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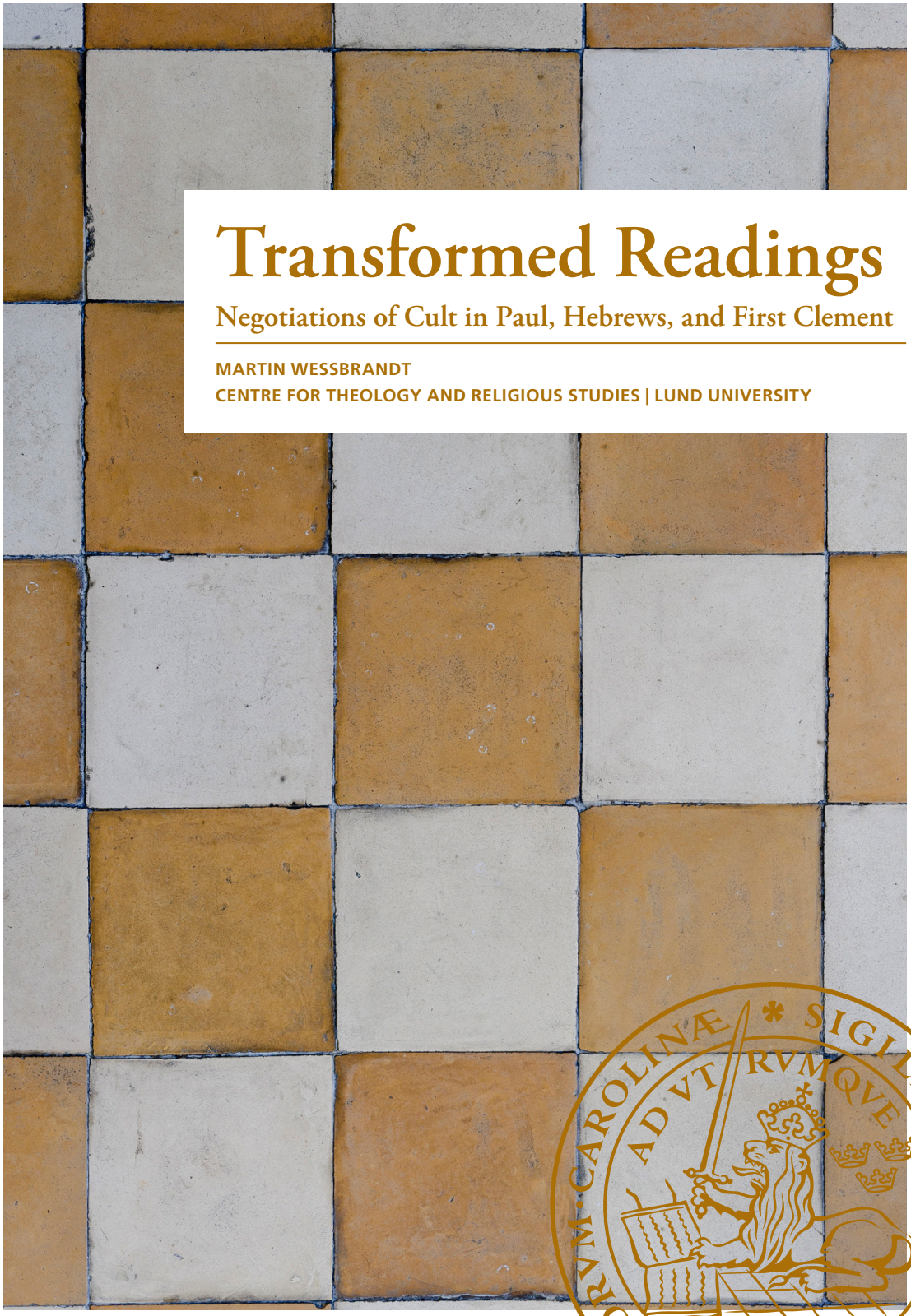

Transformed Readings

Negotiations of Cult in Paul, Hebrews, and First Clement

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In this dissertation, I will investigate four early Christian writings with a focus on their relationships to one another and what they have to say about the Jewish temple cult. The writings are Paul's letter to the Romans and his first letter to the Corinthians, the letter to the Hebrews, and the letter known as First Clement. It is an investigation that does not fall neatly into any specific field of New Testament research and early Christian studies, but rather moves between different areas of specialization in order to paint a broad intellectual-historical picture. In one sense, it is a historical narrative that I will seek to present in these chapters, albeit a rather particular historical narrative which I believe has strong implications for many other research areas and interests.

