement on the topic of the "lost" letters described in the Pauline correspondence.

[327] United States of America, Department of Defence, News Briefing (12 February 2002). http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636.

[328] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 6. Collins similarly writes that "[o]ccasionally pseudonymity was a way in which an author tried to obtain a readership for his work. Some authors chose a pseudonym in order to make use of the authority and prestige of an ancient figure when they themselves did not enjoy much authority and prestige." Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 77. Yet consistent with the aforementioned discussion of Metzger on this point, Collins hastens to soften the blow, in terms of any moral implications: "[m]ight it not have been possible for an earlier generation of Christian writers to have composed letters in Paul's name, thereby honouring him and invoking his authority?" Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 81.

Pseudonymity and the Canonical Pauline Archive

It is clear, then, that the very concept of pseudonymity is multifaceted, and frequently implicates issues relating to both morality and authority. In the case of Pauline studies, it is the latter aspect that is of primary relevance to this particular investigation, a point that brings us back again to the issue of the Pauline canon, and the formation of our Pauline Archimedean points.

As mentioned earlier, much contemporary Pauline scholarship draws a basic distinction between the canonical Pauline corpus (comprised of all thirteen letters: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) and the critical Pauline corpus (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon).[329] Yet to be sure, this common approach is by no means universal, as the division of authentic and pseudonymous epistles involves varied iterations, including radical positions on both ends of the spectrum. While some view *all* of the canonical letters as authentic,[330] and others hold that *none* of the letters are authentic,[331] most contemporary scholarship stands somewhere in between, viewing the authentic correspondence as being comprised of the seven letters of the critical corpus, to which some are also prepared to add one or more of the disputed letters (typically Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians). This middle position aligns generally with the foundational view of F.C. Baur, who posited three classes of Pauline Epistles: letters that were most certainly authentic (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians), letters whose authorship was uncertain or disputed (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Thessalonians, and Philemon), and letters that were most certainly

[329] Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 245.
[330] One example of note in this regard is Donald Guthrie, who painstakingly argues for the authenticity of all thirteen letters. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*.
[331] This position is often associated with the so-called "Dutch radicals" referenced earlier. As Price summarizes, "Van Manen, Allard Pierson, Samuel Naber, Abraham Loman, and their predecessor Bruno Bauer denied the authenticity of every single Pauline letter despite the attempts of F.C. Baur to swat them away." Price, *The Amazing Colossal Apostle*, 58.

spurious (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, i.e. the pastoral epistles).[332] In any event, the variety of divergent starting points for the Pauline archive, or the lack of a uniform approach to locating the "authentic" Pauline archive, underscores the existence of different Pauline Archimedean points among scholars.

In affirming the existence of various Archimedean points, however, I do not intend to suggest that Pauline scholars make their selections in an altogether haphazard or unprincipled fashion. On the contrary, there are important considerations that frequently ground or condition their selections. These considerations involve a diverse range of methodological approaches:

- Locating internal evidence that attests to Pauline authorship, i.e. identifying explicit indications that Paul was the author of a letter. (Notably, this methodological approach results only in the exclusion of Hebrews, if one were inclined to otherwise include it).[333]
- Locating external evidence that would support Pauline authorship. This includes explicit or implied references to Pauline epistles in other material, for example, the letters of the early Church Fathers, the Muratorian fragment, or P46. (To be precise, however, this method does not truly serve to establish the identity of a letter's author. Rather, it technically functions as a means of better ascertaining the date of authorship).
- Distinguishing between style and vocabulary in the letters.[334] For example, as Lovering writes, "[o]perating on the assumption that certain fundamental elements of style will be invariable in an author across time," one can examine the frequency with which certain

[332] Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus* Christ, 1: 245-249. Baur's views on the first and third class are entirely consistent with the general distinction outlined by Collins.
[333] As noted earlier, an internal attestation of authorship is "is not itself a guarantee of its own authenticity…The authorial signature necessarily includes within itself the possibility of imitation and of forgery." Fewster, "Can I Have Your Autograph?": 35.
[334] Lovering, "Collection," 168.

terms are used.[335] (Potential difficulties with this approach include that it does not account for developments or variations in a single author's style, and does not allow for a situation involving the use of a type of amanuensis who writes in a style distinctive from the person giving instruction).

- Analyzing and contrasting the theological content of the letters. For example, discussion of matters concerning the eschaton, the Mosaic Law, and soteriology can be contrasted between the letters, in an effort to determine whether they reflect the ideas of the same author. (This approach is also susceptible to certain pitfalls. On the one hand, identification of divergent ideas can fail to account for the possibility that a single author developed a theological idea over time, or simply changed his mind on an issue. On the other hand, the task of establishing authorial consistency between letters can demand significant hermeneutic creativity in some cases).
- Analyzing the historical setting of the letters. This approach frequently involves an attempt to synchronize the contents of the letters with events described in Acts. (As discussed earlier, this carries with it problematic methodological issues in itself, as it assumes that Acts is a reliable repository of historic information).

Recognizing that this list of approaches is by no means exhaustive,[336] the contemporary position in Pauline scholarship involves—at minimum and with rare exception—a first-order valuation of the letters in the *Hauptbriefe* (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, and Galatians), and a similar, if theologically less robust, valuation of the remaining epistles of the critical Pauline corpus (1

[335] Lovering, "Collection," 168. See, for example, A.Q. Morton, *The Authorship of the Pauline Epistles: A Scientific Solution* (University Lectures, 3; University of Saskatchewan, 1965), and Morton, *Literary Detection*.
[336] Lovering, for example, notes an additional approach that involves analyzing particular verbal parallels or allusions from one letter to another. The idea here is that a certain parallel or allusion is known in advance by both the writer and the reader, ostensibly implying that particular letters had been circulated or were previously known to certain audiences. Lovering, "Collection," 169.

Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon). The seemingly perpetual clout of these letters is dramatically summarized by Calvin Roetzel, who writes that "[t]he earliest writings of the New Testament are the seven undisputed letters of Paul, and no letters have more profoundly influenced Western history than these."[337] While this sentiment reflects the dominant starting point in Pauline scholarship, it is a position that is not without its detractors, including White:

> Until we can fully admit that the prevailing modern discourse on the "real" Paul comes from a long-standing tradition that elevates the *Hauptbriefe* to the front and center of the Pauline canon, not just materially (they stand at the front of ancient manuscripts merely because of their length), but theologically and hermeneutically, we will never approach the kind of deconstructive position necessary for developing more transparent methodologies for reconstructing the "real" or the "historical" Paul. If we were serious about this task, and not merely interested in using Paul as a pawn for modern rhetorics, we would begin to view all the Pauline Epistles, for instance, as Pauline "tradition": diverse images of Paul mediated to us through historically and socially conditioned texts and manuscripts.[338]

In White's view, the current state of affairs in Pauline scholarship evidences a "strong institutional bias since at least the era of F.C. Baur…toward the Paul of the *Hauptbriefe* over numerous other Pauline texts of the first century for envisioning the 'real' Paul."[339] I think there is some merit to White's critique; indeed, it is one that partially overlaps with William Arnal's remarks concerning the allure—transient as it may be—of the Dutch radical position:

> Paul appears to be one of the earliest 'Christians' about whom we can say anything with certainty, yet he also seems to attest to a level of Christian development, unity, and self-consciousness that sources we know to be later are lacking, including texts like Q, the synoptic gospels, and the Apocalypse. This has led some scholars to argue for a revision to the date of Paul's letters, seeing them as second-century forgeries (see, e.g., Detering 1996). The intuition here is probably right, even if the conclusion may be wrong: there is something decidedly second-century, or even later, about this way of imagining Paul.[340]

Arnal's assertion here relates in part to the fact that the canonical Pauline correspondence we possess has been refined, and essentially reified, through centuries of copying and editorial

[337] Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 59. See also Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 6.
[338] White, *Remembering Paul*, 176-77.
[339] White, *Remembering Paul*, 94.
[340] William Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition'": 203.

activity. While this relates somewhat to the issue of interpolation, which will be discussed further below, it also points very generally to the difficulty in assuming that the form of the Pauline correspondence we possess is reasonably uncontaminated. Writing broadly on the subject of textual criticism, Jerome McGann cogently outlines the concern I am referring to here:

> Having learned the lesson that authors who wish to make contact with an audience are fated, by laws of information theory, to have their messages more or less seriously garbled in the process, textual critics proposed to place the reader in an unmediated contact with the author. This project is of course manifestly impossible, a Heisenbergian dilemma, since some form of mediation is always occurring, not least in the editions produced by critical editors of various persuasions. Nevertheless, though everyone today recognizes this inherent limitation on all acts of communication, the idea persists in textual studies that a regression to authorial manuscripts will by itself serve to reduce textual contamination.[341]

Bearing McGann's remarks in mind, it is unsurprising that the "something decidedly second-century" about the Pauline correspondence (i.e. their attestation "to a level of Christian development, unity, and self-consciousness that sources we know to be later are lacking") is conceivably just a by-product of an entirely self-evident fact: the canonical texts that we possess are an incredibly complex aggregate, with countless hands involved in the transmission of the data over many centuries.[342] Given this, one could reasonably expect that the texts have accumulated a sense of "Christian development, unity, and self-consciousness" that is difficult to reconcile with the first-century milieu in which the Pauline writings are said to have originated.[343]

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[341] Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 41.
[342] As Ehrman notes, "more than fifty-seven hundred Greek manuscripts have been discovered and catalogued," and with respect to variants in the texts, there is no agreement: "some say there are 200,000 variants known, some say 300,000, some say 400,000 or more." Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 88-89. Regardless, as Ehrman soberly puts it, "[t]here are more variations among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament." Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 90.
[343] This general statement is entirely consistent with Ehrman's much broader thesis regarding polemical interests at play in the transcription of early Christian texts: "The New Testament manuscripts were not produced impersonally by machines capable of flawless reproduction. They were copied by hand, by living, breathing, human beings who were deeply rooted in the conditions and controversies of their day. Did the scribes' polemical contexts influence the way they transcribed their sacred Scriptures? The burden of the present study is that they did, that theological

Further to this, I think that to a certain extent, at least, Arnal's remarks align with Price's disappointment over how the Dutch radical position is almost universally and automatically rejected in scholarship. As Price puts it, "it is not that the Dutch Radical critical paradigm was tried and found wanting; it was found distasteful and not tried."[344]

I believe that the sort of consternation expressed by White, Arnal, and Price is somewhat justified. And in the case of Price's complaint, I suspect that the reflexive dismissal of the Dutch radical position owes much to its noxious epistemological implications: if *none* of the writings are authentic, then what data do we have left to rely on to generate an account of Paul?

Yet more than that, the difficulty in embracing the Dutch radical position on the (in)authenticity of the Pauline epistles is that this position ultimately just begs the question. For our ability to deconstruct an "institutional bias" regarding the *Hauptbriefe*, or to re-examine the dependability of various parts of the Pauline archive, requires from the outset an appeal to a stable point of comparison: a Pauline Archimedean point. Now granted, one can also make appeals to non-Pauline sources, or external evidence, in the course of scrutinizing these issues. Nonetheless, a fundamental problem remains: in order to reconfigure the Pauline archive, or to establish a new (or reestablish an old) hermeneutic paradigm in the study of Paul, we must first have a basic measure by which we determine what is or is not authentic Pauline data. In other words, to determine whether or not the authorship of a letter is authentic, one *requires* an Archimedean point to begin with. One must already possess, or have in mind, an "authentic Paul"—a control variable against which to measure other letters, or parts of them, as independent

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disputes, specifically disputes over Christology, prompted Christian scribes to alter the words of Scripture in order to make them more serviceable for the polemical task." Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-4. Eric Scherbenske analyses this phenomenon in relation to the Pauline writings, demonstrating that the interpretation of Paul's letters and the editing of them were activities that influenced one another. See Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[344] Price, *The Amazing Colossal Apostle*, 40.

variables. Accordingly, what is implicit in each and every methodological approach to the question of authenticity is an iteration of Meno's paradox: Pauline scholars already "know" the authentic Paul—or rather *an* authentic Paul—a fact that renders the search for a Pauline Archimedean point, or an authoritative archive, a somewhat illusory endeavour from the very outset. This phenomenon can be further evidenced through considering just a couple of particular letters that some have argued to be pseudonymous.

The Authenticity of the Pastorals

In contemporary Pauline scholarship, most take the pseudonymity of the pastoral epistles as well-established, a view that is frequently, if somewhat imprecisely, linked to the foundational work of Schleiermacher.[345] For it was Schleiermacher who, in a letter to his friend Joachim Christian Gass, critiqued the authenticity 1 Timothy, arguing that its vocabulary and ideas were inconsistent with the other Pauline epistles (including, interestingly, 2 Timothy and Titus, the other two pastoral epistles). As Hermann Patsch writes, "[n]on-Pauline phrases and a host of hapaxlegomena provided the decisive evidence against Pauline authorship, which was associated with an incoherent, discontinuous train of thought. Comparison with 2 Timothy and Titus (the

[345] As Jermo van Nes points out, the association between Schleiermacher's work and the *en masse* criticism of the pastorals as pseudepigraphic is imprecise. Notably, Edward Evanson argued against the authenticity of Titus in the late eighteenth century, preceding Schleiermacher's work. Jermo van Nes, "On the Origin of the Pastorals' Authenticity Criticism: A 'New' Perspective," *NTS* 62 (2016): 315-320. See Edward Evanson, *The Dissonance of the Four Generally Received Evangelists and the Evidence of Their Respective Authenticity Examined* (Gloucester, MA: Johnson, 1805), 318-320. Further, Schleiermacher's initial critique was in fact only directed at 1 Timothy. It is not until J.G. Eichhorn's early nineteenth-century work that one finds an "overall critique" on the pastorals. Van Nes, "On the Origin": 317. See also Jermo van Nes, *Pauline Language and the Pastoral Epistles: A Study of Linguistic Variation in the Corpus Paulinum* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); and Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 89-90.

authenticity of neither having been challenged, nor the speeches of Paul in Acts) showed Schleiermacher that 1 Timothy presented a compilation from both of these."[346]

Rightly or not, Schleiermacher's criticism is viewed as one that opened the floodgates to examinations of epistolary authorship in the New Testament. And in the case of the pastoral epistles, doubts over authorship mounted on account of a variety of (sometimes interrelated) concerns:

- That events in the pastorals prove difficult to fit with other sources concerning events in the historical Paul's life.[347]
- That much of the vocabulary in the pastorals differs from other Pauline epistles.[348]
- That certain stylistic features (e.g. the use of conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and definite articles) differ from other Pauline epistles.[349]
- That the pastorals have a certain rigidity, and lack the "vigor" of other Pauline epistles.[350]
- Relatedly, that the theology of the pastorals presents itself as being somewhat un-Pauline, in contrast to other epistles.[351]

Over the years, this has led to widespread agreement over the pseudonymous nature of the pastorals—as Brown notes, "*between 80 to 90 percent of modern scholars would agree that the*

[346] Hermann Patsch, "The Fear of Deutero-Paulinism: The Reception of Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'Critical Open Letter' concerning 1 Timothy," trans. Darrell J. Doughty, *JHC* 6, 1 (1999): 3-31.
[347] As Gordon Fee notes, "events in the Pastorals (e.g. evangelizing in Crete (Titus 1:5), travelling to Ephesus with Timothy (1 Tim 1:3, 3:14), an intention to travel to Nicopolis (Titus 3:12), and a second imprisonment (in Rome), where he expects to die (2 Tim 1:16-17; 2:9; 4:6-8, 16-18)…cannot easily be placed in Paul's life as it can be reconstructed from Acts and the earlier letters." Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1988), 3.
[348] Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 24. As Ehrman notes, "there are 848 different words used in the pastoral letters. Of that number 306—over one-third of them!—do not occur in any of the other Pauline letters of the New Testament." Ehrman, *Forged*, 98. See also P.N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921).
[349] Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 24.
[350] Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 24. See also Pervo, *The Pastorals and Polycarp*, 3.
[351] As Fee writes, "[t]he problem lies not so much with their being non-Pauline in theology—indeed Pauline elements are recognized everywhere—as it does with so much in them that seems un-Pauline, that is, unlike his characteristic way of thinking and speaking as reflected in the earlier letters. Partly this is a matter of language, and partly, shifts of emphasis." Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 14.

Pastorals were written after Paul's lifetime."[352] Yet as Brown's remark suggests, general agreement is not unanimity. A number of scholars continue to insist that the pastorals were indeed authored by Paul. Guthrie, for example begins his argument by claiming, "not until the nineteenth century were doubts cast on the Pauline authorship and it must be wondered why no-one before then raised any problems about them."[353] Going further through the arguments for and against pseudonymity, Guthrie ultimately concludes that the pastorals were indeed written by Paul:

> In spite of the acknowledged differences between the pastorals and Paul's other epistles, the traditional view that they are authentic writings of the apostle cannot be said to be impossible, and since there are greater problems attached to the alternative theories it is most reasonable to suppose that the early church was right in accepting them as such.[354]

Without commenting just yet on Guthrie's conclusion, it is important to scrutinize his suggestion that doubts were not cast on Pauline authorship until the nineteenth century. This assertion is plainly wrong. For hearkening back to the previous chapter's discussion on canon formation, and in particular the gradual move towards a canonical Paul, one must not forget the early struggles that in part instigated that process. Indeed, among early Christianities, there was at least some question as to whether Paul authored the letters to Timothy. This is attested to by Clement of Alexandria, who noted that "the heretics reject the letters to Timothy."[355] Bearing this in mind, Guthrie's assertion is more accurately stated thus: *since Paul's canonization,* doubts were not cast on the authorship of the epistles until the nineteenth century.

In any event, Guthrie is hardly alone in maintaining that the pastorals were indeed authored by Paul. Gordon Fee, for example, argues that "for all the differences [between the pastorals and other Pauline letters], they are still far more like Paul in [language and style] than

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[352] Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 668 [emphasis in original].
[353] Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 612.
[354] Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 646.
[355] Clement, *Strom.* 2.11.

otherwise. The best solution is that Paul used a different amanuensis for these letters than for the earlier ones."[356] Likewise, Luke Timothy Johnson maintains that the pastorals are authentic, asserting that "the grounds for declaring [the pastoral epistles] inauthentic are so flawed as to seriously diminish the validity of the scholarly 'majority opinion.'" [357] Consequently, it is clear that despite the apparent presence of a majority opinion on the authorship of the pastoral epistles, their status in the Pauline archive is by no means unequivocally settled.[358]

To those among the "80 to 90 percent" who deny Pauline authorship of the pastorals, the positions of Guthrie, Fee, and Johnson (among others) might be identified as instances of obstinate and theologically-motivated defiance. I certainly believe there is some merit in that view.[359] Yet at the same time, perhaps there *is* some credibility to the minority position, even if it has little to do with the oft-cited points of debate concerning the pseudonymity of the pastorals. For in the course of affirming his own belief in the Pauline authorship of the pastorals, Robert Wall almost unwittingly makes a pivotal observation: "The diversity evident within the Pauline

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[356] Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 26.

[357] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (New Haven: Yale University Pres, 2008), 91. At the same time, Johnson is also quick to "assert emphatically the impossibility of *demonstrating* the authenticity of the Pastoral Letters." Views consistent with the conclusions of Johnson and Fee are common enough. Thomas C. Oden, for example, suggests that while "[t]he reader is left to judge" the issue of authorship, his commentary proceeds "on the assumption that all three epistles come from Paul's hand," adding that if the epistles were "not by Paul, they were written by one who thought of himself as an absolutely loyal follower of Paul, thoroughly steeped in Paul's language and spirit." Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 15.

[358] In a study that revisits the foundational linguistic arguments on the pastorals, van Nes concludes that scholars "should be more careful in relying on the influential studies by Schleiermacher, Holtzmann, and Harrison, because the vocabulary and syntax of the PE do not seem as peculiar as they have claimed. In addition, there appear to be many factors other than author variation that affect the use of language. These factors suggest that in the future the PE's authorship may be better debated in terms of history and theology rather than language." Van Nes, *Pauline Language*, 224.

[359] Consider, for example, Pervo's remarks over the potential implications of pseudonymity: "If Paul…did not compose some of the epistles transmitted under his name, the canon was no longer a secure basis for doctrine and discussion." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 6. In stating this, however, I should add that while pseudepigraphical authorship of the letters means, according to Brown, that "every issue pertinent to the letters has to be rethought," it remains the case for many that, Pauline authorship aside, the letters nonetheless retain a level of authoritative value and utility. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 668. As MacDonald writes, "[m]ost scholars agree that someone other than Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, but many of them nonetheless suppose that the author stood in the mainstream of later Pauline tradition. According to them, the author sought to redefine the Pauline message in order to render it more palatable, and to defend it against heresy. Some even speak of the author's domestication of Paul as legitimate, healthy, and inevitable." MacDonald, *Legend*, 101.

collection at every level makes it difficult to nail down any single letter as non-Pauline on the grounds that it is different from the rest."[360] In making this claim, Wall of course points to the need for a measure, for a Pauline Archimedean point, in order to assuredly establish the authenticity of one epistle or another. Yet in stating this, Wall's assertion also contains the seed of something *opposite* to what he wishes to assert: paradoxically, the diversity in the Pauline collection at every level makes it equally difficult to nail down any single letter as *Pauline*. In other words, the absence of an absolutely fixed, universally-accepted Pauline Archimedean point has diverse implications—it can be used as a sword or a shield, as a means of either denying or affirming the authenticity of a given epistle. In order to further understand the way in which this paradoxical state of affairs subsists, it is worth probing the issue of authenticity in connection to another letter, one whose authenticity is virtually never questioned in contemporary scholarship.

The Authenticity of Romans

While it would surely strike most Pauline scholars as asinine, an example involving one of the *Hauptbriefe*, Romans, can help to illustrate the inner workings of the aforementioned kind of paradox. In *Introducing Romans*, Richard Longenecker begins with an important preliminary assertion, stating that "[a]uthorship…and the possible involvement of others in the letter's final

[360] Robert W. Wall, with Richard B. Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 5. The presence of "diversity" referenced by Wall relates to the idea that Paul adapted his teaching or literary style. Support for this idea might involve an appeal to 1 Cor 9:20-22, in which we find a proselytizing sentiment quite akin to the Buddhist notion of *upāya*, or "expedient means": "To the Jews I became a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (See also 1 Cor 3:1-2: "But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh"). Yet given the underlying concerns of this chapter, this explanation for inter-epistle diversity does not suffice—appealing to 1 Cor 9:20-22 (or 1 Cor 3:1-2) to account for the diversity (and simultaneous authenticity) of the letters is about as logical as Baron Munchausen pulling himself out of a swamp by his own hair.

composition are the necessary first considerations in the study of any NT letter."[361] While concerns over authorship are routinely addressed in Pauline scholarship, sustained critical engagement with this issue is infrequently seen in connection to the seven letter corpus, and is exceedingly rare when it comes to discussion of the *Hauptbriefe*. Accordingly, it is worth noting that even in raising the issue of authenticity, Longenecker does more than one ordinarily sees in studies on Romans; generally speaking, the matter of authorship is rarely addressed, apart from a bald affirmation of its authenticity.[362]

Longenecker, however, provides a brief account of the Dutch Radical position, noting in particular the works of W.C. van Manen and Edward Evanson. On van Manen's part, his conclusions were partially grounded in his views on the composite nature of the letter: "Compared with the first part (1:18-8:39), the second (9-11), although now an integral portion of the work, betrays tokens of an originally different source. There is no inherent connection between them, although this can, if desired, be sought in the desire to set forth a wholly new doctrinal subject in a wholly new manner."[363] In van Manen's estimation, the thematic shift is all

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[361] Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 3.

[362] C.H. Dodd, for example, writes that "[t]he authenticity of the Epistle to the Romans is a closed question." C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), xiii. Echoing this sentiment, Frank J. Matera writes that "[t]here is little or no question about the authorship and literary integrity of Romans." Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 4. Similarly, Cyril E. Blackman (erroneously) notes that "[t]here has never been any doubt that Paul wrote Romans. Even the most radical criticism has accepted the authenticity of Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians." Cyril E. Blackman, "Romans," in *Acts & Paul's Letters: A Commentary on Acts, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 111. In a remark that more accurately characterizes the contemporary attitude in scholarship, C.E.B. Cranfield writes that "[t]he denial of Paul's authorship of Romans…is now rightly relegated to a place among the curiosities of NT scholarship. Today no responsible criticism disputes its Pauline origin." C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 1975), 1-2.

[363] W.C. van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," *Encyclopedia Biblica*, vol. 4, ed. T.K. Cheyne and J.S. Black (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 4134. Van Manen's assertion here relates also to the earlier discussion concerning there being something "decidedly second-century" about the Pauline letters. Van Manen ultimately splits the letter into four parts, noting that while 12:1-15:13 is "closely connected with that which precedes," it is nonetheless evident that it is of a "different character" and "betray[s] difference of origin." Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4136. The final part of the letter (15:14-16:27) is also distinguished, and van Manen maintains that "the 'epistle' has been compiled with the help of previously existing documents." Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4137.

too sharp, and the topics bear no relation with one another—while 1:18-8:39 is concerned largely with justification by faith, 9-11 veers starkly into a discussion over the soteriological status of Jews and Gentiles.[364] To van Manen, this evidences later compositional activity. Yet even beyond this, van Manen argues that the epistle bears other signs of being composed *after* Paul's death. For example, he argues that the letter presents a developed faith that does not align with what Paul would have formulated in his own lifetime:

> [T]he Paulinism with which we are made acquainted in the Pauline Epistles, and particularly in that to the Romans, is of a more recent date than the historical Paul. Compared with what the first disciples of Jesus believed and professed, it is not merely a remarkable divergence; it is in point of a fact a new and higher development from the first Christianity...It knows, and it is, a new divine revelation; it has a theology, a Christology, and a soteriology, which bear witness to a more advanced thinking and to a deeper experience of life than could possibly have been looked for within the first few years after the crucifixion. It is a remarkable forward step.[365]

In addition to this, van Manen references some passages as evidence that the Roman *ekklēsia* had a somewhat long-standing existence (e.g. 6:17; 13:11), which seemingly points further to post-Pauline composition.[366] Building upon such considerations, van Manen claims that "our canonical Epistle to the Romans is not what it seems to be, not a letter written by the apostle and sent to a definite church; it is a tractate, a book, designed to be read aloud at Christian meetings, a piece to be read in Church."[367] Most important, he concludes that Paul cannot be ascribed as the author of the letter, affirming that "[w]hat is certain…is that the canonical epistle is not by Paul. A writing that is so called, but on closer examination is seen to be no epistle but rather a

[364] Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4134.
[365] Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4138. Notably, van Manen does take into account the notion that Paul's theology evolved or developed over time. But in van Manen's view, this does not account for the level of theological development reflected in Romans: "It is of no avail continually to hark back to the possibility—which in fact no one denies—of a development in Paul's mind during the years that elapsed between his conversion and the writing of his epistles. The Paulinism of the epistles in question is, on their own showing, in its main features at least…as old as the Christian life of Paul; but such a Paulinism is even for thoughtful believers in the supernatural inconceivable as having come into existence immediately after Paul had become a Christian." Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4138-4139.
[366] Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4139.
[367] Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4140.

compilation, in which, moreover, are embedded pieces that plainly show their origin in a later time, cannot possibly be attributed to the 'apostle of the Gentiles.'"[368]

While van Manen's views hold little to no influence over contemporary Pauline scholarship, his claims are nonetheless interesting, and involve incredibly high stakes. Yet beneath his arguments appears an unspoken measure—a *Paulusbild*, or a sense of who the real Paul was. More precisely, van Manen's views exhibit a sense of what the real Paul could *not* be—the real Paul could not be responsible for authoring the kind of doctrinal sophistication apparent in Romans. But it is only through relying, albeit tacitly, on this omnipresent *Paulusbild*, that van Manen is able to formulate his conclusions about the inauthenticity of Romans.

This phenomenon is more readily discernable in the work of Evanson. In the course of reaching the very same conclusion on authorship, Evanson had advanced—in the eighteenth century, even prior to the work of van Manen and other Dutch Radicals—his own arguments concerning the pseudonymity of the epistle:

> (1) Paul could not have written to a church at Rome since the Acts of the Apostles makes it clear that no such church then existed, (2) Paul, having never visited Rome, could not have known so many people at Rome as the last chapter of the letter suggests, (3) Aquila and Priscilla could not have been at Rome at that time, (4) Paul's mother would hardly have wandered off to Rome (Assuming, from a literal rendering of the possessive 'my' of 16:13, that Rufus's mother, who is greeted at Rome, was also Paul's birth mother), and (5) such verses as 11:12, 15, 21, and 22 indicated that Romans was written after the fall of Jerusalem, and so after the death of Paul.[369]

Given such criticisms, Evanson sharply asserts that "[t]hese palpable, and as they seem to me, irreconcilable contradictions, oblige me utterly to reject this Epistle, called Paul's, and to regard

[368] Van Manen, "Romans (Epistle)," 4141.
[369] Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 5. See Evanson, *The Dissonance of the Four Generally Received Evangelists,* 305-312. Evanson's views with respect to the Pauline corpus are, on a broader level, interesting, and rather unusual: while he expunges Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians, he does not reject the others, including the pastoral epistles. In this regard, it is worth noting that Evanson's work in fact preceded the seminal views of Schleiermacher and his contemporaries on the authenticity of 1 Timothy and the pastorals.

it only as one of the many spurious forgeries of the second century, unworthy the least serious attention."[370]

Notably, Evanson relied heavily on Acts as the measure by which the content of Romans could be deemed accurate, or inaccurate. Thus, one sees the contours, or paradigm shifts, in terms of how scholars formulate a textual hierarchy for Pauline data. For Evanson, Acts appears to be at or near the top of the hierarchy—Acts, in other words, was the Archimedean point, and the authenticity of Romans could be determined by reference to Acts. Yet most contemporary scholarship, building upon Baur's commendation of the *Hauptbriefe* (with Romans at the head of it), completely *reverses* that relationship. It is the letters of the *Hauptbriefe*, rather than Acts, that establish the benchmark for what is authentically Pauline. And so a realization again emerges: in order to *apply* the criteria for determining what is or is not authentically Pauline, one must first select, whether subconsciously or otherwise, the text or texts that form that criteria—and in so doing, one's proto-*Paulusbild* is the inextricable substrate in which these criteria germinate.

To be sure, I do not mean to suggest that this point is entirely unknown or unrecognized. It is, however, one that is largely tacit in Pauline scholarship. Because for the most part, scholarship seems quite comfortable operating within the ebbs and flows of the dominant paradigm concerning the "authentic" Paul, without really scrutinizing the pivotal but underlying paradoxical nature of our functional Pauline Archimedean points. For example, turning again to Evanson's theory, and to a contemporary dismissal of it, it is worth considering the views of Longenecker. On Longenecker's part, there is no need to scrutinize the issue of a Pauline Archimedean point—for him, it is a given. Indeed, it is his commitment to a particular

[370] Evanson, *Dissonance*, 310. Interestingly, Evanson's publication met with strong objection from notable quarters: in 1793, a lengthy rebuke to Evanson's work was published by Joseph Priestly, the well-known scientist, philosopher, theologian, and correspondent of Thomas Jefferson. See Joseph Priestly, *Letters to a Young Man, Part II. Occasioned by Mr. Evanson's Treatise on the Dissonance of the Four Generally Received Evangelists* (London: J. Johnson, 1793).

Archimedean point that informs his objection to the view of Evanson on the authorship of Romans: "[s]cholars today…are united in recognizing Romans as having been written by Paul. And all earlier denials of his authorship are commonly viewed today as aberrations in the history of NT study, and rightly so."[371] So much for the views of Evanson and his successors.

Yet upon further consideration, it seems that the real reason for Longenecker's dismissal of the argument boils down to the earlier-mentioned adage by Lietzmann: "[o]ne has to know Paul to be capable of understanding him."[372] The beginning words in Longenecker's study evidence the ubiquity of Lietzmann's sentiment:

> The most uncontroverted matter in the study of Romans is that the letter was written by Paul, the Christian apostle whose ministry is portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles. The author identifies himself as Paul in the first word of the salutation (1:1). He speaks of himself as both a Jew by birth (9:3) and "the apostle to the Gentiles" by vocation (11:13). And throughout the letter—whether in its personal references, theological presuppositions, christological affirmations, rhetorical modes of argument, epistolary conventions, or ethical appeals—there resounds the clear note of authenticity. Together with the letter to the Galatians, it must be said: If these two letters are not by Paul, no NT letters are by him, for none has any better claim to authenticity than Galatians and Romans.[373]

I suspect that Longenecker's last statement here could not ring more true to most Pauline scholars, and I would certainly confess to feeling its visceral allure.[374] Yet at the same time, his

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[371] Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 5.

[372] Quoted in G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, "Early Christian Letters," trans. Frans-Joris Fabri and Michael Conley, *JHC* 9, 2 (2002): 313. Indeed, the habitual offhand rejection of the Dutch Radical arguments might lead one to take the adage in another direction, in which—paraphrasing the lyrics of Phil Spector—Pauline scholars believe that so far as Paul goes, "to know him is to love him."

[373] Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 3.

[374] Bearing in mind Longenecker's reference here to Galatians, I should add here that it, too, is not immune to doubts over its authenticity. As Benjamin White summarizes, Harold Hoehner "playfully [marshalled] together a number of arguments normally made against the authorship of the 'disputed Pauline epistles and [showed] how these same arguments, if administered fairly, would lead to the conclusion that Galatians was also a forgery." White, *Remembering Paul*, 24-25. See Harold Hoehner, "Did Paul Write Galatians?" in *History and Exegesis: New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80th Birthday,* ed. S. W. Son (Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2006). Hoehner outlines a curious phenomenon in biblical scholarship, noting that the arguments frequently cited in support of identifying Ephesians as inauthentic, would, when applied equally to Galatians, lead one to likewise conclude that *Galatians* is inauthentic. Hoehner's endeavour displeased at least one scholar, who chided Hoehner, remarking, "don't do that, I like Galatians." Hoehner, "Did Paul Write Galatians?" 158. I must confess that this rebuke resonates with me sentimentally—I, too, like Galatians.

remarks simultaneously reinforce the earlier-mentioned point, namely, that the control variable by which we measure the authenticity or inauthenticity of other Pauline material is simply the functional Archimedean point, or initial *Paulusbild*, that we, the interpreters, bring with us to the study of Paul. The reality of this state of affairs is further attested to by Morton:

> If you ask…scholars which epistles are Pauline, they will tell you. If you ask them why they consider them to be Pauline they can only say that they see in them the mind and style of Paul. If you then ask them how they know the mind and style of Paul they can only reply that they see it in his epistles. The argument is circular.[375]

Morton's assertion here is entirely on the mark. But it is also one that is hardly novel in New Testament studies. On the contrary, what one finds in the study of Paul is an iteration of a phenomenon that has long been present with the study of the historical Jesus.[376] With Paul, the phenomenon is simply transposed, owing to the differing methodological or data-related issues that accompany the study of the apostle, in contrast to the study of the historical Jesus. Moreover, as we shall see below, the phenomenon involves not only the letters as a whole, but also their individual contents.

Interpolations

When it comes to the study of Paul, the task of differentiating between authentic and pseudonymous textual data does not merely involve contrasting one letter with another, or one letter with another group of letters. For in addition to questions of inter-epistolary relations and authenticity, one also finds similar questions on an intra-epistolary level. To some extent, this states of affairs is unsurprising—bearing in mind the long and complicated history surrounding Paul's canonization, and given also that nearly two millennia have passed since the composition

[375] A.Q. Morton, *The Authorship of the Pauline Epistles: A Scientific Solution* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1965), 7. Morton's assertion here of course evokes the earlier-noted statement by Lietzmann, i.e. "one has to know Paul to be capable of understanding him."
[376] See, for example, Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus*.

of the Pauline correspondence, the integrity of the texts as we have them is sure to be questioned. Indeed, the fact that we *have* variations of biblical texts is beyond doubt.[377] MacNeil and Mak outline the underlying issue:

> [S]cholars rely on versions of the texts in manuscripts that were copied subsequent to the composition of the original text. These manuscripts are of varying quality, having been subject to physical deterioration, errors in transcription, or even deliberate modification. The work of many early philologists involved establishing the relationships of the manuscripts, and examining and emending their texts according to the dominant reading or to the earliest known copy of the text. The appeal to the earliest copy as the most authentic witness of a text is based on the assumption that the closer the manuscript is to the lost original, the less likely it is to have been exposed to corruption.[378]

To be sure, the problem of interpolation is hardly one that concerns just biblical texts. As Robert M. Grant notes, "[a]mong educated people in the Hellenistic age it was common knowledge that the works of the most ancient theological poets were not preserved in precisely the form in which their authors had left them."[379] Works by Homer, Thucydides, and Euripides, and even Plato, among others, have had interpolations identified in them.[380]

Thus, much like the issue of pseudonymity in general, the possibility of interpolation, or internal textual corruption, whether innocent or otherwise, is very real. And to a great extent, it is certainly understandable, given, as Metzger notes, that "[p]rior to the invention of printing with movable type in the middle of the fifteenth century, each copy of every piece of literature was

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[377] Recalling the earlier-referenced quote by Ehrman, "[t]here are more variations among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament." Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 90. See also Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul*.
[378] MacNeil and Mak, "Constructions of Authenticity": 34.
[379] Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1957), 15-16.
[380] William O. Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 27-28. Of note, in the case of Plato, Walker examines the issue in connection to the epistles attributed to him (as well as those attributed to Aristotle, Epicurus and Seneca). With respect to the dialogues, however, it appears that there is scant concern over interpolated material. However, this should not be taken to suggest that none whatsoever exists. See, for example, Gerard J. Boter, "Two Interpolations in Plato's *Symposium*," *Mnemosyne* 68, 5 (2015): 825-835. See also Francesco Ademollo, *The Cratylus of Plato: A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 489-495.

produced by hand—a long and painstaking task, fraught with possibilities of introducing accidental changes into the text."[381]

Consequently, the identification of interpolated material, redactions, or textual alterations is a persistent issue in contemporary Pauline studies. Indeed, it is one that some scholars view as an integral component to the task of "getting Paul right." Darrell Doughty compellingly summarizes the difficulty in this regard, asserting that "[o]ver the years…as I struggled to achieve a verse by verse understanding of the Pauline writings, I became convinced that…they can only be understood as complex redactional compositions, that may include appropriations of early Pauline material, but most certainly include an abundance of later material as well."[382] Put different, one might be inclined to state that the question of "interpolations" essentially concerns the question of editing, or editorial activity. Lovering, however, suggests a clear distinction between the two activities, specifically in the context of the Pauline correspondence:

> "Editor" designates an individual who, by selection and arrangement, but with the most minimal of alterations, prepares the author's original material for publication. "Redactor," on the other hand, is used to refer to one who is not content merely to reproduce but undertakes to add, to delete, to revise and to restate materials—or even to incorporate genuine fragments into his or her own freshly composed whole. The two are distinguished, then, by the amount of original material they contribute to the final product.[383]

While recognizing some technical merit in Lovering's distinction, I also think it is one most relevant to those concerned with the moral implications of the activity—editorial work, it seems,

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[381] Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 20. Referencing the "drudgery" of the copyist's task prior to the invention of the printing press, Metzger adds that one can find moments of levity in the colophons of certain non-Biblical manuscripts, e.g. "The end of the book—thanks be to God!" Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 20.

[382] Doughty, "Pauline Paradigms": 95. See also Martin Rist, "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," 76. Paula Fredriksen has comparably remarked that "[t]hanks to generations of copyists, we no longer have the letters as they left Paul's mouth. And the literary integrity of individual letters is uncertain. Scholars have argued that our present versions of Philippians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans represent various epistles edited together. All this means that, in terms of Paul's 'thought,' coherence often has to be distilled or imposed." Paula Fredriksen, "Historical Integrity, Interpretive Freedom: The Philosopher's Paul and the Problem of Anachronism," in *St. Paul Among the Philosophers*, ed. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009), 62.

[383] Lovering, "Collection," 8, fn 2.

is typically taken to be more benign than redactive or interpolative work. For our purposes, however, such distinctions are unnecessary. For at bottom, the nature of the activity in question is quite broad in scope, relating to additions,[384] subtractions, and reassembling sections of text.[385] And given the second-order nature of such editing, this is ultimately just a particular species of pseudepigraphy, given that the editorial alterations are not acknowledged overtly by the editors. Rather, they are surreptitiously incorporated into (or out of) the text in a manner intended to render the (revised) work as one that remains that of the original putative author—in this case, Paul. In other words, alterations to the texts are not manifestly acknowledged; the Pauline letters are not presented to us as a collection of letters authored by Paul and expressly edited by later individuals. Rather, we encounter the letters in a form that ostensibly represents them in their entirety, as the unadulterated words of Paul. In reality, unfortunately, this is not the case. A better view of our plight is articulated by Dennis MacDonald:

> [T]he Pauline corpus has not come down to us with the accuracy and dispassion of a genderless Xerox machine. It has come down to us from the hands of pious, dedicated, and skilled men—males of a particular social position and world view, who, in spite of their respect for the Pauline text, put their own signatures to his letters, and thereby to some extent helped him write them. The Pauline corpus is mostly his, but also unmistakably theirs.[386]

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[384] Additions can in some instances relate also to glosses, even though the two are technically distinct. For while a gloss is generally intended to explain or supplement the text itself, it is entirely plausible, as William O. Walker notes, that "a gloss might be copied by a scribe into the body of a manuscript, be reproduced in later transcriptions, and thus now appear in some or perhaps even all of the surviving texts. In such cases, the distinction between gloss and interpolation becomes problematic." Walker, *Interpolations*, 23.

[385] My reference to reassembly relates to what are otherwise described as "partition theories." Pervo summarizes these thus: "Partition theories have once more become acceptable. Proposals that one or more of the Pauline letters is the result of combinations of parts of originally independent pieces have long met resistance on the grounds that priority should be given to the extant text and that every effort should be advanced to support its integrity. This view of 'integrity' as the default position sounds reasonable, but it lacks cogency, for it does not recognize the principle that Paul's letters have come down in a book that had no interest in preserving the original texts of each piece of correspondence, but rather in presenting the message of the apostle to all believers everywhere...To reiterate: preparation of Paul's correspondence for a book makes amalgamation of letters highly probable." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 38. Pervo goes on to summarize existing scholarly partition hypotheses relating to Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Colossians, and the Pastorals. Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 38.

[386] MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 89. See also Keck, *Paul and His Letters*, 19. Keck notes that "the letters of Paul as we have them cannot be simply equated with what Paul himself wrote...what the letters present us with is Paul as he was transmitted by the church."

And so, as is the case when it comes to finding our Archimedean points *between* the various Pauline epistles, readers must also be assured, even *within* an authentically Pauline letter, that we are dealing with a text that is comprised of nothing more and nothing less than Paul's own words.

The problem, of course, is that there is no uniform opinion on the degree to which editorial activity exists in the Pauline corpus, or even whether it exists at all. Indeed, with respect to the latter possibility, Doughty notes that "[a] common assumption, conscious or unconscious, is that recourse to redactional proposals is unnecessary so long as 'satisfactory' explanations can be given for the text as it stands."[387] On the other hand, some scholars express the position that post-Pauline editorial activity pervades each and every Pauline epistle.[388] In fact, even when it comes to the presence of editorial modifications to the "genuine" seven-letter corpus, no epistle is immune from such criticism—as J.C. O'Neill puts it, "Paul wrote some of all, but not all of any of the epistles that bear his name."[389]

While moral concerns relating to interpolation are not of critical importance here, it nonetheless bears noting that editorial work, while obviously not a neutral exercise, need neither be viewed as an inherently nefarious one. On the contrary, "[f]or ancient texts in general…Copyists saw themselves as free, even obliged, to alter texts, including not only

[387] Doughty, "Pauline Paradigms," 101. Doughty immediately qualifies this by adding that "a 'satisfactory' explanation may only be one that accords with one's own aesthetic sensibilities or theological proclivities."
[388] See, for example, Doughty, "Pauline Paradigms"; and J.C. O'Neill, "Paul Wrote Some of All, But Not All of Any," in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
[389] J.C. O'Neill, "Paul Wrote Some," 169. O'Neill's view in this regard aligns with that of Dennis MacDonald, who writes that "[t]he text of the Pauline letters that lies behind all the extant manuscripts bears signs of harmonization with the Pastorals. That is, all extant manuscripts of the corpus contain interpolations from a scribe who knew the Pastorals and who altered the text of Paul's own letters to conform with this." MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 86. Nonetheless, of particular note in this regard is the epistle of Philemon, which, due in part to its brevity, is viewed by some as being entirely unredacted. See Victor Furnish, "Pauline Studies," in *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 325. O'Neill, in contrast, specifically argues that "even Philemon was glossed." O'Neill, "Paul Wrote Some," 169.

changes of words and phrases, but also the insertions of additions."[390] Indeed, the earlier-noted example of Marcion bears witness to this phenomenon: Marcion excised material from the epistles that cast the God of Israel in a positive light, believing that these were *inauthentic* interpolations, and that he therefore "had a duty to purge Paul's letters of these sections, so that readers would not be misled by them."[391] Thus, in some instances, at least, the intentions of editors, or interpolators, were apparently aimed at presenting, or recovering, a pristine epistle. This, however, does not change the underlying second-order nature of the activity, and the resulting fact that material added to the texts constitutes a form of pseudepigraphy, insofar as the added material subsists nominally under Paul's name.[392]

The identification of intra-epistle editorial activity, and the methodological approach involved in such identification, has been the subject of great debate. William O. Walker presents both a descriptive and prescriptive account when it comes to the identification of interpolations, and the applicable "burden of proof":

> *In the treatment of any particular passage in the Pauline letters, the burden of proof rests with the argument that the passage is an interpolation; in dealing with the letters as a corpus, however, or, indeed, in dealing with any particular letter in the corpus, the burden of proof rests with any argument that the corpus or, indeed, any particular letter within the corpus (with the possible exception of Philemon) contains no interpolations*. Unless convincing arguments to the contrary are advanced (and, to my knowledge, this has not been done), it is to be assumed, simply on *a priori* grounds, that the Pauline letters, as we now have them, do, in fact, contain interpolations (yet to be identified, of course).[393]

While the assertion might appear bold on its face, it is ultimately quite reasonable, given the state of affairs we are faced with in the study of Paul. For as Walker rightly notes, the Pauline corpus

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[390] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 46.
[391] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 38.
[392] As Martin Rist puts it, "[t]he simplest technique of pseudepigraphy is the interpolation of material, whether very brief or of some length, into the work or works generally accepted as being the authentic writing of an author." "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," 76.
[393] William O. Walker, Jr., "The Burden of Proof in Identifying Interpolations in the Pauline Letters," *NTS* 33 (1987): 611 [emphasis in original]. See also William O. Walker Jr., *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, London, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

that we find in the New Testament "represents not only 'an expanded Paul' (some of the letters are pseudonymous) and 'an abbreviated Paul' (some of Paul's letters are missing) but also—and this is the crucial point—'an edited Paul.'"[394] We do not, of course, possess any papyrus that is believed to contain the original, pristine, first production of any of the letters; the earliest chronological data we have is that contained in P46. Accordingly, the presumption of interpolated material is sensible. Indeed, the words of Heather MacNeil concerning more contemporary writings apply equally, if not more so, to the Pauline correspondence: "contamination, in the form of printing-house punctuation, begins to creep in as soon as a literary text moves from manuscript to print."[395]

Admittedly, it is one thing to make a general assertion about the presence of interpolations in the Pauline texts. It is quite another to set out a concrete method for identifying them. This, of course, leads back once more to the aporia that is at the heart of this study: in order to identify authentic Pauline material, we first must have a Pauline Archimedean point. With respect to interpolated material, this realization is echoed to some extent by Walker, who writes that "in the case of particular passages in the Pauline letters, subjective judgments...will inevitably result in differing conclusions regarding the actual presence or absence of interpolation."[396] Yet notwithstanding this, and recognizing that there is no foolproof method for uncovering interpolations, Walker outlines a variety of considerations relevant to identifying interpolative activity[397]:

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[394] William O. Walker, "The Burden of Proof": 611. See also Leander E. Keck and Victor Paul Furnish, *The Pauline Letters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 50. In relation to "missing" letters, it is worth giving consideration to certain references in the Pauline correspondence: 1 Cor 5:9, 2 Cor 2:4, 2 Cor 7:8, and Col 4:16. As noted earlier, these might be classified as "known unknowns," to use Donald Rumsfeld's terms.
[395] Heather MacNeil, "Archivalterity: Rethinking Original Order," *Archivaria* 66 (2008): 5.
[396] Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 63.
[397] Walker in part builds upon the work of Winsome Munro, "Interpolation in the Epistles: Weighing Probability," *NTS* 36 (1990): 431-443. Munro boils the issue down essentially to three criteria: "ideological or ideational, having to do with differences in the tendencies of the content; stylistic, having to do with differences in linguistic patterns

- text-critical evidence (earlier manuscripts, citations from other writers, etc.) suggesting that earlier versions of a text differed from the current form of the text.[398]
- contextual evidence suggesting that the text is out of place in its location, or does not fit within the greater context of the writing.[399]
- linguistic evidence indicating that certain vocabulary or stylistic features of the text differ from what is purported to be a distinctively "Pauline" norm.[400]
- ideational evidence suggesting that the substantive content in a passage is "un-Pauline," or inconsistent with ideas that are elsewhere identified as Paul's.[401]
- comparative evidence indicating that the substantive elements of a passage derive from a source that is non-Pauline.[402]
- Situational evidence indicating that a passage does not fit within the general occasion or purpose of the text.[403]
- Motivational evidence suggesting an explanation as to why a particular passage may have been added to the original text.[404]

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and vocabulary usage; and contextual, consisting in a clash of ideological or stylistic elements, or the interruption of flow, or the repetition of a catch word or phrase before and after a possible redactional addition." Munro, "Interpolation in the Epistles": 433.

[398] Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 66-63. See, for example, Rom 16:25-27, which is not attested to in all of the early manuscripts. As Walker notes, "[t]he verses apparently were not in the texts used by Marcion (second century), Priscillian (fourth century), or Jerome (fourth/fifth centuries)." Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 67-68.

[399] Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 73-76. It has been argued, for example, that the general argument in 1 Cor 14 is awkwardly interrupted by the injunctions concerning women in verses 34 and 35, which in fact disrupt the progression of the text.

[400] Again, using 1 Cor 14:34-35 as an example, Walker argues that "much of the vocabulary [in verses 34-35] appears to be not only non-Pauline but also distinctively post-Pauline." Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 79-80.

[401] See Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 82. Contrast, for example, 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Cor 11:3-16. Interestingly, Walker later argues that 1 Cor 11:3-16 is an interpolation.

[402] See Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 83-85. Once again, 1 Cor 14-34-35 is cited as an example, as the restriction on the role of women is one characteristic of later developments in Christianity, aligning well with 1 Tim 2:11-12.

[403] With further reference to 1 Cor 13:34-35, Walker notes that "[a]part from this passage and perhaps 1 Cor. 11:3-16 (which is regarded by some as a non-Pauline interpolation), there is nothing whatsoever in the undisputed letters to suggest that the activity of women in the church was regarded as a problem by Paul or during Paul's lifetime." Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 85.

- Locational evidence suggesting a reason as to why a passage may have been placed in a particular location in the text.[405]

Granting consideration to such issues, Walker himself posits that the following passages are interpolations: 1 Cor 2:6-16, 10:1-22, 11:3-16, 12:31b-14:1a, 14:34-35; Rom 1:18-2:29, 13:1-7, 16:25-27; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; and 1 Thess 2:13-16.[406] For our purposes here, I wish to look briefly at two of these: 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Thess 2:13-16.