Thus, this is not quite a conventional dissertation, since it will be difficult to pin down in general terms what, in the field of New Testament research, I have become an expert on in the five years that I have worked on this project. I hesitate to call this a study on the Jewish cult in early Christianity and I also hesitate to call it a study on literary dependence and reception of early Christian texts. My sense is that it does not quite qualify in depth and exhaustiveness in those areas to be named either of those things. At the same time, it is attention to questions of literary relationships and views on cultic matters that make up this investigation, and the project would be failed if I were not able to credibly present some significant insights into those matters as well.

Why, then, these four writings and why this particular focus? This research project began with a very limited topic and a very specific question that concerned the relationship between the Letter to the Hebrews and First Clement. The generally accepted opinion among scholars was that First Clement contained the earliest known example of a use of Hebrews and thus

could provide important clues about the date and destination of this famously anonymous canonical letter. There were, however, some problems with this popular opinion and, as a matter of fact, those who had some deeper knowledge into First Clement often called this literary relationship into question.[1]

One of the things that made me wonder about this relationship was the way that the two authors dealt with issues related to the Jewish temple cult. Hebrews is well known for its cult criticism and for being a writing that plainly argues that Christ has abrogated regular temple offerings through his sacrificial death. First Clement, on the other hand, does not with one word denounce the Jewish temple cult, its priests or its sacrifices, despite the fact that the letter speaks quite frequently on such matters. It even appears that First Clement's author was quite enthusiastic about the cult. How then can it be that this same author alluded to, and quoted from, Hebrews? It is difficult to think that someone who had carefully read, pondered, and sympathized with the message of Hebrews could go on to write First Clement. In my opinion, this objection was strong enough to merit a thorough investigation into the matter. My initial working hypothesis was that Hebrews and First Clement were both dependent on a mutual, now unknown, third source.

As I began to look into the subject of early Christian attitudes towards the Jewish temple cult with a purpose of situating the cultic discussions in Hebrews and First Clement, I turned to the letters of Paul which formed an important background to the original question for two reasons: first, because every discussion of Christianity and sacrificial cult must in some way begin with Paul as the earliest available Christian writer who touches upon these subjects; and second, because the author of Hebrews and the author of First Clement were both familiar with several of Paul's letters, especially Romans and 1 Corinthians. As it happens, these two letters are also among the most important Pauline letters when it comes to use of cultic terminology and concepts.

I decided to add these two letters, Romans and 1 Corinthians, to the investigation in order to broaden the study. Could it be that the author of First Clement was engaged in a program of restoring Paul's cultic theology and therefore ignored what Hebrews had to say concerning these matters? The

[1] Most notably, the authors of the only two commentaries on First Clement written in recent times, Andreas Lindemann and Horacio Lona, both cast doubts on the supposition that Clement knew Hebrews.

question of Hebrews' relationship to Paul's letters turned out to be another intriguing matter, and an issue which was worthy of investigation in its own right. As I added these letters I consequently saw the focus of the project shift from one which was strictly concerned with the problem of the relationship between Hebrews and First Clement to a more general one regarding literary relationships in early Christianity. At the same time, the question of cultic concepts and terminology remained at the center, as this was the issue that had tied all these writings together in the first place in the context of the study.

Thus, instead of investigating only one literary relationship (Hebrews-First Clement), this study contains investigations of two such relationships (Paul-Hebrews, Hebrews-First Clement). And instead of examining the cultic terminology and concepts of only two writings (Hebrews and First Clement), this study instead utilizes four writings in its investigation (Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews and First Clement). As I investigate the relationships between these four texts, I will focus on the cultic terminology and cultic concepts used therein.

The aim of this study is thus twofold. First, it intends to provide an understanding of how some important early Christian writings related to the Jewish temple cult by examining how these texts used cultic terminology and concepts. By investigating this in a number of different writings that are related to one another it will also be possible to address questions of whether some sort of development is discernable in this matter. How do cultic ideas and expressions change over time and in different settings?

Secondly, this study is concerned with the question of literary relationships in early Christianity. How is one to understand the way that early Christian writers used other Christian writings? Are any typical characteristics discernible regarding the earliest use of Christian writings? Were they memorized and reproduced literally? Do they appear to have carried much authoritative weight from early on? And a related question: when is it advisable to construct hypotheses concerning unknown mediating sources in order to explain some particular literary relationship?

I want to stress that while it is possible to analytically separate the aims of this investigation in this dual manner, it will become clear that they are simply two different sides of one and the same historical narrative that I will trace and present in this dissertation.

1.2. Previous Research

In this section, I will present a number of previous studies that deal with matters of cult in early Christianity. They are all studies that seek to trace some type of development or change over time, and discuss the inner logic of that change or development. I will first give a presentation of each of these studies before suggesting at the end of this section in what way this present study contributes to the discussion.