1 Cor 14:34-35: A Misogynistic Interpolation?

While it is not necessary here to dwell on the minutiae over arguments for or against certain interpolations, it is worth taking stock of two particularly notable examples frequently addressed in Pauline scholarship. The first of these, 1 Cor 14:33-36, is often argued to be an interpolation on the grounds that it awkwardly interrupts a discourse on the matter of prophecy, and is inconsistent with the discussion in 1 Cor 11:5-16. Given such considerations, some argue that 1 Cor 14:33-36 was "added later by another hand to make Paul's view [on women] conform to that expressed in 1 Timothy."[407]

Regardless of whether or not this position is correct, one can locate at least a couple of preconditions or assumptions that are pivotal to its foundation. For example, viewing 1 Cor 14:33-36 as an interpolation usually involves a corollary commitment to the notion that 1 Timothy was pseudonymous. Granted, this may appear uncontroversial to some, but it is

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[404] See Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 85-86. Walker cites 1 Cor 14:34-35 again, noting that this is rather similar to the situational evidence suggesting an interpolation.
[405] See Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 86-88. With 1 Corinthians, for example, the egalitarian tone of the letter could be tempered, and better aligned with 1 Tim 2:11-12, through the insertion of 1 Cor 14:34-35. See also Dennis Ronald MacDonald, "A Conjectural Emendation of 1 Cor 15:31-32: Or the Case of the Misplaced Lion Fight," *HTR* 73 (1980): 265-276. This will be addressed immediately below.
[406] Walker does not intend to claim that his list is exhaustive, noting that "[i]t is my own judgment that there are surely more—perhaps many more." Walker, *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, 90.
[407] Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 14. See also Harding, "Disputed and Undisputed," at 151; and MacDonald, "A Conjectural Emendation of 1 Cor 15:31-32."

nonetheless important here: if 1 Timothy is authentic, then the substance of 1 Cor 14:33-36 is no longer anomalous. On the contrary, the injunction is entirely consistent with that expressed in 1 Tim 2:12 ("I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent").

The second and perhaps related precondition to this position concerns the aesthetic of the passage. To most who possess an egalitarian mindset, the content of 1 Cor 14:33-36 (and certainly 1 Tim 2:12) reflects a distasteful and obsolescent patriarchal sentiment, one that is inimical to contemporary sensibilities concerning gender equality. This is problematic for many. For unless one is inclined to jettison the passage from the archive of authentic Pauline data, one is compelled to admit that Paul's stance on the role of women in the church is one that is reprehensible to the modern-day egalitarian.[408]

Some may find it difficult to reconcile this admission with deeply-ingrained views on Paul's "genius." Indeed, some may even find it inconsistent with other seemingly egalitarian Pauline material, particularly Gal 3:28 ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"). John Temple Bristow, for example, asserts that Paul "sought to establish a sense of equality within the membership that was found nowhere else in the ancient world, so that masters and slaves and males and females would all be one in Christ Jesus."[409] He argues that Paul's authentic message in this regard was distorted by later thinkers:

> The writings of the church fathers—especially those of Augustine—deeply influenced the thinking of subsequent generations, to the point that these became authoritative for the Church, next to the Bible itself. And eventually the teachings of the philosopher Aristotle were accepted as almost infallible. These two giant sources of ideas—Augustine the Christian saint and Aristotle the pre-Christian philosopher—provided male church

[408] Notably, Jorunn Økland stands as one who rejects the theory that 1 Cor 14:33-36 is an interpolation, in part because she does "not share many of the presuppositions concerning the unique early Christian egalitarianism that make the interpolation arguments work." Jorunn Økland, *Women in their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (London: Continuum, 2004), 151.
[409] John Temple Bristow, *What Paul Really Said About Women* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 110.

> leaders with a sexual bias that naturally led them to interpret Paul's writings in a like manner of thought.[410]

Bristow goes on to argue that the final blow was struck by Aquinas—it was through the work of Aquinas that "the deprecation of womanhood was completely infused into Christian theology, based upon the authority of Aristotle and Augustine and Aquinas's interpretation of the words of the apostle Paul."[411] Thus, Bristow's vindication of Paul casts a host of others—Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas—as misogynistic villains. In fact, the issue goes beyond mere misinterpretation for Bristow—for insofar as Paul was ostensibly "used as authority to prohibit that which he advocated [i.e. egalitarianism]…Paul the apostle has been slandered and is still being slandered today."[412]

A few points can be made with respect to Bristow's approach. First, it bears noting that he gives no consideration to the possibility of interpolations, and accepts all of the canonical epistles, including the pastorals, as authentic.[413] Yet more important is Bristow's selection of Gal 3:28 as a type of hermeneutic key—it is Gal 3:28 that essentially provides the underlying authority, or theological underpinnings, for interpreting all other passages in the letters about women. This reliance on Gal 3:28—and a particularly generous philogynic *interpretation* of it, to be sure[414] —coupled with the overall thrust of Bristow's thesis, reveals his particular proto-

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[410] Bristow, *What Paul Really Said*, 114.
[411] Bristow, *What Paul Really Said*, 117.
[412] Bristow, *What Paul Really Said*, 114.
[413] Bristow, *What Paul Really Said*, 69.
[414] In fairness to Bristow, Gal 3:28 is frequently cited as a proof-text for Paul's (and by extension Christianity's) broad commitment to egalitarianism, whether in terms of social status, ethnicity or gender. See, for example, Boyarin, *A Radical Jew*. With respect to the issue of gender, however, some scholars are much more reserved in their conclusions on how the passage ought to be interpreted. As Willi Braun writes, "Paul apparently laid down a reconstituted charter for gender equality with his claim that in the Christ associations 'there is neither male nor female, for…all are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28; cf. *2 Clem*. 12:1-6). But…one ought here to pay close attention to the gender of the *one*. The Greek masculine εἷς, rather than the gender-neutral ἕν, expresses the gender quality of the Pauline *one*. That is, the Pauline ἀνδρόγυνος—if that is how we would think of the 'one'—neither levels gender hierarchy nor erases the value distinction between male and female." Willi Braun, "Physiotherapy of Femininity in the *Acts of Thecla*," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honor of Peter Richardson*, ed. M. Desjardins and S.G. Wilson (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 209. See also

Paulusbild as one that must be in step with contemporary views on gender equality. For Bristow, it is impossible to cognize Paul as anything other than a progressive, egalitarian, thinker. Recognizing these preconditions, Bristow's claims arguably reveal much more about his proto-*Paulusbild* than they do anything else.[415]

A similar kind of analysis can be applied to the views of Craig Keener. While aware of arguments for viewing 1 Cor 14:33-36 as an interpolation, Keener views it as authentic, and like Bristow, argues that careful exegesis of the passage results in an interpretation that exculpates Paul from any charge of misogyny. According to Keener, "Paul addresses his argument in this particular letter to the specific situation in Corinth, and…his injunction to silence cannot contextually mean more than that the women should not ask ill-conceived questions during public lectures…the inspired principle he articulates calls us to order in worship, not to the silence of women."[416] As with Bristow, Keener appears rather intent on presenting a version of Paul that aligns with contemporary views on gender equality. Relatedly, his Paul clearly enjoys a certain authoritative eminence, and in the course of maintaining that eminence, Keener's Paul must be resistant to any critique of his intellectual progressivism.

Dennis Ronald MacDonald, "Corinthian Veils and Gnostic Androgynes," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. Karen L. King (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 285.

[415] As alluded to earlier, this is a phenomenon frequently observed in studies on the historical Jesus. It is little different in the case of Paul. As Concannon notes, "[r]ather than finding Paul 'as he really was,' we keep finding Pauls who are really like us, or at least enough like us that we can deploy them in whatever political or theological battle is most pressing to us. Are you concerned about inter-faith dialogue and multiculturalism? I've got a New Perspective Paul for you. Are you troubled by American Empire? Here's an anti-imperial Paul. Worried about the troubling implications of neo-liberalism and capitalism? No need to fear! Paul was a proto-Marxist revolutionary who theorized a radical, political universalism." Concannon, "Paul is Dead."

[416] Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 88. Similarly, in discussing the status of 1 Cor 14:33-36, C.K. Barrett suggests that if it is *not* an interpolation, it must be the case that the injunction was issued in response to "disorder of the Christian assembly in Corinth," and that "in the interests of peace and good order he could command the women to be silent." C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 332. This interpretation again evidences a scholarly impulse to temper any potential backlash on Paul as the author of the passage.

A problem with these approaches is that they involve (and necessarily demand) a significant creative hermeneutic effort, especially in light of their dual aims. For they seek not only to maintain the authenticity of the passage, but also to vindicate Paul's character as a paragon of contemporary virtue. In this regard, the words of Stanley Stowers about interpolations in Romans apply equally to the attempts to exculpate Paul from any charges of misogyny:

> [S]cholars have thought rigorously, but they have not questioned their fundamental model for reading Paul's letters…and for construing his thought. They accept the received scholarly view with certain modifications and point out the contradictions. Then they try to provide explanations for Paul's inconsistency and incoherency. At some point the explanations become so ridiculous, however, that one has difficulty imagining a historical Paul.[417]

Bearing this in mind, the prospect of simply excising 1 Cor 14:33-36 affords scholars another means of preserving Paul's character, without having to employ hermeneutic gymnastics. Hans Conzelmann, for example, argues that the passage is indeed an interpolation:

> This self-contained section [33b-36] upsets the context: it interrupts the theme of prophecy and spoils the flow of thought. In content, it is in contradiction to 11:2ff, where the active participation of women in the church is presupposed. This contradiction remains even when chaps. 11 and 14 are assigned to different letters. Moreover, there are peculiarities of linguistic usage, and of thought. And finally, v 37 does not link up with v 36, but with v 33a. The section is accordingly to be regarded as an interpolation…Those who defend the text as original are compelled to resort to constructions for help.[418]

Similarly, Jerome Murphy-O'Conner asserts that verses 34 and 35 are "not a Corinthian slogan…but a post-Pauline interpolation," which "reflect the misogynism of 1 Tim 2:11-14 and probably stem from the same [non-Pauline] circle."[419]

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[417] Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 6.

[418] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 246. Conzelmann's final remark here is essentially a much more charitable iteration of the previously-mentioned concern of Stowers.

[419] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 811. While Barrett does not unequivocally assert that the passage is an interpolation, he entertains the possibility that it was "added later as a marginal note…at a time when good order was thought more important than

Clearly, then, the option of discarding 1 Cor 14:33-36 can also be rather appealing to those who view the passage as inimical to Paul's reputation. Nonetheless, whether one is inclined to accept the passage as authentic (and then work to rationalize it), or excise it, either approach implicates the tacit role of the Pauline scholar. For the Pauline scholar first possesses a proto-*Paulusbild*, one that is either friendly or hostile to the sentiment expressed in 1 Cor 14:33-36, and this proto-*Paulusbild* informs, or helps establish the measure for what content is or is not representative of the authentic Paul.[420]

1 Thess 2:13-16: An Anti-Jewish Interpolation?

Another purported interpolation of note is found in 1 Thess 2:13-16, a passage of rather significant importance. For as Birger Pearson notes, "[i]n any discussion of the origins of Christian 'anti-Semitism,' among a number of New Testament passages that can be adduced, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 will inevitably be brought to the fore."[421] In this passage, we find reference to the Thessalonians suffering "the same things from your own countrymen as [the Judean *ekklēsiai*] did from the Jews" (1 Thess 2:14). The letter goes on to indicate that it was the Jews "who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all men by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved—so as

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the freedom of the Spirit. There is much to be said for this view, especially since the language of these verses can be explained as based upon 1 Tim. 2:11 f." Barrett, *Corinthians*, 332.

[420] While 1 Cor 14:33-36 is one of the most notable examples of a possible interpolation in the Corinthian correspondence, there are certainly a host of others, all of which are subject to the same types of concerns regarding the conditions that precede any identification of an interpolation. With respect to 1 Corinthians, a variety of passages have been scrutinized as possible interpolations: 2:6-16; 7:29-31; 10:1-22; 11:3-16; 11:23-26; 12:31b-14:1a; 15:3-11; 15:21-22; 15:29-34; 15:31c; 15:44b-48; 15:56. In the case of 2 Corinthians, many scholars take the view that the epistle is a composite, as chapters 1-9 and 10-13 were initially discrete letters that were later assembled. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor summarizes the argument for this position, writing that "[t]here is wide agreement…that 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13 cannot have belonged to the same letter. It is psychologically impossible that Paul should suddenly switch from warm, generous celebration of reconciliation with the Corinthians (chs. 1-9) to savage reproach and sarcastic self-vindication (chs. 10-13)." Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "1 and 2 Corinthians," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 83-84. See also Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 38-51; and Harding, "Disputed and Undisputed," 150.

[421] Birger A. Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation" *HTR* 64 (1971), 79.

always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!" (1 Thess 2:15-16).

The authenticity of this passage is frequently considered in commentaries on 1 Thessalonians. The problem, of course, lies in the palpable disdain found in the author's discussion of the Jews. This contemptuous tone is difficult to reconcile with references in other letters where Paul's self-identification as a Jew is rather plain. As Philippians, for example, makes clear, Paul is quick to acknowledge his Jewish identity, being "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless" (Phil 3: 5-6). Another acknowledgement is found in Galatians, where Paul writes that "[w]e ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law" (Gal 2:15-16). Yet it is in Romans where we find words that are seemingly the most inconsistent with 1 Thess 2:13-16. Chapters 9-11 contain a detailed soteriological discussion concerning both the Jews and the Gentiles—there we find the following remarks:

> I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.
> […]
> Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved. (Rom 11: 1-2; 25-26)

On the one hand, some scholars conclude that when carefully scrutinized, 1 Thess 2:13-16 in fact reveals no inconsistency with passages such as those found in Rom 9-11. Karl Donfried, for example, writes that "the relationship between 1 Thessalonians and Romans is not one of

inconsistency. In Romans, Paul does not negate what he said in his first letter but augments it; 1 Thessalonians does not contain the last word concerning Israel…while not denying what he has said previously, he adds some new information in Rom. 11.25-32, namely, that at the end God's mercy will be extended to Israel in a mysterious way and all Israel will be saved."[422] Relying in part on a frequently-accepted theory concerning the chronological composition of the letters (with 1 Thessalonians being first, and Romans being last), Donfried thus claims that 1 Thess 2:13-16 contains only a small part of larger argument, one that is more fully developed in Romans.

Other scholars not only affirm the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16, but go to great lengths to explain or rationalize the harsh tone of its author, and work to distance Paul from the anti-Judaic overtones that appear quite palpable in passage. For example, Leon Morris notes that "we should notice that Paul's anger is the anger of a man with his own nation, with his own people. He is very much part of them, and he sorrows for their fate…He is grieving over the effects of their misdeeds."[423] In a similar vein, Victor Paul Furnish writes that "this passage is not, strictly speaking, 'anti-Jewish,' and it is certainly not 'anti-Semitic.' It is not anti-Semitic, because Paul—himself a Jew—is not indicting the Jews for *being* Jews; and it is not anti-Jewish, because he is not issuing a general indictment of the Jews as a class. He is alleging particular ways in which certain Jews have opposed the purpose of God: by hostility toward the Judean churches, killing the Lord Jesus, and the prophets, and hindering his mission to the Gentiles."[424] As with the approaches of Bristow and Keener in connection to 1 Cor 14:33-36, these approaches to 1

[422] Karl Paul Donfried, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2002), 207-208.
[423] Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1959), 92.
[424] Victor Paul Furnish, *1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 73.

Thess 2:13-16 permit Pauline scholars to have the best of both worlds: the disputed material is both retained as authentically Pauline and simultaneously stripped of its egregious implications.

Other scholars, however, reject the authenticity of the passage. Earl J. Richard, for example, concedes that "[i]t is difficult…to explain the tone of the entire passage in Pauline terms,"[425] going on to conclude that it is most certainly an interpolation, as "[t]he author is post-Pauline and is writing from a Gentile-Christian perspective which one should characterize as anti-Jewish. The plight of the Jew, following the destruction of Jerusalem and later dispersal from Palestine, is seen as the result of divine retribution finally being meted out for centuries of hostility toward God and the whole of humanity."[426]

Again, consideration of 1 Thess 2:13-16 as an interpolation involves the same sorts of conditions as referenced in connection to 1 Cor 14:33-36. (And to be sure, these passages are merely two out of a host of disputed passages in the Pauline correspondence).[427] Indeed, it is

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[425] Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2007), 124.

[426] Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 127. While Richard outlines a number of concerns with the passage, what is particularly troubling to him is that "one can hardly accept the accusation as Pauline that the Jews' objection to the Gentile mission is motivated by a deep-seated 'hatred for the human race.'" Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 126. This subject is routinely dealt with in monographs on the Thessalonian correspondence. See, for example, Robert Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); and Todd D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbors* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[427] Another well-known Pauline interpolation theory concerns chapter 16 of Romans. As Robert Jewett notes, "[i]t is likely, but far from generally accepted, that 16:17-20 and 16:25-57 are interpolations reflecting later interpretations of the letter." Jewett, "Romans," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul,* ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91. See also Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 49. Pervo argues that "if Romans 16 is part of the original letter, then vv. 17-20a are probably secondary…The material disrupts a long list of greetings to and from, a list that began in 16:3 with greetings to persons and resumes with greetings from persons in v. 21." See also Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 17-23. The most radical view is attributed Walter Schmithals, who, as summarized by Longenecker, argues that like 2 Corinthians, "Romans is a conflation of two letters written by Paul at separate times and with different purposes to Gentile believers at Rome: 'Letter A,' which consisted of material now found in 1-4; 5:12-11:36; 15:8-13; 'Letter B,' which contained materials now in chapter 12; 13:8-10;14:1-15;4a;15:5-6,7,14-32;16:21-23;15:33—though with numerous non-Pauline glosses and interpolations present almost everywhere throughout these two letters." Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 17. See Walter Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem* (Gutersloher: Gerd Mohn, 1975). Somewhat comparably, O'Neill argues that a number of interpolations can be located in Romans, particularly in the later chapters—he writes, "Paul was neither the author nor the collector of 12.1-21; 13.8-14; 15.1-13, much less of 13.1-7 and 14.1-23. There is nothing here that bears the stamp of his mind: no argument, no logical chain of connections, no personal address, no appeal, no sorrow or anger, no fears, no hopes; instead, the reflections of generations, wisdom distilled into aphorisms, though worn smooth by exchange from hand to hand and generation" J.C. O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (England:

vital to recognize that identification of seemingly problematic passages as authentically Pauline, or as interpolations, involves multiple assumptions. First and foremost, it again requires the investigator to formulate, as a foundational point, a functional Pauline Archimedean point, which then permits one to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic material.

Yet even beyond this, a difficulty in assessing interpolation theories is that they tend to presuppose a level of consistency on Paul's part, where Paul's thought on one issue or another either remained ossified, or was at least mutable or developing in a way that can be logically traced or reconstructed. In short, interpolation theories necessarily assume that some semblance of consistency or underlying order can be gleaned from the texts. This, however, is seemingly a problematic starting point, given, as C.S.C. Williams suggests, that "Paul could be brilliantly inconsistent."[428] Yet even this terse, puckish assertion evidences some of the underlying concerns of this study, as the remark itself simultaneously assumes an Archimedean point, attests to intra or inter-inconsistencies in the Pauline corpus, and evidences the persistent eminence of Paul as a source of theological insight.

Penguin Books, 1975), 194. The letter to the Philippians can be cited as a further example, as many view it as a composite. According to Pervo, for example, the identification of this as a partitioned epistle is evidenced by the fact that the letter contains too many conclusions. As Pervo comically summarizes, "[t]his contributes to [a] stylistic problem. Joy is a good thing, but excessive exhortation to exhibit this quality produces a cloying effect. Weariness is a more likely result than happiness." Consequently, Pervo views Philippians as a compilation, comprised of 4:10-20 (Letter A),1:1-3:1, plus elements of chapter 4 (Letter B), and 3:1b[2]-3:21/4:1 (Letter C). Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 44.

[428] C.S.C. Williams, "I and II Corinthians," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1962), 958. Somewhat comparably, Jacob Jervell asserts that "Paul is personally and as a theologian a most complex and manifold man," implying, it seems, that the difficulty in comprehending or harmonizing the epistles is simply a hallmark of Paul's inherent genius. Jervell, "The Unknown Paul," 56. Albert Schweitzer offers a much more biting indictment of scholars on the matter of Pauline inconsistency: "The odd thing is that [Pauline scholars] write as if they understood what they were writing about. They do not feel compelled to admit that Paul's statements taken by themselves are unintelligible, consist of pure paradoxes, and that the point that calls for examination is how far they are thought of by their author as having a real meaning, and could be understood in this light by his readers. They never call attention to the fact that the Apostle always becomes unintelligible just at the moment when he begins to explain something; never give a hint that while we hear the sound of his words the tune of his logic escapes us." Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912), 37.

Be that as it may, there nonetheless remains some merit to the pithy remark by Williams. For without discarding letters or portions of them as non-Pauline, the task of trying to re-construct the real Paul is no doubt an arduous one, sometimes demanding Herculean levels of intellectual creativity.[429] Indeed, if nothing else, the sheer volume of literature on Paul attests at least to this. And even on top of the concern over finding consistency or order when it comes to substantive topics in the letters, one must also grapple with whether or not there is a consistency in the rhetorical strategies employed in dealing with those topics. This is recognized by Lovering, who notes that "to some extent, every letter has to be approached on its own terms and not on the basis of patterns observed in other letters,"[430] leading him to ask, "[c]an Paul be expected to have followed a strict method? Is it likely that he would have consulted his earlier letters and remained consistent in form with them?"[431] These questions are also difficult to contend with.

Other Implications of Interpolative Inquiries

As with the evaluation of epistles in their entirety, questions relating to interpolations evidence the presence of a vexing phenomenon. On the one hand, questions about interpolations imply that the epistles, in their pristine state, possessed a certain authority, and thus it was imperative that they were *kept* pristine—even if doing so involved active editorial work, e.g. Marcion.[432] On the other hand, the presence of interpolations also attests to the fact that to some, at least, the Pauline epistles may not have been so esteemed as to preclude their contents from being tampered with. In other words, the letters—and perhaps more important the name of Paul—held

[429] Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 6.
[430] Lovering, "Collection," 31.
[431] Lovering, "Collection," 29.
[432] Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, 38.

a kind of utility, as the contents could be adapted to accord with the aims of the editors. Viewed in this manner, the malleability of the letters also attests to their gradual development as authoritative documents—from useful, yet alterable, embryonic authorities, to canon. As Pervo notes, "[h]ad the letters of Paul been viewed as sacred texts from the outset, they would not have been so extensively edited. As authoritative texts they were both valuable and mutable."[433]

Nonetheless, for the purposes of this study, the critical realization on the general topic of pseudonymity concerns the tacit presuppositions of the reader, or exegete, in filtering all of the data that presents itself as Pauline. For at the outset, with respect to both the letters as a whole and certain passages within them, there is a peculiar circularity, or a sort of feedback loop at work: our proto-*Paulusbilder* govern the admissibility or inadmissibility of Pauline data and engender the production of our functional Pauline Archimedean points. Moreover, our Pauline Archimedean points are the fundamental measure for *all* of our interpretations or reconstructions of Paul, leading in turn to reinforced or refined *Paulusbilder*.

Yet beyond all of this talk of canonicity and pseudonymity lies yet another hurdle when it comes to the task of apprehending the real Paul. What are we to make of the type or genre of writing that for the most part contains Paul's thought (excluding, of course, Acts)? And further, how much can we expect to glean from these writings, given their genre, contextual composition, and relative brevity? These are the next inquiries that must be addressed as part of a prolegomenon to the study of Paul.

[433] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 57.

CHAPTER 4

GENRE, INTENTIONALITY & THE PAULINE CORRESPONDENCE

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that the Pauline data is plagued with questions relating to authenticity—what epistles, or parts of them, were truly authored by Paul? How do we make those determinations, and what are their implications?

Regardless of how we answer these questions, it is clear that any analysis of them involves a type of reflexive exercise, as those of us who engage in the study of Paul bring with us our own predispositions about the Pauline data and Paul himself. Yet admittedly, it is difficult to trace the etiology of these predispositions. Suffice it to say that they germinate in a type of feedback loop, where analyses of Paul are preceded by the conscious or subconscious formulation of a proto-*Paulusbild*, or Pauline Archimedean point, which appraises the data, favouring that which aligns best with the already-existing *Paulusbild*, and filtering out or compartmentalizing that which is does not. It is from this state of affairs that our studies proceed, as we generate interpretations of Paul that are either more or less consistent with our pre-understandings of Paul, or pre-existing *Paulusbilder*, or result in certain modifications to them. Accordingly, the construction of a *Paulusbild* is not only the product that follows from our endeavours to get Paul right— paradoxically, it is also the starting point.[434]

Yet concerns over authorship, and whether the material we have on Paul is representative of his authentic thought, form only one part of the problem when it comes to scrutinizing the conditions in which our studies of Paul take place. Another significant issue involves the burden we place on the letters in terms of the epistemological expectations we impose on this material.

[434] In identifying this as a paradox, however, I do not intend to denigrate this state of affairs as something to be transcended. Rather, our proto-*Paulusbilder* are inescapably a reflection of our prejudices, which—recalling the earlier-noted words of Gadamer—"are simply conditions whereby we experience something—whereby what we encounter says something to us." Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 9.

A vital point of consideration in this regard concerns the *genre* of the material that comprises most of the Pauline archive.[435]

The Epistolary Genre

The relevance of the epistolary genre to the study of early Christianities is difficult to overestimate. This is evidenced in a rather sobering assertion by Stanley Stowers:

> We possess more than nine thousand letters written by Christians in antiquity. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven writings in the New Testament take the form of letters. Two of the remaining works, the Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse, contain letters within them. If the interpreter is willing to understand early Christian letters as Greco-Roman letters, they can provide a fascinating window into the world of those Christians.[436]

Stowers is no doubt right in noting that the study of these epistles can prove tremendously helpful in attempts to understand or reconstruct the socio-historical conditions and nascent theologies of early Christianities. Yet at the same time, one ought to refrain from demanding too

[435] I use the qualifier "most" here on account of Acts, which was discussed in chapter 2. While I will not dwell on the point in this chapter, my concern over the epistemological expectations placed on the material is one that can also be applied to Acts. Granted, it depends on how one is inclined to frame or understand the narrative. Understood as a historical account, I would concede that in connection to Paul, it purports to perform a dual function: it provides an account of the historical Paul, and serves also as an attempt to get Paul right. If one is inclined to understand Acts in that way, and is also comfortable placing its composition at an early date, the epistemological concerns in this chapter may recede somewhat. They are not diminished, however, if one sees Acts in an altogether *different* light—not as an early work that can be reliably used as a source for grasping the historical Paul, or getting Paul right, but rather as a later hagiographic sort of production. Insofar as my own view tends towards the latter position, the concerns in this chapter are not mitigated through any appeal to Acts.

[436] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 15. I would note here that for the most part, I am not interested in focussing on the issue of genre in terms of various types of epistles (e.g. personal or official), their formal structure (e.g. salutation, body, and farewell), their rhetorical strategies (e.g. parallelisms or metaphoric imagery), or their purposes (e.g. pastoral or paraenetic). This has been investigated in tremendous depth by a host of scholars, e.g. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*; Stirewalt Jr., *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography*; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*; and Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *Paul the Ancient Letter Writer: An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016). Perhaps foremost in this regard is Stowers's *Letter Writing*, which is likely the most influential work on this issue in recent decades. Another recent study of note is that by Paul Robertson, who compares Paul's letters to certain works by Epictetus and Philodemus. Robertson's approach focusses on what he describes as "socio-literary spheres," a phrase that refers to "a grouping of texts that share significant elements of style, content, and social purpose, and whose authors usually share significant elements of education, social location, and social practice." Paul M. Robertson, *Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature: Theorizing a New Taxonomy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 16.

much of these letters. For as Michael Trapp notes, there is at times a lack of epistemological restraint when it comes to scholarly reliance on them:

> It is an intriguing aspect of twentieth-century scholarly history that much of the impetus to the study of [papyrus letters], above all the letters, has come from historians of Early Christianity, seeking insight both into the humble social circumstances of the first Christians, and into the language and forms of early Christian writing (in which the letter played such an important role). This particular interest has had its advantages (in the sheer volume of scholarly time and energy it has caused to be devoted to the letters), and also its disadvantages, as scholars have forced the material in pursuit of their own very specialized ends.[437]

Such "disadvantages" can certainly be identified when it comes to the study of Paul. For even though it is hackneyed in Pauline scholarship to identify the Pauline letters as "occasional"[438]—i.e., that the correspondence was written to particular audiences and for particular purposes—this frequently amounts to only a nominal sort of recognition of their genre, with little sustained reflection upon the implications of this observation.

In one sense, our habitual lack of attention to this issue is conspicuously odd, for a rather obvious reason: none of us are Paul's intended readers, and are not the intended recipients of *any* of Paul's correspondence.[439] Rather, we are in Thomas E. Jenkins's words "'accidental readers': characters who enter the epistolary narrative as fortuitous interpreters, who strive to understand a text's narrative even while being inscribed within it."[440] In another sense, however, it is easy to ascertain a reason behind our tendency to address the occasionality of the letters only

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[437] Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters*, 9.

[438] Similarly, Alain Badiou regards the letters as "interventions." Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism,* trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 31.

[439] One might take some exception to this assertion, and object that the letters were indeed intended for a larger audience. For example, if one grants the authenticity of Colossians, it is worth making note of Paul's directive there to have the letter "read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea" (Col 4:16). I will address this objection in more detail later.

[440] Thomas E. Jenkins, *Intercepted Letters: Epistolarity and Narrative in Greek and Roman Literature* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 1. While I believe that this comment can be applied to the Pauline correspondence, it bears noting that Jenkins's own work is (a) concerned specifically with correspondence that was, or could be intentionally intercepted (i.e. the correspondence was at risk of not reaching its intended recipient), and (b) oriented largely towards Greco-Roman literature that for the most part precedes early Christian writings.

superficially. Owing in no small part to the eminence of the volume within which we find the letters, and its status as a source of a comprehensive theology with universal applicability, our position as "accidental readers" is often forgotten when it comes to the study of the Pauline corpus. Granted, this observation may well be benign, or even irrelevant, in the context of various studies on early Christianities, depending on one's aims.[441] However, in the case of the quest for the real Paul, failure to adequately appreciate the occasional nature of the letters is, I think, a methodological oversight. For in Paul's case, it is imperative that readers of his letters grant sufficient attention to the relevance and implications of their status *as* letters.

"Real" Letters or Epistles?: Adolf Deissmann's Distinction

The study of the Pauline letters *as* letters owes much to the work of Adolf Deissmann, who suggests that "[a]lmost all the mistakes that have been made in the study of St. Paul's life and work have arisen from neglect of the fact that his writings are non-literary and letter-like in character."[442] This remark reflects Deissmann's greatest contribution to the study of the epistolary genre, as he proposes a key distinction between true or "real letters," on the one hand,

[441] The qualification here concerning "aims" is important. For example, if one's focus lies on the underlying veracity of the texts (or portions of them), without any substantive concerns over the attribution of the texts to a particular author, or the desire for consistency or continuity of thought on the part of that author, the methodological worry expressed here may well be diminished.

[442] Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R.M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), 225. Although the spirit of Deissmann's remark aligns with the more general comment by Trapp referenced above, it is worth noting that Trapp in fact specifically identifies Deissmann as an example of one who "forced the material in pursuit of [his] own very specialized ends." Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters*, 9. While the criticism is by no means devoid of merit, I think that Deissmann's work remains laudable for the level of attention it gives to the relevance of genre, even if his own attempt to get Paul right proves difficult to reconcile with his (warranted) insistence on recognizing the letters *as* letters. In this regard, Deissmann gets caught in the same sort of trap as Albert Schweitzer did in his study on the quest for the historical Jesus. In the case of Jesus, Schweitzer critiqued past scholarship on the "historical Jesus," claiming that authors inevitably presented an image of Jesus that aligned with their own subjective theological proclivities. Yet having reached this conclusion, Schweitzer proceeded, for better or worse, along the same path, producing his own image of Jesus as an eschatological figure (though this is not to suggest that construction of Jesus as an eschatological figure is inherently wrong or unsustainable). See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

and "epistles" or "literary letters" on the other. On its face, of course, Deissmann's proposed distinction would seem quite odd. For as Murphy-O'Connor rightly notes, "today no one uses the terms *letter* and *epistle* to imply Deissmann's distinction; they are employed as synonyms."[443] Indeed, in ordinary parlance, the words are generally used interchangeably, as has been the case throughout this study.

Yet despite the befuddling nomenclature, Deissmann's underlying classificatory scheme remains legitimate. As Murphy-O'Connor concedes, "'real letters' and 'apparent letters' [i.e. 'epistles'] remain the basic genre categories."[444] For Deissmann, a real letter is "something non-literary, a means of communication between persons who are separated from each other. Confidential and personal in its nature, it is intended only for the person or persons to whom it was addressed, and not at all for the public or any kind of publicity."[445] While this description of a letter as "non-literary" may appear strange—for as Stowers plainly points out, "[a]ll letters are literature in the very broadest sense"[446]—Deissmann's use of the term is intended to denote a difference between texts that are intended for a private audience, and texts that are plausibly intended for broader dissemination.

In contrast to a "real letter," Deissmann argues that even though an epistle *resembles* a letter in form, it is not a real letter— "[t]he epistle is distinguished from the letter just as the historical drama is distinguished from a piece of actual history, or a Platonic dialogue from a

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[443] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 44.
[444] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer* at 44. See Adolf Deissmann, *Contributions Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions of the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity*, trans. Alexander Grieve (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1901), 16-21. The original German terms used by Deissmann are *Brief* and *Epistel*, a point worth noting on account of the English synonymity between letter and epistle.
[445] *Light from the Ancient East*, 218. As Edgar Goodspeed similarly remarks, "[t]hat Paul's letters were personal and not written for publication is made abundantly clear by many things that they contain." Goodspeed, *Christianity Goes to Press*, 15.
[446] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19.

confidential conversation."[447] Deissmann further explicates the distinction between a letter and an epistle:

> A letter serves separated people instead of conversation. It is an 'I' that speaks to a 'you.' Individual and personal, only intended for the person or persons addressed, it is not destined for publication, even by custom and right it is protected from publication. It is private. The real letter is unliterary, just as is a receipt or a lease. It concerns only the one who has written it, and the one who is to open it, whether the addressee intended to be a single person or a family or other circle of persons. Its contents are as varied as life itself. The letter may be trifling, commonplace, passionate, kindly, trivial, wearisome, and it may reflect human fate or family tragedy, moving the souls of writer and recipient to mountain heights or to abysmal depths.
>
> It is otherwise with the epistle. It is a literary artistic form, like the drama, the epigram, the dialogue. The epistle has only the outer form of a letter; apart from that it is the opposite of the real letter. It intends to interest and influence a public, or even the public. Since to be published is in its very nature, it uses the personal note only to preserve the illusion that it is a 'letter.' If the letter is private, the epistle is a marketable article. It does not go forth to the world as a single sheet of papyrus like the letter, but from the very first it is reduplicated by the slaves of the bookseller in the great city; it is intended to be bought, read and discussed in Alexandria, in Ephesus, Athens and Rome.[448]

While the two-fold classificatory scheme is presented in a rather dogmatic fashion, this should not be taken to imply, necessarily, that Deissmann's model is inherently oversimplistic, or that there is no room for nuance. On the contrary, he recognizes that there are instances where correspondence betrays signs of both a real letter *and* an epistle, making classification more difficult. In the case of the Pauline correspondence, for example, Deissmann ultimately classifies all of the authentic Pauline letters—ten of them, excluding the pastorals[449]—as real letters. In

[447] Deissmann, *Paul*, 10. Elsewhere, Deissmann puts it thus: "An epistle is an artistic literary form, a species of literature, just like the dialogue, the oration, or the drama. It has nothing in common with the letter except its form; apart from that one might venture the paradox that the epistle is the opposite of a real letter. The contents of an epistle are intended for publicity—they aim at interesting 'the public.'" Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 220.

[448] Deissmann, *Paul*, 9-10.

[449] Though it is "not impossible that [the pastorals] have had worked into them genuine elements of a letter or letters of Paul," the pastorals are identified by Deissmann as epistles. Deissmann, *Contributions*, 54. In fact, Deissmann identifies all of the remaining letters contained in the New Testament as epistles, stating "[t]hey belong...to the beginnings of 'Christian literature.'" Deissmann, *Contributions*, 49.

doing so, Deissmann makes particular note of Romans, which he recognizes as a letter that poses some challenges to his classificatory scheme:

> In the case of "Romans" one might at first be in doubt whether it were a letter or an epistle…Yet it is not an epistle addressed to all the world or even to Christendom, containing, let us say, a compendium of St. Paul's dogmatic and ethical teaching. Its mere length must not be held an argument against its letter-like character: there are long letters, as well as short epistles. "Romans" is a long letter. St. Paul wishes to pave the way for his visit to the Roman Christians; that is the object of his letter. The missionary from Asia does not yet know the Western church, and is known to it only by hearsay. The letter therefore cannot be so full of personal details as those which the apostle wrote to churches long familiar to him. "Romans" may strike many at first as being more of an epistle than a letter, but on closer examination this explains itself from the circumstances of the writing.[450]

At its point of composition, then, Deissmann asserts that Romans is a real letter. At the same time, however, he also recognizes that the classification of a particular text as a letter or an epistle does not necessarily remain static. For example, a text that is authored and originally intended as a letter can eventually become a piece of literature, i.e. a published product.[451] Indeed, this is precisely what occurred with the Pauline correspondence—as Deissmann explains, these texts composed as real letters eventually became literary texts:

> [A]ll the [authentic] letters of Paul are real, non-literary letters. St. Paul was not a writer of epistles but of letters; he was not a literary man. His letters were raised to the dignity of literature afterwards, when the piety of the churches collected them, multiplied them by copying and so made them accessible to the whole of Christendom. Later still they became sacred literature, when they were received among the book of the "New" Testament then in a process of formation; and in this position their literary influence has been immeasurable. But all these subsequent experiences cannot change the original character of Paul's letters.[452]

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[450] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 231. Consistent with this, Deissmann states elsewhere that "[t]he least personal of the longer letters of Paul is Romans. But even it is, if the intention of the author is the deciding factor, a real letter, not a literary epistle…Undoubtedly Paul wanted to teach the Roman Christians and he did it in part through the means of contemporary theology. But he does not contemplate the literary public of his day as his readers, nor yet Christendom in general and later generations; he addresses himself rather to a little group of people living in one of the more modest quarters of Rome, of whose existence the general public was scarcely even aware." Deissmann, *Paul*, 23-24. See also Deissmann, *Contributions*, 48.

[451] Deissmann, *Contributions*, 20.

[452] *Light from the Ancient East*, 232-233. Similarly, Deissmann elsewhere asserts that "[i]t appears ...quite certain that the authentic writings of the Apostle are true letters, and that to think of them as epistles is to take away what is best in them. They were, of course, collected, and treated as literature—in point of fact, as literature in the highest

In Deissmann's view, then, it is a mistake to classify the authentic Pauline letters as epistolary texts, or literature, *at their time of composition*. Granted, as the letters were more widely circulated and disseminated, their function evolved, and they gradually became identifiable as literature—indeed, this reification culminated in their canonization as part of the New Testament. Nonetheless, the development of the letters into literature is something that, to Deissmann, must be distinguished from the initial classification of the letters as real letters, which were intended to be read by a limited audience. This led Deissmann to a fundamental conclusion concerning the nature of Paul's correspondence:

> Paul had no thought of adding a few fresh compositions to the already extant Jewish epistles, still less of enriching the sacred literature of his nation; no, every time he wrote, he had some perfectly definite impulse in the diversified experiences of the young Christian churches. He had no presentiment of the place his words would occupy in universal history; not so much as that they would still be in existence in the next generation, far less that one day the people would look upon them as Holy Scripture. We now know them as coming down from the centuries with the literary patina and the nimbus of canonicity upon them; should we desire to attain a historical estimate of their proper character, we must disregard both.[453]

While there is much in Deissmann's words here that ought to be taken seriously by Pauline scholars, there are two points in particular that I wish to address. First, and perhaps foremost, Deissmann emphasizes a tendency in Pauline studies that persists today: we fixate on and engage the letters in the context of their scriptural milieu, a milieu which itself functions to imbue the letters with an illustrious literary aura, displacing their more modest compositional context. This fixation occurs in spite of the uncontroversial recognition that this scriptural, or canonical milieu, is a second-order production, occurring well after the composition of the letters themselves. Yet if we take Deissmann's view to heart, this recognition should compel us to strip the letters of any

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sense, as canonical—at an early period. But that was nothing more than an after-experience of the letters...this after-experience cannot change their original character." *Contributions*, 43-44.

[453] Deissmann, *Contributions*, 44.

artificial literary eminence that they accumulated by virtue of their place in the canon. For insofar as one is engaged in any attempt to construct the real Paul, Deissmann's admonishment is on the mark. Now, granted, it is surely naïve to think the letters can be severed entirely from the canonical location in which we encounter them. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon us to do our best to divest them of any theological or hermeneutical encumbrances that have accumulated as a byproduct of their canonization.

The second point of note in Deissmann's remarks relates to his suggestion that Paul had "no thought of adding a few fresh compositions to the already extant Jewish epistles," and had "no presentiment of the place his words would occupy in universal history." While it is not explicitly stated, it is clear here that Deissmann is operating with a particular *Paulusbild* already in mind—in Deissmann's view, Paul would have given no consideration to his words even being "in existence in the next generation" on account of his imminent eschatological expectations, as expressed in various places in the correspondence (e.g. Rom 13:11-14; 1 Cor 7:29-31; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:13-18). Consequently, if he held such expectations, then the thought of an enduring literary legacy would have been outside of Paul's consideration—indeed, it would have been utterly nonsensical to him. Elsewhere, Deissmann expresses a similar notion, albeit with greater sentimentality:

> That after centuries some of these confidential letters would still be in existence Paul neither intended nor anticipated. His glowing faith never reckoned on coming centuries. Spanning apostolic Christendom, like the sultry sky of thunderous weather, was the hope that the present age of the world was hastening to its close, and that the new world of the kingdom of God was just about to appear. Such a hope does not thirst for earthly fame of authorship, it reaches out longing after the new, the heavenly.[454]

[454] Deissmann, *Paul*, 13-14. Similarly, Doty notes that "except for Romans, I doubt that Paul conceived of his letters surviving him by many years." Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 76. Doty's concession here is interesting, given his views on the intended audience of the letters, a topic I will turn to shortly.

The relevance of Deissmann's views here are for our purposes two-fold. First, his commitment to a *Paulusbild* with imminent eschatological expectations—while certainly well-evidenced in the epistles—further supports a key underlying thesis in this study: all investigations of Paul are preceded by an already-existing image, whether complex or rudimentary, that inform our encounters with his ideas or theology. And insofar as Deissmann's Paul is one who was most certainly devoted to the idea of an imminent eschaton, this proto-*Paulusbild* colours Deissmann's general understanding or construction of Paul, and also his distinction between real letters and epistles.

Second, if we grant Deissmann's distinction between real letters and epistles, and contemplate his related assertion that Paul's letters, at the time of composition, would never have been intended for our eyes, what implications follow from this? In other words, if Deissmann is correct in this regard, how does this realization impact the study of Paul, and more specifically, our use of the letters?

Deissmann himself provides an answer to this question. According to him, the classification of Paul's letters as real letters actually fosters a *greater* understanding of Paul and his thought than we could attain through classifying his letters as epistles. As Deissmann puts it, the "non-literary characteristics [of the letters]…are a guarantee of their reliability, their positively documentary value for the history of the apostolic period of our religion particularly the history of St. Paul himself and his great mission. His letters are the remains (unfortunately but scanty) of the records of that mission."[455] To Deissmann, then, identifying Paul's letters as real letters is in fact a boon to the Pauline reader. As he romantically puts it,"[t]o regard Paul's letters as unliterary takes nothing essential from them, rather it restores to them their original

[455] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 233.

fire. And whoever has seen the sacred flame glowing in these jewels has noticed that they are genuine precious stones."[456]

To be sure, Deissmann's views in this regard again betray a certain comportment he brings with him to his construction of Paul. Specifically, Deissmann's classificatory scheme permits him to distinguish somewhat strangely between "religion" and "theology," with Paul being a herald of the former:

> Paul at his best belongs not to Theology, but to Religion...Paul the theologian looks backward to Rabbinism. Paul the religious genius gazes into the future history of the world. Paul is essentially first and foremost a hero of religion. The theological element in him is secondary. Naïveté in him is stronger than reflection; mysticism stronger than dogmatism; Christ means more to him than Christology, God more than the doctrine of God. He is far more a man of prayer, a witness, a confessor and a prophet, than a learned exegete and close thinking scholastic.[457]

In my estimation, it is at this point that Deissmann's views become far less compelling. For notwithstanding the merit to his underlying distinction between real letters and epistles, it is also clear that he utilized this distinction largely in the services of formulating, as Stowers puts it, "a romantic picture of Paul, a champion of the lower classes and the uneducated, pouring forth his passionate responses to church crises in a way unaffected by literary or rhetorical convention."[458] This Paul was a guerilla theologian, focused on tackling immediate issues arising in his *ekklēsiai*, as opposed to carefully working towards crafting a comprehensive theology characteristic of a corporate religion.[459] To put it with anachronistic bluntness: Deissmann's Paul was clearly a

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[456] Deissmann, *Paul*, 15.
[457] Deissmann, *Paul*, 6. Similarly, Deissmann writes that "[t]he letters of Paul are not so much sources for the theology, or even for the religion, of the period...it is only by a literary misconception that they are looked upon as the documents of 'Paulinism.' The result of their criticism from the standpoint of the history of religion can be nothing more than a sketch of the character of Paul the letter-writer, and not the system of Paul the epistolographer; what speaks to us in the letters is his faith, not his dogmatics; his morality, not his ethics; his hopes, not his eschatology—here and there, no doubt, in the faltering speech of theology." Deissmann, *Contributions*, 58.
[458] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 18.
[459] Deissmann's view here relates again to the transition from Paul as a writer of real letters to Paul as a literary figure. As Deissmann puts it, "[b]ecause the personality of Paul has been transferred from the naïve to the premeditated, from the religious to the theological, his letters also have been transposed from the unliterary to the

Protestant, not a Catholic. This, however, should not be viewed as outlandish in the scholarly milieu in which Deissmann wrote. On the contrary, as Stowers notes, "Deissmann's antithesis between the natural and the conventional was typical of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Romanticism popularized in Deissmann's day."[460]

Stowers is quite right to identify in Deissmann's work a romantic aesthetic. Indeed, Deissmann can scarcely contain his reverence for Paul as the archetype of the gifted, innovative visionary—his works are littered with expressions of adulation, e.g. "Paul must be classed with the few people regarding whom that much misused phrase 'religious genius' can rightly and fittingly be used,"[461] "[i]n the letters of Paul, there speaks to us a commanding personality…every sentence is the pulse-throb of a human heart,"[462] and that Paul was "prophet-like [in] rising above his class and surveying the contemporary educated world with the consciousness of superior strength."[463]

In Deissmann's work one thus finds an interesting picture of Paul. On the one hand, he is rather critical of the literary appropriations of real letters, expressing an aesthetic or ideological distaste for the theologically-oriented motivations of "epistles," and preferring the apparently more pure or pristine thinking reflected in Paul's real letters.[464] On the other hand, it is of course the canonical Paul, or the literary Paul, that Deissmann encounters at the outset. This is a state of affairs that Deissmann reflects on only superficially: while he certainly recognizes that we

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literary class, and by the help of these literary letters the attempt has been made to represent the Apostle as a literary man and a dogmatist." Deissmann, *Paul*, 8.

[460] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19. Deissmann's leanings in this regard are also entirely consistent with his academic postings: he was a Protestant theologian who held posts as professor of theology at the Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg, and later at the Friedrich Wilhelms University of Berlin. See Albrecht Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 42, 84.

[461] Deissmann, *Paul*, 79.

[462] Deissmann, *Contributions*, 53.

[463] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 234.

[464] Deissmann laments that "we are all far too deeply embedded in the merely literary, and even Christianity, become literary, has far too great a respect for rows of folios. Therefore the liberation of Paul's letters from the literary class is easily felt by one and another as a form of depreciation. And for all that, through this very liberation, the historical (and religious) value of those pages is extraordinarily increased." Deissmann, *Paul*, 12.

encounter the letters within their canonical context, or as literary works, and that they require "liberation"[465] from that milieu, he never fully delves into the epistemological implications—and limitations—that follow from the distinction between real letters and epistles. Rather, for him, the distinction in fact purports to somehow foster an *enhanced* understanding of Paul, as it grounds his romantic construction of Paul as a "religious genius" whose thought is entirely distinguishable from the dogma that characterizes a rigid, formal, and more organized religion.

Nonetheless, if one is able to get past Deissmann's flair for the romantic, and his unabashed idolization of Paul, there remains in his work a certain verisimilitude, one that flows directly from his proposed distinction between real letters and epistles:

> The letters of Paul...share with their writer the fate of being frequently misjudged. I do not refer to single cases of exegetical misunderstanding but to a false valuation as a whole. Their intimate peculiar character—their soul—has been misunderstood. They have been regarded as treatises, as pamphlets in the form of letters, in any case as literary productions, as the theological works of the primitive Christian dogmatic theologian.[466]

This realization remains fundamentally important. For even though contemporary scholarship typically acknowledges the occasional nature of Paul's letters, this move is frequently reflexive, and amounts to little more than a cursory acknowledgement of a socio-historical setting in which the letters were composed.[467] It is worth considering whether Pauline scholarship should be obliged to reflect on this issue with greater earnestness.

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[465] Deissmann, *Paul*, 12.
[466] Deissmann, *Paul*, 8.
[467] I should emphasize here that while this move is *frequently* seen in scholarship, I hardly intend to suggest that it is universal. To be sure, there is unequivocally scholarship that, contrary to this assertion, engages precisely in the task of examining the socio-historical setting of the letters. See, for example, Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of 1 Thessalonians and Philippians* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003); Joseph A. Marchal, ed., *The People Beside Paul: The Philippian Assembly and History from Below* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015); Richard Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and Wheller, "Christ as Ancestor Hero." What is characteristic of these works, however, is that they tend to focus on issues that are distinguishable from the task of grasping the real Paul, or the historical Paul. In other words, these studies are generally not fixated on the quest to get Paul right.

Deissmann's Legacy

While contemporary scholarship owes much to Deissmann's distinction between real letters and epistles, it can hardly be said that scholars today adopt his rather straightforward dichotomy. Deissmann's critics claim that his distinction between real letters and epistles involves an oversimplification, given that it is frequently difficult to categorize a letter as entirely private (as is the case with a real letter) or entirely public (as is the case with an epistle).

In an assessment that echoes the earlier-noted remarks by Stowers, William Doty, for example, rightly asserts that "[t]he distinction between literary and non-literary, between epistle and letter, is pressed by Deissmann to emphasize the natural and genuine beauty of the early Christian writings."[468] This leads Doty to conclude that "[t]he absolute distinction between Letter and Epistle should be dropped. Instead we should give specific letters a relative position somewhere in the spectrum of private, intimate letters and open public letters."[469] Stowers himself holds—or at least previously held—a similar view:

> The distinction between private (letters) and public (epistles) does not hold well for either Greco-Roman society in general or for letter writing. Politics, for example, was based on the institutions of friendship and family. It is characteristic for moderns to think of politics as the epitome of the public sphere in contrast to friendship and family, which constitute the private sphere. The distinction between private friendly letters and public political letters is thus a distinction more appropriate to modernity than antiquity…It is difficult to answer the question, "How public or private were Paul's letters? They were addressed to specific communities based in households, were meant to be read to any who were in attendance at the community assembly, and were perhaps copied and circulated to communities in other cities even before Paul's death.[470]

[468] William G. Doty, "The Classification of Epistolary Literature," *CBQ* 31 (1969): 187.
[469] Doty, "The Classification of Epistolary Literature":198. Addressing the milieu in which Deissmann produced his work, Doty rightly observes that Deissmann was reacting to a dogmatic view of Paul as a theologian: "[i]n reaction to this, Deissmann thought of Paul as writing 'religion' rather than 'theology.'" Doty, "Epistolary Literature": 185.
[470] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19.

Such concerns led Stowers to conclude that "[t]he distinction between private and public letters is not very helpful."[471] Stowers's judgment in this regard strikes me as being unduly absolute, and I suspect that it comes across as unequivocal in a way that Stowers did not actually intend. In my view, his underlying critique of Deissmann's theory is more precisely stated thus: the distinction between private and public letters is not very helpful to the task of formulating a robust, well-developed theory on ancient Greco-Roman letter-writing *in general*. This, I think, is a fair assessment. However, if one's focus is on the *Pauline* correspondence, I think that Deissmann's distinction becomes much more difficult to dispose of.[472] For what is key here for our purposes is not the issue of who ultimately read the letters—an issue to which I will comment on further below—but the nature or size of the audience contemplated by the author (i.e. Paul). Bearing this in mind, Stowers's more recent work suggests that he has refined his position on the intended audience of Paul's letters:

> [W]hat we know for sure is that Paul did not envision the kind of institution that became "the church"…Whatever his "assemblies of God" or "of Christ" are, when he wrote 1 Thessalonians he assumed that this movement consisting of a paltry handful of followers in the North East quadrant of the Mediterranean and a few other places would have reached its missionary end during his lifetime when Christ returned from heaven. When he writes Romans, he says that he has fully preached the good news to the Gentiles all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum and that he will soon be ready to go on to Spain by way of Rome in order to finish the mission by going to the West. He clearly does not have the later idea of either an enduring worldwide church or of a mission to convert the whole world.[473]

Granted, Stowers presents this view in the context of an argument that is quite distinct from the focus of this study. Specifically, Stowers makes this claim in the course of calling upon scholars to interrogate presuppositions about early Christian communities, arguing that "writers do not

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[471] Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 19.
[472] To some extent, at least, this is clearly recognized by Stowers, who concedes that "New Testament scholars have found it very difficult to transcend Deissmann's two divisions: 'real' and 'nonreal' letters are still the most important genre categories in use." Stowers, *Letter Writing*, 18.
[473] Stanley Stowers, "The Concept of 'Community' and the History of Early Christianity," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 252.

give evidence and arguments for taking the social formations in question to be highly cohesive with commonality in belief and practice…Appeal to what Paul and other writers thought some population had miraculously become and ideally ought to be is not good evidence for actual community."[474] Regardless, I believe that there are at least two ways in which Stowers's argument relates to the issue of Deissmann's legacy.

First, in entreating scholars to more closely examine our presuppositions concerning the cohesiveness of early Christian communities generally, Stowers of course implicates the communities identified in the Pauline correspondence. In other words, Stowers's mandate demands, among other things, that we scrutinize preconceived notions about the more or less homogenous nature, or identity, of Paul's audiences. For while it is trite enough to assert that some of Paul's missives are aimed at correcting ideas or practices that *Paul* finds concerning, this is not tantamount to knowledge concerning whether, or to what degree, particular beliefs and practices were *uniformly* adhered to between his various *ekklēsiai*. Indeed, we really have a rather limited understanding of what his *ekklēsiai* thought they were doing *from their own perspective*. We have Paul's perspective, of course (subject to the previously-described issues relating to pseudonymity and interpolation). But we don't have any report from his *audience*, other than what Paul himself presents as an intermediary (e.g. 1 Cor 1:11; 5:1; 7:1; 11:18). Thus,

[474] Stowers, "Community": 245. See also Stanley Stowers, "Kinds of Myth, Meals, and Power: Paul and the Corinthians," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 110. William Arnal concurs with Stowers in this regard, writing that "the word [community] implies too much because it carries with it the normally unargued baggage of a Romantic conception of organic, seamless, and essential identity, and one based, strangely, on mental assent to a particular ideological position." William Arnal, "Early Christianity, Early Judaism, and the Study of Religion: Response to Stan Stowers" (paper presented at the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, Toronto, Ontario, 29 May 2017), 7. Further, Stowers's view aligns well with a remark by Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller in the context of the Society of Biblical Literature's Seminar on Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins: "though mythmaking and social formation are linked…one is not simply a reflection, or the cause, of the other. This means that we cannot always infer social formations from the evidence of mythmaking, as though there were some simple way to specify the nexus that links them. It also means that a site for redescription does not have to constitute a single social formation, as though it consisted in some firmly bounded corporate entity." Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, "Introducing Paul and the Corinthians," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 15.

to contemporary readers, Paul is effectively the *only* correspondent. In other words, we have a correspondent in Paul, but are not in possession of true *correspondence*.[475]

This state of affairs is reflected in one of the methodological axioms set out in the Society of Biblical Literature's Seminar on Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins in connection to the study of Paul and the Corinthians: "The collective identity of those to whom Paul writes was never assumed [by the seminar] merely on the basis of Paul's representation of the Corinthians or of his own practices. Whether some Corinthians could be characterized as Pauline 'Christians' was a matter of debate."[476] Turning again to Stowers, one can see an interesting conclusion that follows from such an approach:

> In my view two things are very clear from the evidence of the Corinthian letters: first, Paul very much wanted the people to whom he wrote to be a community, and he held a theory saying that God had miraculously made them into a community "in Christ"; second, the Corinthians never did sociologically form a community and only partly and differentially shared Paul's interests and formation. In my estimation, it is very unlikely that "the Corinthians" ever had any more social organization than households that may have had previous ties with other households and, after Paul, a roughly shared knowledge that Paul wanted them to be an *ekklēsia* in Christ and that he kept telling them that God had transformed them into one.[477]

While I am unconvinced by Stowers's argument that "the Corinthians never did sociologically form a community," I recognize that any objection on this front boils down to an issue of definition, and depends upon one's criteria for identifying the presence of a "community." Nonetheless, this small quibble takes nothing away from Stowers's more important point: regardless of whether or not the Corinthian *ekklēsia* meets a type of sociological threshold for

[475] Or to put the matter more precisely, we are most certainly not in possession of *authentic* correspondence. In including this caveat, I am thinking of the apocryphal Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul, in which the "Corinthians" petition Paul to assist them in dealing with two men, Simon and Cleobius, who are preaching a different message. The apocryphal Third Epistle to the Corinthians forms "Paul's" response to this concern.
[476] Cameron and Miller, "Introducing Paul and the Corinthians," 4.
[477] Stowers, "Kinds of Myth," 109.

establishing a "community," it is certainly the case that the *ekklēsia* was involved in an identity-building project that was very different from what Paul had in mind.[478]

In any event, while the above-noted views are expressed in the context of the Corinthian correspondence, there is good reason to adopt the same type of approach in connection to all of the Pauline letters. For it is integral to keep in mind that even though the letters were generally addressed to various *ekklēsiai*, this is not tantamount to evidence of an audience that possessed ideas and adhered to practices congruent with those advocated by Paul. On the contrary, the contents of various letters, especially those containing admonishments, doctrinal developments, clarifications, or modifications (e.g. 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Galatians), very much indicate otherwise. This is an important point to reflect upon. For we err in simply assuming, anachronistically, that the letters can be framed simply as correspondence from one "Christian" to a group of other "Christians."[479] Wayne Meeks summarizes this point effectively:

> [T]he early Christians put a great emphasis upon unity amongst one another, and the odd thing is they seemed always to have been squabbling with one another over what kind of unity they were to have. The earliest documents we have are Paul's and what do we find there? He is, ever and again, having to defend himself against some other Christians who

[478] Stowers, "Kinds of Myth." See also Jonathan Z. Smith, "Re: Corinthians," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011). More recent corroboration of this position can be found in the work of Mark Wheller, who argues that the Corinthians appropriated Christ as a type of local ancestor hero, and synthesized the notion of the Lord's meal (among other things) with other rites already familiar to the Corinthians. See Wheller, "Christ as Ancestor Hero." As Wheller argues, the result of this synthesis involved the formulation of a hybrid conception of Christ, one surely quite distinct from what Paul intended. Yet despite any dissimilarity in the *results*, the underlying analytic approach of the Corinthians would arguably have been quite similar to what Paul was up to. As Arnal writes, "Paul, now, is understood not as a purveyor of ideas whose content he has received from others and passes along, but as a *bricoleur*, who uses mythic content, forms, and fragments as he encounters them, to construct novel notions that address his own problems, issues, and circumstances." William Arnal, "Bringing Paul and the Corinthians Together? A Rejoinder and Some Proposals on Redescription and Theory," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians*, ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill Miller (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 79-80. In short, Arnal and Wheller both point to a rather palpable dialectic at play in both cases—on the part of Paul as a missionizing *bricoleur*, and on the part of the Corinthians (not to mention Paul's other *ekklēsiai*) as evangelistic hermeneuts.

[479] On the use and presence of this term in early Christianities, Arnal notes that "only three occurrences of the adjective 'Christian' (Χριστιανός), typically presented as an outsider epithet, appear in the New Testament, and they occur in documents that should be dated to the second century: 1 Peter (see Horrell 2007: 361-381), and Acts of the Apostles (on the late dating of Acts, see Mack 1995: 45; Pervo 2006; Tyson 2006). The term does not appear at all in any of the canonical gospels (nor the Gospel of Thomas, for that matter), nor in any of the letters of Paul, whether authentic or pseudonymous." Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition'": 195.

> have come in and said, "No, Paul didn't tell it right. We have now to tell you the real thing." So, it is clear from the very beginning of Christianity, that there are different ways of interpreting the fundamental message. There are different kinds of practice; there are arguments over how Jewish are we to be; how Greek are we to be; how do we adapt to the surrounding culture—what is the real meaning of the death of Jesus, how important is the death of Jesus? Maybe it's the sayings of Jesus that are really the important thing and not his death and not his resurrection.
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> Now, this runs very contrary to the view…which the mainstream Christianity has always quite understandably wanted to convey. That is, that at the beginning, everything was unity, everything was clear, everything was understandable and only gradually, under outside influences, heresies arose and conflict resulted, so that we must get back somehow to that Golden Age, when everything was okay. One of the most difficult things which has emerged from modern historical scholarship, is precisely that that Golden Age eludes us. The harder we work to try to arrive at that first place where Christianity, were all one and everything was clear, the more it...seems a will-o'-the-wisp. There never was this pure Christianity, different from everybody else and clear, in its contours.[480]

Indeed, Meeks's point hearkens back to the nature and meaning of the term *ekklēsia*: while the term clearly denotes multiple individuals, it cannot be taken to assume the existence of an ideologically uniform entity that one tends to associate with the word "church." In other words, as Arnal states, "[t]he concept homogenizes the groups to one another," leadings us to assume, problematically, that "one 'church' must be the same as the next, more or less."[481]

The point here then is this: we tend to possess an unwarranted assuredness about the identity of Paul's audiences. Typically, we identify or cognize them as uniform "Christian" communities, and view Paul's correspondence as pleasant or harsh interventions—as occasions for him to articulate his ideology in general (e.g. Romans), to clarify certain ideas (e.g. 1 Thessalonians), to offer stern admonishment (e.g. 1 Cor and Gal), or simply to offer thanksgiving or encouragement (e.g. Phil).[482] And in those instances where Paul's tone is particularly severe

[480] Wayne Meeks, "Paul's Mission and Letters," https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/diversity.html.
[481] Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition'": 210.
[482] As Paul Schubert writes, "every letter of Paul was written under the stress of a more or less severe, critical issue. That this is true of the Corinthian letters and of Galatians is obvious. That it also applies, though perhaps less dramatically, to Romans, I and II Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon, and Colossians, some reflection will show.

(e.g. 1 Cor and Gal), a reflexive hermeneutical position involves the claim that Paul's temperament is understandable—even defensible—on the grounds that he is dealing with delinquent *ekklēsiai* that have deviated from a kind of established, normative, theological identity. Rarely is there an alternative proposed: that the *ekklēsiai* were in the *process* of eking out their particular identities, and as such, were plausibly both ideologically or theologically relatable *and* distinguishable from one another. Indeed, bearing in mind the paucity of information we have on what, precisely, Paul outlined to the various *ekklēsiai* in the first place, it is hardly surprising that such a project was occurring on the part of the *ekklēsiai.* Given the exiguous nature of Paul's initial contact with them, there were lacunae that they had to fill in, or *try* to fill in, with or without Paul's help or endorsement.[483] This is perhaps most clearly evidenced in the case of 1 Thessalonians, where Paul references his "labor and toil" alongside the Thessalonians while he preached to them (1 Thess 2:9). Granting serious consideration to this statement, Richard Ascough convincingly argues that Paul essentially preached to the Thessalonians while they were all "on the job," so to speak:

> Presumably Paul and the Thessalonians worked at the same trade, or at least trades within the same general area, thus facilitating contact between Paul and the Thessalonians. And it was while at work that Paul preached the gospel and presumably made his initial converts. Thus, the core of the Thessalonian community comprised handworkers who shared Paul's trade…As an itinerant worker, Paul probably worked in one of the local shops at Thessalonica. Since Paul was there "night and day," presumably he would have used the opportunity to share his gospel message with fellow workers and customers, the

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Thus we see Paul in every letter in a tense, though spontaneous, pose, preoccupied with specific problems." Paul Schubert, "Form and Function of the Pauline Letters," *JR* 19, 4 (1939): 376.

[483] I am speaking here not in connection to the interpretation of the *letters*, but the content of what Paul preached to his *ekklēsiai* at the outset (excluding, perhaps, Romans). Accordingly, the task of filling in gaps here is one that is altogether different from what occurs with us—our encounter with gaps is a separate matter altogether, and relates to issues concerning a text and the reader. In that context, Wolfgang Iser, for example, suggests that textual gaps in fact "function as a basic inducement to communication," evidencing a "fundamental asymmetry between text and reader, that give rise to communication in the reading process." Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 109.

> former being the most likely candidates for proselytizing. Such workers were probably already involved in some form of voluntary association.[484]

This being the case, it is entirely understandable that the Thessalonians would have been presented with a somewhat sparse and underdeveloped theological picture. For the context in which Paul, an itinerant worker, encountered the Thessalonians did not afford the luxury of careful exposition of, or sustained reflection on a comprehensive theological system (to say nothing of the suggestion that Paul did not have one to offer in the first place—indeed, perhaps he had no need or desire to, owing to the imminence of the eschaton). This state of affairs is completely consistent with the fact that the Thessalonians subsequently encountered problems—namely the deaths of members—that they were unable to formulate theological solutions to. Thus, it is precisely their lacking a well-developed theology that occasions their request for more information. Understood in this fashion, 1 Thessalonians evidences that any notion of a developed, uniform, and resilient "Christian" identity among the *ekklēsiai* is, at the very least, a presumption that needs to be carefully scrutinized in Pauline scholarship.[485]

Added then to Deissmann's distinction between real letters and epistles, the epistemological implications of this point sink in further. For at the outset, we are mistaken to assume that the letters are addressed to *ekklēsiai* that are theologically homogenous between themselves, and are distinguishable only locatively. Nor for that matter is it evident that these

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[484] Richard S. Ascough, "The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association," *JBL* 119, 2 (2000): 315.

[485] Building on Ascough's article, Arnal posits the theory that Paul's missionizing strategy follows what Arnal describes as a kind of "*Fight Club* model," where Paul "attends meetings of [a trade association of artisans] when he is in town simply by virtue of occupational affinity," and "manages…to redirect this already extant club from the worship of its original patron deity to that of Christ/Yahweh." The result is the formation of a "subgroup within this association at the instigation of Paul's agitating," (i.e. an *ekklēsia* "founded" by Paul), even though it is technically the case that "we can also recognize that the group as a group was not founded by Paul at all." Arnal, "Bringing Paul and the Corinthians Together?" 85-86. While I find the substance of Arnal's theory compelling, I confess that I have much difficulty in visualizing it in terms of *Fight Club* imagery. This is likely a failure on my part, borne out of a visceral (yet uncritical) attachment to a portrait of Paul, drawn from the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (i.e. a short, bald man), which leads me to envision an individual who bears a greater physical resemblance to George Costanza than Tyler Durden (in the form of either Brad Pitt or Edward Norton).

ekklēsiai were presented with a reasonably well-developed theological picture in the first place. Rather, what is apparent in the critical Pauline corpus is that there is no ideological, corporate singularity,[486] and no strong evidence of a comprehensive or robust theology being presented to the various *ekklēsiai*.[487] As noted earlier, the letters are simply "interventions," which at best reveal only a fragmentary Paul.

Yet even apart from any problems that relate to our assumptions about the identification of the *ekklēsiai*, there exists a second issue or question of significance, one that has been touched on earlier, and is encapsulated also in Stowers's earlier-noted consternation regarding the identification of Christian communities: who were Paul's intended recipients in the first place? More specifically, was it Paul's intention to write to an audience beyond the immediate recipients of his correspondence? And can we as contemporary readers plausibly identify ourselves as an intended audience, or at least an intended second-order audience?

These sorts of concerns are reflected in an old Peanuts cartoon, where in speaking with Charlie Brown about the study of Paul's letters, Linus confesses: "I must admit it makes me feel a little guilty…I always feel like I'm reading someone else's mail."[488] Although the remark is obviously intended to be humorous, it actually points to an entirely legitimate issue that deserves careful contemplation. For even though virtually all scholarship recognizes the Pauline correspondence as occasional, this is frequently presented as little more than a perfunctory recognition, one that is thereafter set aside, so that we can proceed with mining the epistolary data in the services of our endeavours to get Paul right. By and large, this sort of approach is

[486] It is to be granted, however, that this was very likely the *intention*, given, as Stowers states, that "Paul wanted them to be an *ekklēsia* in Christ and that he kept telling them that God had transformed them into one." Stowers, "Kinds of Myth," 109.
[487] While Romans can be pointed to as an exception in this regard, I think it possible to resist that view. Moreover, an appeal to Romans would remain only an exception. None of the other letters patently evidence situations in which *ekklēsiai* were presented with well-developed theologies.
[488] http://www.gocomics.com/peanuts/2011/11/04.

methodologically questionable, and serious reflection upon this state of affairs involves a two-fold inquiry: 1. the *intended* audience contemplated by Paul in the letters; and 2. the epistemological burden we place on Paul's letters *as* letters.

Dealing first with the former issue, it is necessary to articulate why, exactly, a concern over Paul's intended audience is important, or why it is relevant to studies aimed at grasping the real Paul. In contrast to Linus's statement, the problem is not so much whether there is, or should be, any *moral* concern that leaves us with a kind of unease when reading letters that were addressed to other recipients. While this is an interesting theoretical issue, to be sure,[489] it is also one long moot in Pauline studies: practically speaking, a corollary of Paul's canonization is that any moral concern over our status as unintended readers is rendered trivial. For even though the *historical* Paul may have originally directed his correspondence to particular *ekklēsiai*, the *canonical* Paul speaks not to these individual *ekklēsiai*, but to a much wider audience—the canonical Paul speaks universally.

A by-product of Paul's canonization however, is that there tends to be little serious, sustained consideration in scholarship as to whether the letters were ever intended to be read by an audience beyond those to whom Paul originally directed them. My concern, then, lies simply with how this issue is inadequately contemplated in Pauline studies.

What we generally find in scholarship—when the issue is addressed at all, that is—are casual and ultimately quite vacuous justifications for the ubiquitous appropriation or universal application of Paul's letters. This phenomenon can be observed in a variety of cases, and is often guised as a critique of Deissmann's epistolary model. Doty, for example, suggests that "[s]ince Deissmann wrote, New Testament scholars have come to realize that Paul's letters are by no

[489] Of some relevance in this regard is the work of Jenkins, who presents a fascinating analysis on "intercepted" letters in antiquity, discussing, among other things, the various implications of this activity and the preventative measures employed by ancient epistolarians. See Jenkins, *Intercepted Letters*.

means 'private personal letters' in the usual sense of that term. Rather, they were written to communities of Christian believers for use in their common life, and they were written by Paul in his self-conscious capacity as an official representative of early Christianity (as an 'apostle')…Paul's letters were intended for public use within the religious gatherings."[490]

While Doty's assertion surely holds a visceral allure to those of us already accustomed to reading Paul, it is nonetheless rather devoid of substantive foundation, and is questionable on at least two grounds. First, as Stowers has pointed out, it is problematic to think of the Pauline *ekklēsiai*, let alone early Christianities generally, as homogenous entities.[491] Given this, Doty's reference to "communities of Christian believers for use in their common life" implies a general level of applicability that is incongruent with the particular, limited, and interventionist character of the letters. Second, the issue of what Paul represented *himself* to be is one that contributes nothing to the question of who his intended *audience* was—to paraphrase Galatians 2:6, Paul's *self*-identification makes no difference to our identification of his *audience*.[492] In fact, Paul's self-identification as an apostle does not relate at all to the identification of his intended audience, but rather to his status as an authoritative figure. Accordingly, appealing to Paul's "capacity as an official representative of early Christianity" does not grant us some type of

[490] Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 25. Doty goes on to suggest that, since Deissmann, "[s]ubsequent scholarship has reached something of a balance between treating Paul's letters as purely occasional, contextual writings, directed only to specific situations, and as attempts to express a Christian understanding of life which had ramifications for theological expression beyond the particular historical situation." Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 26.

[491] See also Arnal, who points out, "we continue to act as though 'Christianity' represents a coherent, sensible, and informative classification for *what* we are studying when we study the writings of the New Testament, and this assumption continues to circumscribe what we regard to be thinkable." Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition'": 194-195.

[492] I am certainly *not* suggesting, however, that the relationship between Paul's self-identification and his audience has nothing to do with how the Pauline letters are *interpreted*.

license from Paul for us to read the letters; rather, it serves simply as one explanation (among others) for our persistent interest in the Pauline correspondence.[493]

In any event, Doty's view is consistent with a general disposition that is conspicuous in Pauline studies. Similar to Doty, Murphy-O'Connor writes—again in the course of criticizing Deissmann—that even though "Paul wrote to specific people for a limited purpose…Nonetheless [the letters] were meant for public consumption (Col 4:16). In this respect they are epistles."[494] Murphy-O'Connor's assertion involves a curious but vital appeal to a single statement in Colossians: "And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea." While the statement certainly points to a readership beyond the Colossian *ekklēsia*, the directive here can hardly be taken to suggest that the epistles were meant for "public consumption" in the manner alluded to by Murphy-O'Connor. Indeed, Col 4:16 attests neither to an intended universal audience, nor even a "Christian" audience for that matter (if such a thing could even be contemplated at that point). The directive in Colossians is not a directive to read the letter to audiences other than Laodicea, nor is the directive stated in such a way as to render it applicable also to *other* correspondence (a consideration that would also implicate, by extension, concerns over the chronological composition of the letters, i.e. what Pauline correspondence was available at the time that Colossians was composed). Rather, the passage contemplates only a reciprocal reading of two

[493] While this issue, and the issue of authority broadly, will be addressed in the next chapter, it is worth adding here that Gamble's view in many respects echoes the sentiment of Doty: "It may be objected that because we have to do in this case with correspondence addressed by Paul to individual churches, we should not seek here general practices for the dissemination of literature. This objection arises from a misconception of Paul's letters and too narrow a definition of literature. Certainly Paul did not fancy himself as an author or think of his letters as having an especially literary value. Nevertheless, his letters cannot be construed with Deissmann as personal letters directly analogous to the private letters found among the papyri. Paul's letters have an official character that distinguishes them from private letters. He writes as an authoritative person: in the prescripts of his letters he invariably calls attention to his apostolic status and assumes his apostolic authority throughout." Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 95. As is the case with Doty, I think that Gamble misconstrues Paul's references to his apostolic status as proof, somehow, that he intended for his letters to reach a broader audience.

[494] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer*, 44.

pieces of correspondence—the letter to the Colossians is to be read in the Laodicean *ekklēsia*, and the letter to the Laodiceans is to be read in the Colossian *ekklēsia*. It is not an injunction, nor even a license, for Paul's letters to be read, *en masse*, in broad settings.

Beyond such considerations, moreover, one must also give some thought to whether the instruction even comes from Paul in the first place. For any appeal to Col 4:16 as a justification for widespread reading of Paul's correspondence also assumes, of course, that Colossians is not a pseudonymous writing.

Despite these concerns, arguments such as those by Doty and Murphy-O'Connor are rather commonplace in scholarship. A third example can be found in the work of Collins, who presents an even more elaborate justification for insisting that Paul's correspondence was intended for wide consumption:

> [D]espite an English translation (Revised Standard Version, New American Bible) that is more precise than the Greek text necessarily calls for (the Greek *anagnōsis* literally means "reading," not necessarily the "reading of the Scriptures"), 1 Timothy 4:13 suggests that Christian writings were read in the liturgical gatherings of the Christian churches. The use of the second person plural in 1 Timothy 6:21 (cf. 2 Tim 4:22; Tit 3:15) suggests that the document is intended for a larger audience than the beloved co-worker of Paul to whom it is apparently addressed. The presence of liturgical greetings at the close of 1 Thessalonians (5:28) as well as at the end of so many other letters in the New Testament suggests that these letters were destined for public reading before an assembled body of the brethren. Thus it is difficult to take issue with the claim that Paul's letters, whether authentic or not, were intended by their author for public reading.[495]

The conclusion here by Collins involves no small level of hermeneutic maneuvering. As with the above-noted reference to Colossians, we again face, with the pastoral epistles, debates over whether Paul truly authored these at all. Yet even apart from this preliminary consideration, there is nothing in these verses that involves an instruction to read *Paul's letters* to a broad audience, beyond the immediate addressees. Granted, Collins is quite right in noting that 1 Thess 5:28

[495] Raymond F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 11.

implies that the "letters were destined for public reading before an assembled body of the brethren."[496] Indeed, there is no question that the Pauline epistles, excepting the pastorals, are expressly addressed to either *hagiois* (i.e. "holy ones," or "saints"), *adelphois* (i.e. "brothers, or "brethren"), or the *ekklēsiai*, or *klētois* (i.e. "those called") at certain locations. As such, these letters are directed to *groups* of people, rather than individuals. [497] This, however, is an obvious and ultimately rather mundane observation. More important, it in no way establishes that the letters were intended for a "public" that was any broader than the particular individuals or *ekklēsiai* identified in the correspondence. Yet this is precisely what is implied in the views of Collins, Doty, and Murphy-O'Connor. Indeed, their arguments suggest, essentially, that by virtue of the original recipients being communities of "Christian" believers at large, the letters are therefore bequeathed to us—we are somehow the heirs of the original recipients, and are therefore equally identified as the rightful recipients of the correspondence.

These arguments are far from compelling. In my estimation, they are animated by an unexpressed, subconscious kind of protectionism, one that tacitly functions to legitimize our appropriation of the letters for manifold purposes (including, among others, the task of getting Paul right). This legitimizing move involves an odd sort of transmutation, as the "public" character of the canonical Paul gets retrojected back onto Paul the letter writer. To put it in distorted biblical terms, the "humble" Paul who speaks "face to face" with his audience (2 Cor 10:1) yields to the literary Paul, who speaks "openly and unhindered" (Acts 28:31). A key implication of this shift is articulated by Stowers:

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[496] 1 Thess 5:27 is even more explicit in this regard: "I adjure you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren [*adelphois*]," i.e. to all of the members of the Thessalonian *ekklēsia*.

[497] Even Philemon is no exception in this regard, as the letter is directed not only to Philemon, but also to certain other individuals (Apphia and Archippus), and more generally, to the *ekklēsia* that meets at Philemon's house (Phil 1:2).

> [A] change in the context of shared meaningful activity in which a text is used means a change in the codes of its interpretation, a change of genre. The most obvious change of genre for Paul's writings in the ancient church is that from occasional letters of various sorts to that of scripture addressed to the universal church or to humanity rather than to individual congregations at specific times and places.[498]

As Paul Schubert notes, this sort of distinction, between occasional letters and scripture, or between Paul the letter writer and Paul the literary figure, is highly relevant to how we approach and classify the material:

> At some definite point within [a] wide framework of Hellenistic epistolography the Pauline letters have genetically their own proper place, their native habitat, in regard to both their function and form. No one would hesitate to search for and assign this place to them if they had recently been recovered from an Egyptian rubbish pile, or if we could, methodologically, disregard the genetically irrelevant form and function which they have assumed and discharged through the centuries as a distinct and distinguished part of the New Testament canon.[499]

The problem, of course, is that it is virtually impossible to disregard the form and function that the letters have assumed. Consequently, the general position held by Doty, Murphy-O'Connor, and Collins tends to be dominant in Pauline studies: by and large, there is a sense in which the letters *are* somehow directed at us.

When scrutinized, however, one can readily identify the cracks in this position. For rather than proving somehow that Paul intended for a readership beyond the immediate addressees, scholarly attention to this issue actually evidences something else altogether: namely, that there is not only a deeply entrenched attachment to the letters as repositories of *universal* wisdom, but also the sense that there is a public ownership of them. This is neither surprising, nor, in the case of the latter, necessarily erroneous. For insofar as Paul the letter-writer has become the canonical Paul (or the "published Paul," as it were), his work has, as Deissmann puts it, been "raised to the

[498] Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 10.
[499] Paul Schubert, "Form and Function of the Pauline Letters": 367.

dignity of literature,"[500] engendering a *de facto*, culturally-embedded ownership of it. Nonetheless, it bears noting that our appropriation of Paul's correspondence is, in a sense, an unlicensed appropriation—at the very least, it is an appropriation not contemplated by the author. And regardless of whether this leads to any feeling of moral culpability on the part of us as readers (as it does for Linus), earnest reflection on this issue ought to lead, at the very least, to an important hermeneutic concession: Paul the letter-writer does not intend to speak to us.[501] Rather, Paul the letter-writer is appropriated, or unwittingly conjured by *us*, through the medium of Paul the literary figure.

In stating this, however, let me be clear: I am not suggesting that proper recognition of the occasional nature of the letters ought to *preclude* us from appropriating them. Obviously, the fact that Paul's letters were not intended for us hardly deters us from reading them and utilizing them for a variety of purposes. Indeed, even if one expressed any kind of moral objection to this state of affairs, it would practically come much too late, given the entrenchment of the canonical Paul. The Pauline Pandora's box has long been open. Moreover, the issue of Paul's intended audiences is one that must be distinguished from the issue of how various readers *encounter* Paul. In this regard, it is worth considering the view of Stowers in connection to the Roman correspondence:

> Pauline scholarship is in great need of conceptual discipline regarding the question of audience or reader. Literary theory has developed several approaches to the problem of the reader…Three basic categories are compatible with a wide range of literary theories and approaches: the empirical reader, the encoded explicit reader, and the encoded implicit reader.

[500] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 232-233.
[501] Returning once more to Deissmann, he notes that Paul in fact "had no wish to speak to us at all," bearing in mind that Paul "does not think of the literary public of his time, or of Christians in general, as his readers; he appeals to a little company of men, whose very existence, one may say, was unknown to the public at large, and who occupied a special position within Christianity." Deissmann, *Contributions*, 48, 53.

> If we presume that the letter reached Rome and was read, those readers are empirical readers. I too am an empirical reader. Empirical readers can represent vastly different periods and cultural assumptions. The encoded explicit reader, on the other hand, is the audience manifest in the text. When Paul writes "all the gentiles, including you yourselves" (1:5) and "yes I am speaking to you gentiles, however" (11:13), this is the reader explicitly inscribed in the text. Other examples of the explicit reader in the text include direct address of the audience in the second person plural and direct reference in the first person plural as well as the expression "brothers." The encoded implicit reader in some ways resembles what scholars call the ideal or competent reader. One conceptualizes this reader by asking the question, "What assumptions, knowledge, frame of reference, and horizon of expectations does Romans implicitly assume in order to be well or fully understood?" The letter, for example, implies an audience that understands something about Jewish scripture and the logic of its use and authority in Judaism or certain types of Judaism. At some points this assumption about the audience's knowledge of scripture may become an aspect of the explicit reader…Normally one expects continuity between the explicitly inscribed and the implicitly encoded reader. Both, however, must be sharply distinguished from empirical readers of any sort. The encoded audience is a feature of the text itself.[502]

The distinctions laid out by Stowers here are fundamentally important to the study of Paul generally, and are particularly relevant to the foregoing discussion concerning the intended audience of the Pauline correspondence. Indeed, the view of Stowers leads us to some pivotal observations.

First, the preceding discussion has focussed on what Stowers terms the "encoded explicit reader." In other words, discussion of Paul's intended audience refers ultimately to the encoded explicit readers. These are the readers who were within the direct contemplation of the author, i.e. the intended recipients of Paul's letters.

Second, and recognizing, as Stowers notes, that "[n]ormally one expects continuity between the explicitly inscribed and the implicitly encoded reader," we cannot—and need not, for that matter—assume that Paul's audiences, i.e. the encoded *explicit* readers, were also the encoded *implicit* readers (or the ideal or competent readers, to put it in other terms). For example, remaining within the context in which Stowers writes, we need not assume that

[502] Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 21-22.

references to Jewish scripture in Romans means that the encoded explicit readers actually *understood* anything about "the logic of its use and authority in Judaism." Granted, they may have. But it is also entirely possible that Paul's references in the letter were part of a rhetorical strategy, one aimed at eliciting *acceptance*, *concession*, or *agreement* on the part of the encoded explicit readers. This, however, does not necessarily equate to *comprehension* or *understanding* on the part of the readers. This distinction between concession and comprehension relates to the issue of authority, and is eloquently articulated by Bruce Lincoln:

> In practice, the consequentiality of authoritative speech may have relatively little to do with the form or content of what is said. Neither officers' commands nor experts' opinions need to be artfully phrased or even make sense in order to yield results. (Indeed, the authority of the latter may be enhanced by a certain incomprehensibility).[503]

With this in mind, it becomes quite plausible to suggest that Paul's intended encoded explicit readers (his intended audiences) were *not* encoded implicit readers. Indeed, one could well argue that contemporary empirical readers are in some respects *better* positioned as encoded implicit readers than were Paul's original audiences. At the very least, owing to the greater literary context within which we find the Pauline correspondence—i.e. the canon in general, and the New Testament canon in particular—our natural hermeneutic instinct is to interpret the Pauline correspondence in a manner that supplements, synthesizes, or even harmonizes it with the other

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[503] Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 4. In the case of the Pauline correspondence, I would suggest that one can locate an even better example of this phenomenon in Galatians, where Paul adapts Hagar and Sarah as allegories for the law and faith, respectively. In the course of his argument, Paul allegorically associates Hagar with the Mosaic law, leading him to claim that she is "in slavery with her children," i.e. Ishmael (Gal 4:24-25). Building on this, Paul writes: "But what does the scripture say? 'Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.'" (Gal 4:30). Were anyone in his audience familiar with the tale of Hagar and Sarah, Paul's hermeneutic leap in this regard would likely have been met with incredulity—Paul's reference to the injunction to "cast out the slave and her son" actually comes from Sarah herself (glossed by Paul as "scripture"), and the severity of the injunction is mitigated by God, who says to Abraham, "whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you…I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring" (Gen 21:10-13). Given this, it is entirely plausible that in the case of the Galatian correspondence, the encoded explicit readers were *not* encoded implicit readers possessing a deep familiarity with the Judaic texts Paul referred to. Rather, Paul's appeal to those texts fulfilled the sort of function outlined by Lincoln. As an aside, it is worth noting the way in which God counsels Abraham in this passage. In advising him, essentially, to listen to his wife, one cannot help but note the dissonance between God's admonition and the Pauline injunctions found in 1 Cor 14:33-36 and 1 Tim 2:11-12.

early Christian literature that canonically surrounds it. And to be sure, this instinct operates reciprocally—the non-Pauline material of the New Testament is often tacitly interpreted through the lens of the Pauline correspondence. On no topic is this more evident than that of soteriology. For with the synoptic gospels, textual indications of Pauline soteriology are at best scant, and in certain cases arguably even absent entirely.[504] However, given the canonical milieu of these works, or the physical, literary proximity of the Pauline correspondence to the gospels, there is frequently a reflexive sort of "reading in" of Pauline soteriology that occurs in our interpretations. As such, the relation between the Pauline correspondence and the gospels is ultimately rather symbiotic: interpretation of the Pauline correspondence occurs through the lens of the gospels, and interpretation of the gospels is informed by the Pauline correspondence. Thus, despite any hermeneutic dangers that might lie in our habitual synthesis or harmonization of New Testament material, this activity arguably engenders a more robust interpretative construction of the material, evidencing, as noted, that we are perhaps hermeneutically "advantaged," so to speak, by our status as empirical readers.

Consequently, it is plain that our status as empirical readers, rather than encoded explicit readers, does not automatically impede our ability to formulate effective understandings of texts that are not intended for us. On the contrary, it can in some respects be beneficial. But at the same time, it is *also* necessary to concede that our status as empirical readers forecloses to us

[504] In the case of Matthew, for example, Graham Stanton states that "Matthew's gospel as a whole is neither anti-Pauline, nor has it been strongly influenced by Paul's writings; it is simply un-Pauline." Graham Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 314. With respect to Mark, H.J. Combrink notes that "[i]t is often said that Mark 10:45 and 14:24 are the only references to the salvific meaning of the death of Jesus in Mark, and that these references were influenced by the early Christian tradition." H.J. Bernard Combrink, "Salvation in Mark," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 33. In relation to Luke, Gert Steyn writes that "Luke's soteriological emphasis differs…particularly so from that of Paul…Scholars have searched in vain for sayings about the atonement power of Jesus' death…No direct soteriological significance is drawn from Jesus' suffering or death (Fitzmyer 1981, 219; Cadbury 1958, 280-282; Talbert 1966, 71-82). His death is not the *cause* of salvation, but serves rather as an *example* of salvation (Zehnle 1969), 420-444)." Gert J. Steyn, "Soteriological Perspectives in Luke's Gospel," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 68.

epistemological possibilities that would have been open to the intended recipients of the letters, the encoded *explicit* readers.

Intentionality and Epistemological Expectations

Building on this then, we turn once more to the second vital point concerning the occasional nature of Paul's letters: the epistemological burden we place on Paul's letters *as* letters. In identifying this concern, however, it is important to note that it can prove problematic in varying degrees—or even not at all—depending on the nature of one's research endeavour. For example, if one is simply mining theological content from Paul's letters in the interests of comparing, combining, or aligning it with *other* theological data, drawn from non-Pauline sources (biblical or otherwise), one might find it relatively easy to set aside preoccupations with the occasional nature of the correspondence.[505] Likewise, if one is using the letters as a resource for uncovering a certain socio-historical situation, the letters might well be up to that task, too.[506] These are but a

[505] See, for example, Brevard S. Childs, who claims that "the canonical interpreter…strives critically to discern from its kerygmatic witness a way to God which overcomes the historical moorings of both text and reader. The difference between the methods [of a historical critical interpreter and a canonical interpreter] does not lie in an alleged polarity between tradition and criticism, but between the nature of an analytic approach and one which is consonant with the theological function of a normative religious canon." Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 52. Kent D. Clarke effectively summarizes Childs's position thus: "[Childs] denies that a book's theological validity depends upon the correct determination of its historical authority. Childs protests that theories of pseudonymity, like all critical interpretations, are concerned with the construction of the historical author's 'real' intentions and purposes, despite the fact that they have been purposely concealed, rather than with the kerygmatic witness of the text and the significance of the portrayed 'canonical' author." Clarke, "The Problem of Pseudonymity," 460. While I am unconvinced by the comment regarding intentions being "purposely concealed," I nonetheless believe that Childs is right in making the underlying distinction that he does. That said, other than making note of this distinction, I do not think that its implications are of particular relevance to the context of *this* study—here, I am concerned to some degree with the former (issues of "'real' intentions and purposes"), and not at all with the latter ("the kerygmatic witness of the text").

[506] While I have alluded to this in passing previously, I am thinking here of studies that effectively "de-center" Paul, as Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre puts it. See Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, "Historical Approaches: Which Past? Whose Past?" in *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*, ed. Joseph A. Marchal (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012). Such studies are concerned with the historical Paul or the real Paul only tangentially, and instead use the letters for other research interests, e.g. reconstructing, in various respects, the *Sitz im Leben* of his *ekklēsiai*. See, for example: Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*; Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*; Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations*; Marchal, *The People Beside Paul*; Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklēsia*; and Wheller, "Christ as Ancestor Hero."

couple of examples, to be sure—there are no doubt a host of research endeavours that arguably have little or no need to dwell on issues of genre or intentionality as it relates to the Pauline correspondence.

The situation differs, however, when it comes to studies concerned with grasping the real Paul. For I think it is fair to say that those research projects are generally governed by Schleiermacher's understanding of hermeneutics as "the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly."[507] If this is one's aim, one must reflect upon questions of genre and intentionality, and carefully deliberate on whether we over-encumber the letters with our epistemological expectations.

Returning once more to Deissmann, we can see how such a concern is entirely justified. For what Deissmann asserts specifically about the Corinthian correspondence is no less true of the other Pauline letters:

> The great difficulty in the understanding of it is due to the very fact that it is so truly a letter, so full of allusions and familiar references, so pervaded with irony and with a depression which struggles against itself—matters of which only the writer and the readers of it understood the purport, but which we, for the most part, can ascertain only approximately. What is doctrinal in it is not there for its own sake, but is altogether subservient to the purpose of the letter.[508]

Deissmann's remarks underscore an important consideration about the dual ways in which Paul's letters are "occasional." As Joseph Marchal puts it, "the letters were written occasionally in at least two senses of the word *occasional*: not systematically but every now and then, and for a specific reason or purpose."[509] One cannot avoid coming to appreciate the significant epistemological implications of this realization: insofar as we undertake to apprehend the real Paul, or get Paul right, we are in possession of a woefully inadequate data set. For even apart

[507] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 3.
[508] Deissmann, *Contributions*, 47.
[509] Marchal, "Asking the Right Questions," 4-5.

from the issues of pseudonymity and interpolation discussed earlier, we are faced also with the monumental task of trying to construct a reasonably cogent theology or thought-system with recourse only to epistolary odds and ends. Zetterholm articulates this very same point:

> By writing letters, [Paul] answered questions and set about correcting matters regarded as unsatisfactory. Because of this, it is quite difficult to reconstruct a systematic theology with the Pauline letters as a point of departure. Most of the letters at best offer limited glimpses of what Paul thought about certain matters.[510]

Pervo echoes a similar, though more forcefully-stated sentiment:

> One must…take with utmost seriousness the function of letters. They are irrevocably dialectical in character. The letter is an appropriate genre for a movement that understands itself to be in the process of formation, on the way…The ephemeral and ad hoc character of these epistles says something about the totality of the theological enterprise. The difficulty of accepting this leads some to wish to treat Paul's letters as if they had been dropped from the sky on tablets of stone. That is a serious error. These letters are exploratory probes.[511]

While Pervo's reference to the letters as "exploratory probes" is perhaps a somewhat cavalier descriptor for letters that (for the most part) concern matters of significant gravitas, I think that his comments are nonetheless quite on the mark. But if he is right about the true function of the letters, what then are the implications on us as readers of Paul?

On the one hand, I believe that appreciation of this state of affairs actually becomes a scholarly boon in some research endeavours. For example, a certain fixation on the occasional nature of the letters functions as the lifeblood of socio-historical studies on the various Pauline *ekklēsiai*. In fact, the occasional nature of the letters renders them *particularly* well-suited to those studies aimed at examining the variety of socio-historical sites and situations to which they apply. Indeed, these texts are arguably more manageable candidates for socio-historical inquiries

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[510] Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul*, 4.

[511] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 24-25. Pervo goes on to elaborate on this point later, asserting that "Paul had not attempted to present an immutable gospel carved upon stone tablets. His writings were occasional, models for dealing with pastoral problems rather than catchall solutions. These letters were often obscure, especially to those who were not part of the generating discussion." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 229-230.

than are the gospels (though this is hardly to suggest that the latter are immune to such examinations).

On the other hand, sustained reflection on the occasional nature of the letters is the bane of any study concerned with grasping the real Paul. For the task of getting Paul right involves a desire to understand Paul's thought as systematic and concrete. We seek to cognize Paul on a general level, as a thinker who has something to say universally—something to say to *us*. To those engaged in *this* kind of enterprise, it is analytically and epistemologically perilous to become fixated on the occasional nature of the letters. For those seeking to grasp the real Paul, it is simply not possible to abide with the notion of Paul as a disjointed and sporadic writer. The letters must be plucked from their occasional milieu. This sentiment is consistent with Arnal's assertion that Pauline scholars "still speak of a corpus of Pauline letters, with the seven authentic letters read by most scholars as an integral unity, thus homogenizing each letter to the situation and circumstances of the others."[512] Indeed, this is precisely what occurs. The Pauline correspondence in all of its particularity is sacrificed in order to foster the production of a general account of Paul.[513]

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[512] Arnal, "The Collection and Synthesis of 'Tradition'": 209. I should note here that while I am specifically speaking of whatever correspondence one holds to be genuinely authored by Paul—and in this regard I lean towards adhering to the seven-letter critical corpus mentioned by Arnal—the point does not necessarily depend on any particular conclusion regarding the authenticity of the epistles. For example, even if one admits the pastorals into evidence as authentic letters, this does not alter anything relating to the underlying occasional nature of the letters. Granted, the pastorals contain instruction that presents itself as more unequivocally normative and universal than what is found in the other letters, and is thus arguably more conducive to the project of grasping the real Paul. But the fact remains that the immediate addressees of the pastorals remain individuals: Timothy and Titus. As such, one is again sucked back into acknowledging that the letters are particular, occasional, interventions. In stating all of this, however, I would also add that my own view on this matter is quite different. Following scholars such as MacDonald (among others), who convincingly argues that the pastorals were second-century compositions aimed in part at opposing certain teachings, I concur with those who view the pastorals as one of the earlier attempts to place Paul into the realm of the universal (or "domesticate" him, as MacDonald puts it). See MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*, 89. As Pervo writes, "[t]he Pastoral Epistles seek to tie up the package with secure twine. In them the shift from particular to general is complete and enduring." Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 84.

[513] Along the same lines as the statement from Arnal above, a lament by Dunn evidences some recognition of this problem: "A decade-long seminar at the annual Society of Biblical Literature attempted to refocus the old questions about a centre or core of Paul's theology and about a discernible development through is letters; but found itself becoming bogged down in the problem of deciding whether 'the theology of Paul' is the theology of each letter as

More often than not, then, accounts of the real Paul shrug off the immense epistemological caveats that ought to follow from reflecting upon the occasional nature of the letters. Yet in light of the situation described by writers such as Zetterholm and Pervo, I think it quite prudent to soberly reflect on a significant question: do a handful of occasional letters, written to specific churches and concerned with particular situational conflicts or issues, constitute data sufficient enough to enable us to formulate a comprehensive and robust account of the real Paul?

I find it impossible to respond to this question in the affirmative. Yet at the same time, I do not intend for this expression of skepticism to be interpreted as a clarion call to abandon all endeavours to apprehend the real Paul. For while I believe that diligent reflection on the occasional nature of the letters should at the very least engender some level of epistemological turbulence or humility, I know that it will not—and believe that it *need* not—preclude us from continuing on with our endeavours to get Paul right. For just as Kant writes in relation to the unyielding human pursuit of metaphysics, the cessation of our quests to grasp the real Paul is likewise "as little to be expected as that we, to avoid inhaling impure air, should prefer to give up breathing altogether."[514] As such, a sober level of epistemological reflection on our inability to apprehend the real Paul should not be mistaken as a license to jettison the enterprise altogether. In this regard, I think it vital to distinguish between the limits of our epistemological abilities and the incessancy and inextricability of our epistemological impulses.[515] In my view, a recognition of the former does not necessitate that we must (or for that matter even *can*) somehow outgrow

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such, or is better conceived as the theology upon which Paul drew to write the letters and which he reshaped by writing them. James D.G. Dunn, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11.

[514] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Paul Carus, ed. Lewis White Beck (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1997), 116.

[515] Apart from the words of Kant referenced above, I am also recalling Gellner's epistemological positions outlined in chapter 2; in particular, I am thinking here of the position that "retains the faith in the uniqueness of truth, but does not believe we ever possess it definitively." Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, viii.

the latter. Rather, I think that the quest for the real Paul very much aligns with Kant's words concerning the relentless quest for metaphysical researches. Consequently, while it might appear naïve to some, I am of the view that sustained rigorous discourse on Paul can continue to bear fruit, even if it is of a type different than what we ideally strive for. Indeed, Pauline inquiries can engender (deliberately or otherwise) valuable discourse on a variety of topics that are both distinct from yet collateral to the quest to get Paul right (e.g. literary, socio-historical, and theological matters). Moreover, even if we are unable to apprehend the real Paul with absolute certainty, this hardly precludes us from attempting to construct cogent accounts, especially if those accounts exhibit a reasonable level of introspection about the formation our Pauline Archimedean points.

CHAPTER 5

LOCATING PAULINE AUTHORITY

A number of pivotal preliminary issues have now become apparent in the study of Paul. As the previous chapter demonstrates, readers of Paul must take into consideration the onerous epistemological expectations we place on the correspondence, bearing in mind its occasional nature. Equally important is attention to the choices we make in constructing our Pauline archives, in terms of contemplating risks and benefits that accompany the inclusion or exclusion of certain data. Essentially, these choices relate to the selection and hierarchical arrangement of authorities, selections determined by our pre-understandings of Paul and the nature of our inquiries into him. For example, if Acts is excluded as an authority, then it becomes possible to avoid preoccupation over any points of inconsistency or dissonance between events described in the letters and events described by Luke. In some respects, this makes one's research much easier to manage, and enables one to avoid awkward or unconvincing hermeneutic maneuvers that can accompany attempts to harmonize the material. Yet the decision to remove Acts from the data set also comes at a cost. For it requires one to concede that Acts is unreliable, or is at the very least subordinate to the data contained in the epistles. Moreover, omitting Acts from one's archive also engenders a less robust account of Paul. Thus, depending on the nature of one's proto-*Paulusbild*, and depending also on one's epistemological goals, this tack may or may not be a desirable.

Yet ultimately, one's disposition towards the selection of admissible data, and the formation of a Pauline Archimedean point, relates in no small part to the concept of *authority*. Indeed, the notion of authority is pivotal to the study of Paul, in a myriad of ways. For what reasons do we find Paul's thought compelling, or somehow authoritative? Moreover, how can

the phenomenon of Pauline authority be theorized? And perhaps most important for the purposes of this study, how is the concept of authority relevant to the formation of our Pauline Archimedean points?

Canonical Authority

For many, the allure of Paul as an authority figure derives from his place in the canon, a topic discussed earlier.[516] Recalling for example the words of Adolf Jülicher, "[t]he canon is the norm to which everything in the Church accommodates itself; to canonize means to recognize as part of this norm. The Christian of *c.* 400 felt at the mention of the word 'canonical' precisely as we do when we say divine, holy, infallible, absolutely authoritative."[517] A. van de Beek expresses a similar sentiment:

> According to the church, the canon has *divine* authority. In these books it is not only our forebears in culture and faith who are speaking, but in their words the word of God comes to us. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity technically agree with one another that there is a canonical book, which is the word of God for mankind. This book is even the normative Word of God, so that other words stand under its critique, and may even be discounted in advance.[518]

What follows, for those who adhere to this particular view of canon, is a necessary allegiance to a particular hermeneutic, whether in relation to the study of Paul or any other biblical topic of inquiry: the contents of the canon cannot be severed in any manner, nor is there any relative authoritative weighting to its individual books. All of it is equally and absolutely authoritative.

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[516] It is important, of course, to distinguish the sense of authority that Paul or the Pauline data may have possessed to a first- or second-century audience, versus the sense of authority Paul and the canonical letters possess vis-à-vis a contemporary reader. In this regard, recall Rensberger's assertion that "it is only relatively late in the second century that we find widespread treatment of Paul as on a level with authoritative and normative Christian writings." Rensberger, "As the Apostle Teaches," 331. While the authority of Paul and the Pauline data to a first or second-century audience is certainly a topic of interest, my focus here is more on the issue of authority in relation to contemporary readers.

[517] Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 23-24.

[518] A. van de Beek, "Being Convinced: On the Foundations of the Christian Canon," in *Canonization and Decanonization*, ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Torn (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 332.

To put it in terms of an admittedly pejorative expression, this sort of stance might be summarized thus: "the bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it."

In any event, while this position is obviously not shared by all who engage in the critical study of Paul, it is hardly uncommon among Paul's general readership. Moreover, it is one that aligns entirely with a key aspect of Lincoln's theoretical understanding of religion:

> [Religion involves] *a discourse whose concerns transcend the human, temporal, and contingent, and that claims for itself a similarly transcendent status*...Insofar as certain propositions or narratives successfully claim such status, they position themselves as truths to be interpreted, but never ignored or rejected.[519]

The texts of the New Testament, and in particular the material that forms the Pauline data archive (i.e. the Pauline epistles and Acts), can most assuredly be classified as this kind of discourse. Now granted, in the case of Paul, it is not that the text claims for *itself* a transcendent status.[520] Rather, it is the collection of that discourse, or its formation into a canon, which metamorphizes mere writing, or "scripture" (i.e. *graphē*), to "Scripture." For example, the words in 2 Tim 3:16 ("All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness") do not expressly make the claim that 2 Timothy is itself "Scripture." Rather, that reinscription occurs later—it is with the canonization of 2 Timothy that the reference to "scripture" is augmented into something that is self-referential.[521]

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[519] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 5-6.

[520] To be clear, I am speaking here of the *discourse* or the *writings*, and less in relation to the authoritative status of *Paul himself*. That said, I recognize that it is difficult to demarcate a clear distinction between the two, a point that Jerome McGann affirms: "[a]s the very term 'authority' suggests, the author is taken to be—for editorial and critical purposes—the ultimate locus of a text's authority, and literary works are consequently viewed in the most personal and individual way." Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 81. Yet further blurring the relation between the authority of the text and the authority of the author, McGann also writes, "[b]ecause literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products, they do not even acquire an artistic form of being until their engagement with an audience has been determined." McGann, *Modern Textual Criticism*, 43-44.

[521] As Fewster writes, "canon authorizes itself by elevating the authorial figure in a way that co-opts authorial authenticity and intention in service of the canonical apparatus." Fewster, "Archiving Paul": 117.

Nonetheless, insofar as the Pauline archive comes to us in its canonical guise, it is frequently understood as fitting quite comfortably in the category of discourse outlined by Lincoln: it is a discourse that not only relates to concerns that transcend the human, temporal, and contingent, but also a discourse that claims for itself—or in this case, has been sanctified with—a similarly transcendent status. Bearing this in mind, Pauline readers ought to reflect on whether or how this milieu in which we engage Paul impacts the manner in which we approach our studies. For as Deissmann rightly notes, "the letters of Paul have come into our possession with the venerable halo of canonical dignity."[522] Consequently, it is clear that this canonical setting accounts for one of the ways in which Pauline authority is generated.

Literary Authority

Interestingly, the phenomenon of Paul's canonical authority has what might be viewed as a "secular"[523] equivalent. In this regard, it is evident that the Pauline legacy has been impacted by what Pervo describes as a "shift in the nature of religious authority," as traditional views on the bible as "the sole basis of doctrinal and other authority" have given way in some circles to "the rise of critical skepticism that emphasized reason. This generated widespread challenges to traditional authority."[524] These challenges, however, have not necessarily eradicated Pauline authority. On the contrary, one result of these challenges is that Pauline authority has simply been reconstituted. To some, Paul retains a level of authority or renown as a literary figure, a renown that evidences Paul's evolution or development in western culture. Indeed, this kind of

[522] Deissmann, *Paul*, 15.
[523] I use the term "secular" here with some reservation, recognizing, as Benjamin Berger notes, that "there is no single phenomenon of secularism but, rather, 'secularisms,' suffused with local history and ethnographic complexity, and manifesting wide variation." Benjamin L. Berger, *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 33–34. See also Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
[524] Pervo, *The Making of Paul*, 5.

development accords with Smith's suggestion that "[c]anonization, as a secondary process, is inseparable from modes of production; it is as much an affair of technology as theology."[525] Thus, while the mass production of the canon reflects an ostensible interest in disseminating Christian doctrine to the masses, there is something more that occurs in the process: the canon also becomes a capital good that possesses value or utility—e.g. literary, aesthetic, or cultural—apart from its primary identification as a theological or religious resource. Consequently, even if one does not value the Pauline material on account of its canonical status or theological content, one can in many cases detect that a certain valuation of Paul nonetheless subsists—it is modulated, however, for the purposes of exploiting the Pauline writings in an alternate (and frequently non-theological) context.

In recent years, for example, Paul's continuing appeal as a literary authority is evidenced in the work of contemporary philosophers such as Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, and Slavoj Žižek.[526] These writers do not view Paul's canonical authority as inherently important, nor are

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[525] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," in *Canonization and Decanonization*, ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Torn (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 307.

[526] See, for example, Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003); Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute—or Why the Christian Legacy Is Worth Fighting For* (London: Verso, 2000); Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003); and Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans,* trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005). In referencing these three here, I do not intend to suggest that they are by any means the first or only thinkers to appropriate Paul for their own non-theological projects. As another (and earlier) example in this regard, one can look to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, who constructed a kind of psychology of Paul as a near-villainous originator of Christianity:

> The law was the cross to which [Paul] felt himself nailed: how he hated it! how he had to drag it along! how he sought about a means of *destroying* it – and no longer to fulfil it! And at last the liberating idea came to him, together with a vision, as was bound to happen in the case of this epileptic: to him, the zealot of the law who was inwardly tired to death of it, there appeared on a lonely road Christ with the light of God shining in his countenance, and Paul heard the words: 'Why persecutest thou *me*?' What essentially happened then is rather this: his *mind* suddenly became clear: 'it is *unreasonable*', he says to himself, 'to persecute precisely this Christ! For here is the way out, here is the perfect revenge, here and nowhere else do I have and hold the *destroyer of the law*!'

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), §68. Nietzsche's views on Paul, and on Christianity in general, are related also

they particularly interested in any sort of theology, *per se*. Rather, what one finds in their works is a "hermeneutic reversal," as described by Peter Frick:

> On the one hand, the vast majority of theologians employ philosophy in order to interpret and understand Paul's letters, and correspondingly his theology. They treat Paul as an author and his texts as legitimate sources for speaking about objective realities; they begin with Paul. On the other hand, contemporary philosophers interested in Pauline thought do not begin with Paul and his texts. They have their own ideological structures and therefore employ Paul in the services of those structures. They also do not substantially use theology to clarify their philosophy; the former is hardly ever the handmaid of the latter.[527]

John Caputo expresses a similar sentiment concerning the contemporary appropriation of Paul by some philosophers:

> These are secular philosophers who pointedly do not share Paul's core belief in the resurrection of Christ but regard his project as centrally important for contemporary political life and reflection. The Pauline project, as they see it, is the universality of truth, the conviction (*pistis*) that what is true is true for everyone and that the proper role of the subject is to make that truth known, to fight the good fight on behalf of the truth, to all ends of the earth (*apostolos*). They have in mind the dramatic conversion of Paul—the event!—and Paul's subsequent dispute with the leaders of the early Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem that Christ belongs to all, that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, master nor slave, and the militant vigor with which Paul promulgated that belief across Asia Minor.[528]

Whatever else may be said about such appropriations of Paul—and to be sure, they have generated lively discourse[529]—I raise them here solely in connection to the issue of authority.

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to his much larger critique of philosophy's preoccupations with metaphysics and morality, preoccupations that Nietzsche associates largely with Plato. As Nietzsche derisively puts it, "Christianity is Platonism for the 'common people.'" Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Preface. For further discussion of Nietzsche's appropriation of Paul, see Peter Frick, "Nietzsche: The Archetype of Pauline Deconstruction," in *Paul in the Grip of the Philosophers: The Apostle and Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, ed. Peter Frick (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

[527] Peter Frick, "Paul in the Grip of Continental Philosophers: What is at Stake?" in *Paul in the Grip of the Philosophers: The Apostle and Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, ed. Peter Frick (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 7.

[528] John D. Caputo, "Postcards from Paul: Subtraction versus Grafting," in *St. Paul Among the Philosophers*, ed. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009), 2. Recalling Concannon's summation of some of the various uses to which Paul is put, it is worth noting that his reference to Paul as "a proto-Marxist revolutionary who theorized a radical, political universalism" is most certainly an allusion to thinkers such as Badiou and Žižek. Concannon, "Paul is Dead."

[529] See, for example, John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff, eds., *St. Paul Among the Philosophers* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009); Ward Blanton and Hent de Vries, eds., *Paul and the Philosophers* (New

For despite the fact that thinkers such as Badiou, Agamben, and Žižek (among others) hold no fidelity to any traditional "Christian" understanding of Paul, it is nonetheless evident that they view Paul's writings as possessing a kind of subversive utility, and implicitly ascribe some level of authority to the writings. In my estimation, this appeal to Paul's authority as a literary figure simply represents another iteration, or is perhaps the cultural evolution of Paul's allure as a canonical figure.[530] For as John Howard Schütz rightly observes, "[w]hether the collection of [Paul's] letters is testimony to his importance or more nearly the occasion of it…that collection also thrust Paul into a position of authority for a later age."[531] Schütz's assertion rings true, and applies also to contemporary non-theological thinkers who look to Paul as a figure that can be weaved into their own political, philosophical, or other ideological projects.[532]

Chronological or Historical Authority

Apart from the issue of Pauline authority as it relates to his place in canon, or his literary entrenchment generally, one also finds his authority linked to both his chronological place in the history of Christianity, and the chronological place of his letters in early Christianity. With respect to the former, the situation is aptly summarized in the words of Deissmann:"[t]wo names contain in themselves the primitive history of Christianity: The names of Jesus and Paul…From

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York: Fordham University Press, 2013); and Peter Frick, ed., *Paul in the Grip of the Philosophers: The Apostle and Contemporary Continental Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

[530] In making this assertion, it is perhaps worth repeating the earlier-noted words of Mack in connection to the persistent cultural impact of texts such as the bible: "[o]ne might have thought that the western history of intellectual enlightenments, social revolutions, scientific discoveries, and industrialized technologies would have outgrown an archaic myth-ritual system created in a bygone age of cultural class and experimental social formations. That, however, has not happened." Mack, *The Christian Myth*, 178.

[531] John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 2.

[532] This is hardly limited to non-theological thinkers—as indicated previously, one can frequently identify in Pauline studies an express or implied desire to glean some kind contemporary meaning or significance through interpreting the Pauline material. This can occur regardless of whether one's project is theological or non-theological in nature.

the broadest historical standpoint Jesus appears as the One, and Paul as the first after the One."[533] In relation to the latter, the chronological location of Paul's literary activity is routinely referenced in New Testament studies. As Collins notes, "Paul was the first Christian missionary to have written a letter or at least the first to have written a Christian letter."[534] Such chronological considerations have no small impact on the value we ascribe to the Pauline correspondence. Mack elaborates on this point:

> [Paul] looms so large in the pages of the New Testament that what he calls his gospel has served for the Christian church as the definition of the new religion…many scholars also continue to imagine Christian origins as in keeping with Paul's views. The reasons for this impression are obvious. His (partially pseudonymous) authorship accounts for over one-half the books in the New Testament. His letters from the 50s are the earliest Christian writings for which we have manuscript documentation.[535]

Perhaps even more to the point, White writes:

> Why does the "real" Paul carry so much authority in Christian polemics? For modern scholars, the answer to the…question is clear. Paul is our earliest window into developing Christianity. How we describe that movement in its nascent form provides rhetorical payoffs in the authorization of various modern forms of Christianity through a kind of archaizing argument: "We ought to be 'x' because Christianity in its earliest genius was 'x.'"[536]

White is certainly right in asserting that Paul's writings purport to provide us with the earliest tangible "window into developing Christianity." Indeed, Paul is easily distinguished from other sources and figures associated with the New Testament in this regard. The Jesus of history, for example, consistently eludes us, given that the gospels are second-order productions. In fact, even the true authors of the gospels are themselves unknown; in most scholarship, authorship of the gospels is rarely associated with their eponymous composers.[537] Comparably, the non-

[533] Deissmann, *Paul*, 3.
[534] Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 71.
[535] Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?: The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 99.
[536] White, *Remembering Paul*, 9.
[537] Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 109.

Pauline epistles in the New Testament (i.e. James, Peter, Jude, and John) are generally identified as being written by persons other than their purported authors. Consequently, Paul is the one figure that would seem to be on solid footing when it comes to associating at least some New Testament texts with their putative author(s). In fact, among biblical scholars at least, it is fair to suggest that Paul is the *only* biblical character who has at all been able to withstand modernity's deconstruction of traditional or apologetic assumptions concerning the authorship of the canonical texts.

Yet at the same time, White's assertion about the resulting kind of "archaizing argument" must also be considered. For any appeal to Paul as some type of early Christian Rosetta Stone is rather misplaced, for multiple reasons. Some of these have been addressed already in this study. For one, such an appeal to Paul overlooks a fundamental realization about his literary development and eventual canonization: the canonical Paul, or the literary Paul, is the product of a protracted dialectical encounter, one that involved various thinkers and iterations of early Christianities. Given this, it is difficult for us to assume that the textual Paul of canon is in fact an accurate reproduction of what a single, historical figure generated.[538] Further, it is clear that even at best, the canonical Paul only offers a glimpse into the thought of any historical figure, recognizing the limited number of writings we possess, coupled with sober reflection upon their genre and occasional nature. Yet despite such vital caveats, Pauline readers nonetheless remain captivated by his historical allure as the supposed wellspring of foundational Christian thought.

[538] Recalling the earlier-noted words of Ehrman, one must again bear in mind that "[t]he New Testament manuscripts were not produced impersonally by machines capable of flawless reproduction. They were copied by hand, by living, breathing, human beings who were deeply rooted in the conditions and controversies of their day." Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, 3. See also Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul*.

Apostolic or Charismatic Authority

In addition to the above, Paul's inherent authority is sometimes associated with his position as an apostle, or as a kind of charismatic figure. Granted, when it comes to Paul's status as an apostle, there is a palpable tension on this point readily evidenced in the New Testament. Luke, on the one hand, does not grant Paul that designation—in Acts, Paul is ineligible to join the group of twelve.[539] In the Pauline correspondence, conversely, it is a status frequently claimed as an introductory title,[540] appealed to on some occasions for rhetorical purposes,[541] or even passionately argued for in a few instances.[542]

In any event, it is certainly the case that Paul's standing as an apostle is at times invoked as an independent rationale for the valuation of his thought. Collins, for example, writes that "[Paul's] message is authoritative because it comes from an apostle of Christ. Indeed, Paul's letters are always written from an apostolic perspective. In this respect, they are never merely personal letters; they are always apostolic letters."[543] To some degree, the view of Collins trades on a particular understanding of the word apostle, i.e. *apostolos*. While the term traditionally referred simply to a messenger, ambassador or envoy, its meaning was augmented in Christian discourse, where an apostle came to designate a person with special or privileged status, i.e. a kind of sacred messenger.

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[539] Acts 1:21-26.
[540] E.g., 1 Romans 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, 1 Tim 1:1, 2 Tim 1:1, and Titus 1:1.
[541] E.g, 1 Cor 15:9, and 1 Cor 9:1-2.
[542] E.g, 1 Cor 9:1-2. 2 Cor 11:5, 2 Cor 12:11-12, and Gal 2:6-8.
[543] Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write*, 72. Although the apologetic tenor of Collins on this point is consistent with his own theological leanings as a Roman Catholic priest, it is nonetheless noteworthy that he expressly identifies Paul's authority as being derived from his status as an apostle. One particular work of note on the topic of apostolic authority is John Howard Schütz's *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority.* In this work, Schütz distinguishes authority from legitimacy, and argues that Paul's legitimacy is only established during the period of his canonization. While I have referenced Schütz's study earlier in this chapter, his particular framework (relating to authority and legitimacy) is not one that I follow here.

Regardless, the relevance of Paul's status as an apostle is evidenced also in the Pauline correspondence itself. Nowhere is this more explicit than the introductory words in Galatians, where Paul's identification as an apostle is qualified as being "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal 1:1). Consequently, the notion of Paul's apostleship holds a clear relation to his status or appeal as an authority figure.

Somewhat comparably, Paul's authoritative status might be related to his identification as a charismatic figure. This kind of tack has been taken by scholars such Anthony Blasi, who employs Max Weber's notion of charisma:

> The charismatic hero derives his authority not from an established order and enactments, as if it were an official competence, and not from custom or feudal fealty, as under patrimonialism. He gains and retains it solely by proving his powers in practice...his divine mission must prove itself by *bringing well-being* to his faithful followers.[544]

Building upon the work of Weber, Blasi develops a notion of "charisma" that could be applied to the way in which audiences receive Paul:

> [T]he fact is that the charisma to which we respond is not the real human. It may belong or pertain to a real person, but it is our creation...We transform public persons so that they become items of our vocabulary, figments of our collective imagination, and fulfillments of our societal needs.[545]

In Blasi's work we find an indication of something vital to the notion of authority as it pertains to Paul: the *ascription* of authority (or in the case of Blasi's study, charisma). This is something that will be examined in more detail below. Regardless, what remains clear here is that Paul's identification as either an apostle or a charismatic figure evidences a couple of further ways in which Pauline authority is accounted for.

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[544] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff et al. (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 1114.
[545] Blasi, *Making Charisma*, 4.

Revelatory Authority

Apart from the above, there is little doubt that to some, Paul's authority derives from claim that his gospel comes from a divine source (Gal 1:11-12). In other words, Paul's situation involves the idea that his gospel was imparted to him through a revelation, i.e. an *apokalupsis*.[546]

In this regard, however, some attention must be given to the interpretation of the term *apokalupsis*, particularly as it is used in Gal 1:12 and 2:2. Typically, the word is translated as "revelation," and is commonly understood more literally as an "unveiling" or "uncovering." A problem with the usual understanding, in Paul's case, is that any reference to "revelation" tends to evoke the mythic "road to Damascus" episode as described on three occasions in Acts, even though the word *apokalupsis* appears nowhere in these accounts.[547] In the first account, narrated in third person, Paul was journeying to Damascus when "suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'" (Acts 9:3-4). The second and third accounts are related by Paul himself, first to a crowd in Jerusalem following his arrest (Acts 22:6-21), and later before King Agrippa (Acts 26: 12-18). While the major aspects of the account remain consistent within Acts, there are certainly differences between them.[548] In the third account, Paul himself relates the occasion of his conversion to King Agrippa, indicating that he saw "a light from heaven" and heard "a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'" (Acts 26: 13-

[546] While I will not address it in detail here, ancillary to the notion of authority being derived from revelation is the identification of biblical texts as "inspired" writings (e.g. 2 Tim 3:16: "[a]ll scripture is inspired by God"). This leads Witherington, for example, to call for an investigation into a "theory of inspiration and its relationship to the authority of the apostle and his letters." Witherington, "Contemporary Perspectives on Paul," 267-268. I have no interest in examining the issue further here, but recognize that the notion of "inspiration" and authority bear some link to "revelation" and authority.

[547] The word appears once in Luke (Luke 2:32), a few times in 1 Peter (1 Peter 1:7; 1:13; 4:13), and of course at the very beginning of Revelation (Rev 1:1).

[548] In the third account, it is explicitly stated that the voice spoke to Paul in Hebrew. In addition, the dialogue between Paul and Jesus in the third account contains details not included in either of the first two accounts.

14). Interestingly, these components are present nowhere in the Pauline correspondence.[549] Furthermore, the accounts in Acts are not entirely consistent themselves: in Acts 9:7, Paul's companions hear a voice but see "no man," while in Acts 22:9, Paul's companions see "the light," but do not hear a voice.

What one frequently finds, then, is an account of Paul's revelation that conflates the description of Paul's revelation in Galatians with the accounts in Acts. Yet even though it is common enough to reflexively synthesize the two accounts, Bernard Brandon Scott reflects upon the difficulty in translating *apokalupsis* in a manner that accords with the accounts in Acts:

> "Revelation" as a translation has the disadvantage of reading into Paul's account the vivid image of the in-breaking of the supernatural world in the form of the blinding light and dramatic voice addressing Saul that occurs in the Acts account. "Insight" and "to make known" sidestep Acts's dramatic image and imply that it might not be a single,

[549] To be clear, I am speaking specifically with respect to the term *apokalupsis* in the Pauline letters. When it comes to claims concerning the physical manifestation of Jesus before Paul, we can indeed locate these elsewhere in the Pauline correspondence. In 1 Corinthians, for example, we find the claim that "last of all, as to the untimely born, [Jesus] appeared to me also" (1 Cor 15:8; see also 1 Cor 9:1). In that case, however, we are not dealing with the term *apokalupsis*, but rather the verb *ōphthē*, a cognate of *optanomai*, i.e. to look at or behold. Despite this, Hans Dieter Betz concludes that with respect to the claims in Galatians, "[c]ertainly, the revelation of Christ in Paul points to a visionary experience of some sort, while the order to proclaim the gospel among the Gentiles implies a verbal revelation." Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 64. Despite Betz's conclusion, it is important to emphasize that a connection between *apokalupsis* and *ōphthē* is not obvious in the texts. Thus, while Betz's conclusion is conceivable, I also suspect that it reflects an attempt—perhaps on a subconscious level—to harmonize the features of Paul's revelatory experience in Acts with the contents of the Pauline corpus. It is also worth noting that beyond Galatians, the word *apokalupsis* is used in connection to Paul's own experiences only in 2 Corinthians, where he "boasts" of knowing a man—presumably himself, given the surrounding context of the discussion—who received visions and revelations "that cannot be told, which man may not utter" (2 Cor 12:1-4). Despite this, Paul spoke a fair bit around the experience, which might lead one to question whether he violated Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous dictum: "[w]hat we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2006), 7. Interestingly, the apocalypse of Paul, or *Visio Pauli*, is essentially a full-fledged elaboration on 2 Cor 12:2-4, constructed in the third or fourth century. The tale includes a creative account of how the text came to be discovered, which functions to augment its claim to legitimacy. In the preface of the *Visio Pauli*, the author writes of how a nobleman in Tarsus had an angel appear before him in a dream, telling him to dig the foundation of the house. After being unconvinced until seeing the vision for a third time, the nobleman dug and found a marble box containing the *Visio Pauli*, which he delivered to King Theodosius, who in turn transcribed it. As Martin Rist points out, this story in the preface "reminds us of Joseph Smith's account of the finding of the *Book of Mormon*." Rist, "Pseudepigraphy and the Early Christians," 85. For an informative discussion on the relation between 2 Corinthians and the *Visio Pauli*, see Vernon K. Robbins, "The Legacy of 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 in the *Apocalypse of Paul*" in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies in a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*, ed. Trevor J. Burke and J Keith Elliott (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 327-339.

> dramatic moment, but may have occurred over a period of time. But it risks downplaying that, for Paul, the event is from God.[550]

To a certain extent, Scott's sentiment is echoed by Burton Mack, who writes that Paul "was not claiming a personal, private *experience* of encounter with God's son," but rather that he "was reporting a sense of divine commission resulting from his *insight* (or 'revelation') that the Christians' claim about Jesus had significance for Israel's mission and that he, Paul, would have to lead the way."[551]

At the very least, the remarks of Scott and Mack highlight the fact that the translation of the term *apokalupsis* warrants careful consideration. Indeed, by translating the term as "insight," one more readily recognizes, as Scott suggests, that an *apokalupsis* does not necessarily entail an experience involving the senses. On the other hand, the term "insight"—when thought of colloquially, at least—implicates no external agent as being involved in a subject's *apokalupsis*. This, however, becomes problematic in the context of the Pauline epistles, given that Gal 1:15-16 makes it quite evident that there is an external agent, God, who is involved in the *apokalupsis*.[552]

The important implications of this are explicated by Kierkegaard, who writes that "[t]*he divine authority is what is qualitatively decisive*...the one called by a revelation, to whom a doctrine is entrusted, argues on the basis that it is a revelation, on the basis that he has

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[550] Bernard Brandon Scott, *The Real Paul: Recovering His Radical Challenge* (Salem: Polebridge Press, 2015), 32.
[551] Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?*, 102 (emphasis added).
[552] While the terminology differs, it is also worth considering the notion of divine wisdom, or "madness," as it appears in Plato's work. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates argues that while many would suggest that "madness [is] bad…in fact the best things we have come from madness, when it is given as a gift of the god." Plato, *The Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1995), 244a. Shortly thereafter, Socrates goes on to suggest an etymological connection between "manic" (madness) and "mantic" (prophecy). Recognizing that the construction of creative etymologies was a common strategy in ancient rhetoric, Nehamas and Woodruff note that "[t]he words for madness (*manikē*) and prophecy (*mantikē*) are similar but not actually related. *Mantikē* refers specifically to the uttering, by inspired women, of messages from gods that are unintelligible to ordinary human beings." Nehamas and Woodruff, 27, fn. 58. For further discussion of the issue, see Sarah Iles Johnston and Peter T. Struck, eds., *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination* (Leiden: Brill: 2005).

authority."[553] Indeed, Kierkegaard specifically references Paul as an example of one possessing divine authority, noting "I am not to listen to Paul because he is brilliant or matchlessly brilliant, but I am to submit to Paul because he has divine authority."[554]

For Kierkegaard, then, the recipient of this divine authority "belongs in the sphere of the transcendent, the paradoxical-religious sphere, which, altogether consistently, also has a qualitatively different expression for the relation of other people to an apostle."[555] In other words, though the apostle is appointed or called to be the emissary of God, this calling simultaneously puts the apostle outside of any universal, comprehensible, system of thought, and thus paradoxically renders him incapable of being fully apprehended or understood by those within such a system. Consequently, under Kierkegaard's framework, the notion of Paul being "unintelligible to posterity"[556] is merely a by-product of the divine source of his message.

Bearing all of this in mind, one can recognize that for some, Paul's appeal as an authority figure is simply connected to him being the recipient of a revelation. For logically speaking, Kierkegaard's analysis of the category is quite cogent: if one subscribes to the notion that Paul's message is of divine origin, then it indeed follows that one ought to "submit to Paul because he has divine authority."[557]

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[553] Kierkegaard, "The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle," 96.
[554] Kierkegaard, "The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle," 96. Doty appears to reach this same kind of conclusion, noting that "[Paul's] wishes were meant to be obeyed since they had the authority of eschatological revelation." Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 44.
[555] Kierkegaard, "The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle," 101.
[556] Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, 249.
[557] While I will not dwell on it here, it is worth pointing out that in this regard, Paul might be distinguished theoretically from a figure such a Muhammed, who, unlike Paul, functioned essentially as an amanuensis. In other words, Muhammed is not so much the recipient of revelation, but rather the *reciter* of divine communication.

Theorizing Pauline Authority

Following from the above, it is evident that appeals to Paul and the Pauline writings frequently evoke one iteration of authority or another. Yet beyond simply accounting for some of these iterations, it is worth thinking about how one might go about *theorizing* them in Paul's case. For in doing so, we might gain further insight how we cognize our Pauline Archimedean points. In particular, it is worth considering how the study of Paul might be related to two notions of authority: executive authority and epistemic authority.

Executive authority, as defined by Richard De George, "is the right or power of someone (X) to do something (S) in some realm, field, or domain (R), in a context (C)."[558] In the case of Paul, one can locate, on multiple levels, a kind of executive authority in him or his writings. For example, with Paul himself, his status as the recipient of revelation or as an apostle can conceivably imbue him with a level of executive authority. Comparably, the writings attributed to him—or about him, in the case of Acts—possess their own level of executive authority, on account of either their canonical status or even their entrenched literary status.

Epistemic authority, on the other hand, relates to an authoritative status conferred on account of expertise or knowledge that a person or text exhibits (or appears to exhibit, at least) in a particular field of knowledge.[559] This notion of authority aligns with what H.L.A. Hart describes as "theoretical authority":

> To be an authority on some subject matter a man must in fact have some superior knowledge, intelligence, or wisdom which makes it reasonable to believe that what he says on the subject is more likely to be true than the results reached by others through

[558] Richard T. De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority* (Kansas: Kansas University Press, 1985), 17.
[559] Lincoln, *Authority*, 3-4. See also De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority*, 22. To be clear, however, De George frames the issue somewhat differently than I am here. De George's primary distinction is between executive authority and *non-executive* authority. Epistemic authority is a particularly notable subcategory of the latter, though it is not the only one. See De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority*, 22-23. Further, in the case of Lincoln, I do not intend to suggest that his view of authority is such that it is simply accounted for through distinguishing between executive and epistemic authority. Indeed, Lincoln is partially concerned with transcending that distinction. See Lincoln, *Authority,* 3. I shall return to this point below.

> their independent investigations, so that it is reasonable for them to accept the authoritative statement without such independent investigation or evaluation of his reasoning.[560]

In the case of Paul, the most straightforward examples of this sort of identification are reflected in contemporary references or appeals to him as a "gifted exegete"[561] or "genius."[562]

To be clear, however, these categories of authority are by no means mutually exclusive. Rather, as Lincoln notes, "[e]pistemic and executive authority are not necessarily opposed to one another, but can be complementary. Often the two articulate in hierarchic fashion, such that epistemic authority supplies advice, expertise, and the like to executive authority, while the latter retains final decision-making power."[563] Accordingly, I should make it clear that I do not intend to suggest that Pauline authority lies unequivocally in the realm of either epistemic or executive authority. To be sure, there is overlap and interplay between these two in the case of Paul, and it would prove exceedingly difficult to fully detach one from the other. For example, Paul's epistemic authority might itself be tied to the claim that he was given a revelation. Yet at the same time, as the recipient of a revelation, Paul is also an executive authority—indeed, this is consistent with Kierkegaard's identification of "divine authority," i.e. executive authority, as the type of authority that Paul possessed. In other words, as a recipient of a divine revelation, Paul's thought is imbued not only with a type of executive authority (on account of the divine's

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[560] H.L.A. Hart, "Commands and Authoritative Legal Reasons," in *Authority*, ed. Joseph Raz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), 108.
[561] See Jervell, "Paul in the Acts," 76.
[562] See Deissmann, *Paul*, 79; Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 19; and Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 1. Evidence of this phenomenon is not *only* found in contemporary writings, however. Recall, for example, the words of Polycarp: "neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul." Pol. *Phil*. 3.
[563] Lincoln, *Authority*, n. 168. Similarly, De George acknowledges that "there may be some instances of authority which fall clearly on neither one side nor the other." De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority*, 22.

omnipotence), but also a level of epistemic authority (on account of the divine's omniscience).[564]

Locating Pauline authority firmly in one category or another also proves difficult in relation to Paul's canonization. For on the one hand, one might be inclined to argue that Paul's writings were to some degree valued on account of their epistemic authority, and that this valuation occasioned their reinscription as canonical authorities, i.e. executive authorities. On the other hand, one might otherwise insist that the Pauline writings possessed executive authority from the very outset, on account of Paul's apostolic authority, or again, on account of his status as the recipient of a revelation.[565] Consequently, while I think it is worthwhile to reflect upon the ways in which the authority of Paul and the letters might be framed in terms of executive or epistemic authority, I do not intend to suggest that all modes of Pauline authority can be subsumed exclusively under one category or the other.

The Final Authority

Admittedly, all of this discussion about executive and epistemic authorities skirts around a fundamental issue relating to the concept of authority. For what has been absent thus far is due consideration to how authority is conferred, or more precisely, who confers it. This issue is touched on by Gadamer:

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[564] Similarly, one could posit that Kierkegaard's own conception of divine authority actually encompasses *both* categories, given that an omniscient and omnipotent divinity is both an epistemic and executive authority. Strictly speaking, however, that sort of analysis is technically applicable not so much to Paul, but rather God. In the case of Paul, the executive authority is actually one step removed from God. Accordingly, one might be inclined to think of the situation here as involving three, rather than two categories, as outlined by Joseph Raz: "To have authority is, sometimes, (1) to have (a right created by a) permission to do something (which is generally prohibited). It is also (2) to have the right to grant such permissions, and finally, it is (3) to be an expert who can vouch for the reliability of particular information." Joseph Raz, "Introduction," in *Authority*, ed. Joseph Raz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), 2. The first and second categories described by Raz are both aspects of executive authority. Paul's executive authority might be placed into subcategory (1), as his authority is one permitted by the divine.

[565] Regardless of how one theorizes this particular issue, I would at the very least maintain that the canonization of Paul reifies him and his epistles as executive authorities.

> [T]he authority of persons is based ultimately, not on the subjection and abdication of reason, but on an act of acknowledgement and knowledge—the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence, i.e., it has priority over one's own.[566]

Taking this notion further, it is worth turning again to Lincoln, who asserts that irrespective of the distinction between executive and epistemic authority, the concept of authority in general "is best understood in relational terms as the effect of a posited, perceived, or institutionally ascribed asymmetry between speaker and audience that permits certain speakers to command not just the attention but the confidence, respect, and trust of their audience, or—an important proviso—to make audiences act *as if* this were so."[567] In this framework, the role of the audience is critical—indeed, the audience has an integral role in the identification of the "ascribed asymmetry" that Lincoln notes.

In the case of Paul, then, this brings us back once more to the issue of our proto-*Paulusbilder*, and the formation of our functional Pauline Archimedean points. For any recognition of authority in Paul and the Pauline corpus (or elements of it) is ultimately a product of our own cognition. Given this, it is actually we, the readers or interpreters of Paul, who are the ultimate arbiters. In other words, we are the final authorities on all things Pauline.

Elements of this realization have been evidenced throughout this study. It is clear, for example, that we are not passive recipients of Pauline data. On the contrary, we are active in a variety of ways: in selecting which data (and even further in some cases, which *parts* of that data) represents the authentic voice of Paul, in pressing this data into service for a variety of purposes (many of which are grounded in the audacious endeavour to apprehend the real Paul or

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[566] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 281.

[567] Lincoln, *Authority*, 4. While De George specifically makes the remark in connection to epistemic authority, his thought reflects a sentiment similar to Lincoln's, as he observes that the analysis of epistemic authority involves "defining an epistemic authority in terms of those for whom he is an authority...It emphasizes the relation of an authority to those for whom he is an authority, and so it underlines the functional aspect of being an authority." De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority*, 27.

the historical Paul), and in general, choosing to identify Paul or the letters as being authoritative in some respect or another. Our role in this relates fundamentally to our own status as Pauline authorities. Indeed, Collingwood's analysis of the historian's role applies equally to readers of Paul:

> Throughout the course of his work the historian is selecting, constructing, and criticizing; it is only by doing these things that he maintains his thought upon the *sichere Gang einer Wissenschaft* [secure course of a science]. By explicitly recognizing this fact it is possible to effect what, again borrowing a Kantian phrase, one might call a Copernican revolution in the theory of history: the discovery that, so far from relying on an authority other than himself, to whose statements his thought must conform, the historian is his own authority and his thought autonomous, self-authorizing, possessed of a criterion to which his so-called authorities must conform and by reference to which they are criticized.[568]

This leads Collingwood to conclude that "[f]or the historian there can never be authorities, because the so-called authorities abide a verdict which only he can give."[569] Or as Johann Gottlieb Fichte puts it, "[a]uthority is trust in our power of correct observation and in our veracity."[570] In the case of this particular study, then, this realization might simply be summarized thus: *we are the loci of Pauline authority*. Consequently, our Pauline Archimedean points are not fixed *external* points that we locate. Rather, these Archimedean points are constructed *within* us, being informed by our pre-understandings of Paul or proto-*Paulusbilder*: we are the ones who determine the overall valuation of Paul and his writings, the ones who determine what does or does not constitute reliable data on Paul, and the ones who determine the hierarchical ranking of that data.

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[568] Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 236. Collingwood appropriates the phrase *sichere Gang einer Wissenschaft* [secure course of a science] from the preface of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 106-120.
[569] Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 238. See also Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 281.
[570] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, ed. Allen Wood, trans. Garrett Green (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 52

Given all of this, it would seem that what we find in the notion of Pauline authority is something perhaps different than expected. Granted, it is clear that there are multiple ways to think about Pauline authority—from canonical authority to revelatory authority—and these iterations of Pauline authority can be further theorized in relation to the concepts of epistemic and executive authority. Yet the foundation of all Pauline authority lies with us, the readers and interpreters of the canonical Paul. Accordingly, in reflecting upon the formation of our functional Pauline Archimedean points, it is clear that we are the final adjudicators of the data, and we are the ones who imbue both Paul and the Pauline texts with authority.

CONCLUSION

Pauline Anarchivists

Quests for the real Paul or the historical Paul are founded on a set of preliminary choices or assumptions often not reflected upon in Pauline studies. Moreover, the issues that relate to these choices or assumptions—notably, questions over the reliability of texts, or parts of them—distinguish the study of Paul from many other ancient literary figures. For with Paul, there is clearly a lingering ambiguity over which data can be relied upon as authentically representing his thought. On top of this, there is an additional burden we place on the Pauline correspondence, as we frequently expect the occasional letters to foster the production of a compelling, logical, and reasonably robust account of Paul's thought. These preliminary methodological concerns do not plague the study of other ancient seminal literary figures in the way they do Paul.

However, this study is not intended to be a lament over the state of Pauline studies. Rather, it is simply aimed at reminding Pauline readers that methodologically speaking, we would do well to reflect upon the preliminary choices we make. Put different, it is important for Pauline scholars to think carefully about our pre-understandings of Paul, and the formation of our functional Pauline Archimedean points.

In addition, we would do well to think about where the abundance, or overabundance of scholarship leads in relation to the quest for the real Paul or the historical Paul. For in a sense, the aggregation of scholarship actually increases the distance from our object of study. In other words, the selections made by contemporary scholarship about the Pauline data, and the conclusions that are generated from the analysis of that data, leads to an ever-growing *accumulation* of archival data. Derrida notes the implications of this:

> By incorporating the knowledge deployed in reference to it, the archive augments itself, engrosses itself, it gains in *auctoritas*. But in the same stroke it loses the absolute meta-

> textual authority it might have. One will never be able to objectivize it with no remainder. The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed.[571]

In the case of Paul, the reliability of the data found in the canonical Paul becomes continually re-entrenched through repetitious reliance on it. At the same time, nuanced variations in the use of that data result in varied interpretations of Paul. Consequently, the study of Paul of course engenders the production of further archival material. Given this, there is some merit to MacDonald's statement that "Paul is a 'Christian Proteus,' like the Proteus of the *Odyssey*, a sea daemon who eluded capture by continually changing his form."[572] I basically concur with MacDonald, but would be inclined to recalibrate his remark slightly: it is not so much that *Paul* changes his form, but rather that the diversity and malleability of the Pauline data permits *us* to readily change his form.

Building on this realization, one might return once more to the question of whether the quest for the real Paul, or the historical Paul, is one worth continuing. Concannon, for one, suggests that it is *not*:

> Pauline scholars should stop trying to craft "real" Pauls that can pronounce judgment on our political and theological projects. What do we really need such Pauls for anyway? We should have the courage to confront our world and its problems without having to hide behind some historically-constructed Paul. Let's not start with the presumption that the Pauline archive will provide us with answers once we have revealed the real Paul; rather, we should allow our work to ask if anything from the Pauline archive (or any early Christian text for that matter) might yet become weaponizable in the struggle for a more just future. Even if we could get to the actual, historical person of Paul through our analysis, why would we need his approval for how we put his work into action?[573]

I do not entirely agree with Concannon's sentiment. For as alluded to earlier, I believe that ending the quest for the real Paul, or the historical Paul, is as "as little to be expected as that we,

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[571] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 67.
[572] MacDonald, *Legend and the Apostle*, 97.
[573] Concannon, "Paul is Dead."

to avoid inhaling impure air, should prefer to give up breathing altogether."[574] But more than that, I am not inclined to pass judgment on the merit (or lack thereof) in these quests, and the frequently ancillary desire—tacit or otherwise—to employ Paul to adjudicate contemporary matters. In this regard, I concur with Paula Fredriksen, who writes that "[t]heological readings of foundational religious texts are intrinsically anachronistic…Systematic rereading is how these ancient Jewish eschatological texts that are Paul's letters retain—or, rather*, obtain*—contemporary meaning. There is no dishonor in this. It is theology's project."[575] Given that many Pauline scholars are in fact theologians, I find Concannon's injunction too methodologically dictatorial, even though I myself have little personal interest in "theology's project," and subjectively share many of Concannon's underlying worries about Pauline studies.[576]

What I *would* suggest, however, is that Pauline scholars embrace their roles as "anarchivists." I mean this in two ways. First, I believe that part of this study serves as a call to think again, or anew (i.e. *ana*-), about our Pauline Archimedean points, and our active role in the management of Pauline data. For the most part, scholarship tends to treat this issue only fleetingly, with little regard to our own involvement in the generation of Pauline Archimedean points. Second, and relatedly, I think that recognition of this state of affairs can occasion at least

[574] Kant, *Prolegomena*, 116.
[575] Fredriksen, "Historical Integrity, Interpretive Freedom," 71-72.
[576] In stating this, I do not mean to suggest that I endorse a pluralistic Pauline free-for-all. In this regard, I would return to the previously-noted remarks of Braun: "I am suspicious of any invocation of postmodernism where I sense that it is employed either as a rhetorical device to place some taste, preference, practice, belief, or self-representation beyond criticism, or as an incantation of the dubious premise of what Ernest Gellner calls the 'egalitarianism of all thought-systems' as the basis for an uninterrogatable admission of 'whatever' into venues of critical thought (see Gellner 1992, 55). This is simply a kind of vulgar liberalism turned into compost for growing things that I find very frightening, not only because of what they bode for thought itself, but also what they imply socially and politically. Braun, "Introducing Religion," 489-490. With respect to Pauline studies, I have no aversion to entertaining or giving consideration to various reconstructions of the real Paul. However, I would also of course reserve the right to pronounce my own judgment on whether any given construction is *persuasive*.

a kind of tempered "anarchy" in Pauline studies.[577] In this regard, I would return one last time to White:

> Until we can fully admit that the prevailing modern discourse on the "real" Paul comes from a long-standing tradition that elevates the *Hauptbriefe* to the front and center of the Pauline canon, not just materially (they stand at the front of ancient manuscripts merely because of their length), but theologically and hermeneutically, we will never approach the kind of deconstructive position necessary for developing more transparent methodologies for reconstructing the "real" or the "historical" Paul. If we were serious about this task, and not merely interested in using Paul as a pawn for modern rhetorics, we would begin to view all the Pauline Epistles, for instance, as Pauline "tradition": diverse images of Paul mediated to us through historically and socially conditioned texts and manuscripts.[578]

Insofar as this study calls for self-reflection on the choices we make about the Pauline data, I think it also serves as some fertile ground on which to take White up on his challenge, and revisit the sort of sentiment exhibited by Dutch Radicals in questioning the Pauline data, even if we do not reach their same conclusion.[579] For despite our contemporary, perennial allegiance to the Paul of the *Hauptbriefe*, or the seven-letter corpus, it is clear that this allegiance is borne just as much out of disciplinary habit and convenience as it is out of analytic rigour. Given this, and given our own palpable role in the production and promulgation of a core, normative Pauline

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[577] In this regard, my views here are partially (but not entirely) consistent with those of H.M. Vos in connection to the canon generally. As Vos writes, "Pluralism and freedom of mind can ultimately result in the feeling that there is no longer any solid ground on which to stand…whether we admit it or not, from a philosophical point of view decanonization propels us into a situation of anarchy, a situation without a firm footing; it introduces us to an an-Archimedean era, an era without fixed Archimedean points." Vos, "The Canon as a Straitjacket," 368. While I empathize with Vos's general sentiment, I have some reservation about him framing the matter in terms of an "an-Archimedean era." I say this for a few reasons. First, Vos's remarks reflect a kind of allegiance to the position of epistemological relativism, as described earlier in this study. See Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, viii. I do not share this epistemological view, and would identify myself rather as a 'corrigible modernist.' See "Braun, "Introducing Religion," 489-490. Relatedly, it can be argued that the position of epistemological relativism nonetheless involves, somewhat paradoxically, fidelity to a kind of Archimedean point of its own, namely, that there are no Archimedean points. The third reason that I have some resistance to Vos's framing of the issue is that it could function as an epistemological impediment to worthwhile intellectual endeavours. To recall the earlier-referenced words of Smith, "[y]ou have to allow me some measure of monomania if I am to get anywhere. I can't do my work when I have to stop and entertain every other opinion under the sun." Smith, "Afterward: The Necessary Lie Duplicity in the Disciplines," 80.

[578] White, *Remembering Paul*, 176-77.

[579] As noted earlier, I confess to finding it difficult to embrace their conclusion, given that relegating the entire Pauline correspondence to the pile of pseudonymous works nonetheless requires, paradoxically, a Pauline Archimedean point from which to reach such a bold conclusion.

data set, perhaps it is time that we explored the implications of alternative functional Pauline Archimedean points—what might result from different or more novel combinations and permutations of the Pauline data?

This is a shift worth contemplating in Pauline studies. For even though there are risks or dangers in venturing off the well-worn path in Pauline studies—such ventures could ultimately lead to dubious conclusions and require correction, after all—the foregoing has nonetheless demonstrated that we often fail to reflect sufficiently on how we find ourselves on this path in the first place. And perhaps the exploration of different avenues and different functional Pauline Archimedean points might result in fruitful discourse about not only Paul, but ancillary socio-historical, literary or even theological matters relating to early Christianities. Thus, I think that pursuing alternative paths, or Pauline Archimedean points, involves both risk and promise. For as Hölderlin writes, "But where danger threatens / That which saves from it also grows."[580]

[580] Hölderlin, "Patmos," 463. Admittedly, my appeal to this line is hardly novel. Among other appropriations, see Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 34.

AFTERWORD

Some might view Paul as a figure who today remains significant only to Christians or navel-gazing biblical scholars. I disagree. Paul's relevance and influence extends beyond these audiences. In the political sphere, for example, American Attorney General Jeff Sessions appealed to Paul in the course of defending Donald Trump's zero-tolerance prosecution policy on illegal immigration, stating in a 2018 speech, "illegal entry into the United States is a crime—as it should be. Persons who violate the law of our nation are subject to prosecution. I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13, to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order."[581] While this is hardly the first political appeal to Paul, it is nonetheless one that attests to his enduring importance—or perhaps better *utility*—in contemporary discourse. At the very least, it is clear that there is a persistent sort of functional value associated with Paul.

That being the case, I would like to think that the issues addressed in this study are entirely relevant to any who would acknowledge and recognize Paul's functional or rhetorical utility, if not argue for his inherent and incontrovertible importance. Now granted, for those who count themselves among the latter, some may find the contents of this study either unpalatable or perhaps even irrelevant. This depends in large part on what disposition, or prejudice, one possesses in connection to Paul. In other words, one's response to this study depends on what kind of proto-*Paulusbild* one brings to the table. I concede, for example, that this study may well

[581] United States of America, Department of Justice, Justice News, "Attorney General Sessions Addresses Recent Criticisms of Zero Tolerance By Church Leaders" (14 June, 2018). https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-sessions-addresses-recent-criticisms-zero-tolerance-church-leaders. There is, however, an important and interesting caveat to this anecdote. Sessions uttered these words in a June 14, 2018, closed address to a smaller group of around one hundred people. Nonetheless, his speech was also posted on the United States Department of Justice website, and was disseminated over various forms of media, quickly going "viral." The rapid dissemination of Sessions's remarks largely disregarded the context within which they were uttered. This is not entirely dissimilar to the subject discussed in chapter 4, i.e. intentionality and the Pauline correspondence.

prove pointless to those who view the New Testament Paul as an immutable and absolutely uninterrogable divine authority. For as Kierkegaard points out, the category of divine authority leaves no room for cross-examination:

> [T]he divine authority is the category. Here there is very little or nothing at all for assistant professors and licentiates and paragraph swallowers to do. The assistance of these gentlemen is needed here no more than a maiden needs a barber to shave her beard and no more than a bald man needs a hairdresser to "style" his hair.[582]

Strictly speaking, I think that Kierkegaard is right—when one takes seriously the implications of the category of divine authority, there is little to no place for rational analysis.[583] Given the nature of this study, however, I would maintain that a hasty appeal here to this category is rather misplaced. For the New Testament, and more specifically the Paul of the New Testament, did not appear suddenly from nowhere—the formation of the New Testament Paul was "not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26), so to speak. Bearing this in mind, I think it is incumbent upon all serious readers of Paul to grapple with the sorts of challenges outlined in this study. In other words, to appropriate, or contextually *mis*appropriate a Pauline injunction, I think that readers of Paul would do well to "test everything," and "hold fast what is good" (1 Thess 5:21).

[582] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 34.
[583] See Søren Kierkegaard *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

"Getting Paul right": The phrase "getting Paul right" here refers to the traditional endeavour to properly or accurately interpret Paul, or understand what Paul *meant* in his writings. Thus, the effort to "get Paul right" accords with Friedrich Schleiermacher's formulation of the hermeneutic task as "the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly." In this study, the phrase "getting Paul right" is also used interchangeably with the notion of the "real Paul."

Historical Paul: The notion of the "historical Paul" picks up on the phrase used to reference the quests for the "historical Jesus." Here, however, the phrase is used only occasionally, in reference to the task of determining what the Paul of history actually *said* or *did*. In this study, the quest for the historical Paul is distinguished from the task of *interpreting* Paul (see "Getting Paul right").

Pauline Archimedean Point: In this study, the notion of an Archimedean point is not used in the Cartesian sense to denote absolute epistemological certainty. Rather, it is employed in a more tempered or functional sense to refer to our selection of Pauline data that establishes the measure for determining what is or is not representative of Paul's authentic thought. Further, this study maintains that our Pauline Archimedean points are informed by and very closely related to our proto-*Paulusbilder* (see Paulusbild).

Paulusbild: The term *Paulusbild* ("Paul picture") is used here in two distinct ways. First, the term proto-*Paulusbild* (or pre-understanding of Paul) is used to denote how any attempt to formulate an understanding of Paul requires some nascent or incipient notion of who he was, what he said, or what he was up to. The second sense of *Paulusbild* in this study refers to the final product of our studies, i.e. the picture or construction of Paul that we ultimately formulate through our studies and close readings of him.

"Real Paul": See "Getting Paul right."

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