1.2.1. Robert Daly – Christian Sacrifice

In the 1978 study *Christian Sacrifice: The Judeo-Christian Background before Origen*, Robert Daly investigates the "theology of sacrifice" in Jewish and early Christian writings until the time of Origen. Daly's thesis is that the notion of "Christian sacrifice" found in Origen flows in a natural way from the biblical testimonies of both the Old and New Testaments. In the concluding chapter of the book, Daly asserts that most of Origen's ideas of sacrifice fell readily into a threefold division: "(1) the sacrifice of Christ, (2) the sacrifice of the Christian, (3) the Christian as the new temple,"[2] and that this threefold division can be found already in Paul.

Even if, as Daly maintains, "[e]ach of the three parts of this division are, in fact, explainable apart from Paul," it is still Paul who deserves the epithet "the first theologian of Christian sacrifice."[3] He was the creator of the sacrificial notions that would later be present in the writings of the church fathers, "especially in Ignatius, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, and also, to a significant extent, in Justin and Barnabas."[4] Thus, already in the beginning, Christianity is understood to have had its own views on cult and sacrifice which would have been different from those in Judaism. In the writings of early Christianity these shared views on sacrifice simply find different expressions in different writings. There is no significant tension in the early Christian movement with regard to these questions.

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[2] R. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judeo-Christian Background before Origen* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1978), 491.

[3] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 491.

[4] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 491.

1.2.2. Frances Young – Sacrificial Ideas

In 1979, the year after Daly's study was published, Frances Young put out her dissertation, entitled *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom*, although it had already been finished much earlier, in 1967.[5] She describes the aim of her study to be "to emphasize the importance and diversity of sacrificial concepts in the theology and life of the early Eastern Church, and so to throw light on the usually confused treatment, not only of Christ's atoning death, but also of the sacrifice of the Eucharist."[6] The "confusion" mentioned here is partially that which arises when the "sacrifice" of Christ is "confused with theories of substitution, satisfaction and propitiation."[7] Young successfully shows in her study that "sacrificial language in the Greek Fathers does not necessarily imply the presence of a propitiatory theory of Atonement." Among other things she calls attention to the fact that cultic language was often used apologetically by these writers, as the early Christian movement "claimed to be a religion despite having no outward and visible sacrificial cult."[8] In such cases, notions of atonement were not the primary motive for using this type of language.

1.2.3. George Heyman – The Power of Sacrifice

More recently, a number of studies have appeared that deal with issues of sacrifice in early Christianity. In 2007, George Heyman discussed sacrifice from a discourse perspective in his book *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict.* Heyman asserts that "a sacrifice is as much about how one subjectively names it as it is about a precisely defined objective ritual."[9] He further explains that,

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[5] F. Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1979), iii

[6] Young, *Sacrificial Ideas*, 1–2.

[7] Young, *Sacrificial Ideas*, 1.

[8] Young, *Sacrificial Ideas*, 1.

[9] G. Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 221.

> [b]ecause of the ubiquitous nature of sacrificial rhetoric throughout human history, sacrifice is best seen as a mode of social discourse that has provided human culture with the power to establish and control social identity by both inverting and reinforcing accepted social norms.[10]

It is thus fruitless to enquire about the origins or essence of the practice of sacrifice in order to try to understand its true meaning. When Heyman then discusses the Christian discourse of sacrifice his main focus is on martyrdom. He writes:

> If Jesus' death was understood as a sacrifice, and if all Christians ritually shared in the effects of his sacrifice through baptism and Eucharist to the point that they were exhorted to become "living sacrifices," then it was not surprising that when Rome sentenced Christians to death a new and potent dimension of Christian sacrificial rhetoric emerged – the phenomenon of martyrdom.[11]

Heyman connects this Christian "discourse of sacrifice" with the Roman discourse of the imperial sacrificial cult, with which the Christians found themselves in conflict. "In an ironic twist," he writes, "as Rome began to kill Christians for refusing to sacrifice, the rhetoric of martyrdom elevated the dead by utilizing the discursive quality of sacrifice."[12] Thus, Heyman sees two sacrificial discourses in conflict, the Christian and the Roman: "The struggle between the power of Rome and the Church was played out vis-à-vis a clash within sacrificial discourses and not a collision of competing systematic theologies."[13] As with Daly's study, *The Power of Sacrifice* presents an understanding of "Christian sacrifice" as a unified and shared concept found in a range of early Christian sources, and which can be traced back at least to Paul's letters.

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[10] Heyman, *Power of Sacrifice*, 221.
[11] Heyman, *Power of Sacrifice*, 231.
[12] Heyman, *Power of Sacrifice*, 231.
[13] Heyman, *Power of Sacrifice*, 223.

1.2.4. Maria-Zoe Petropoulou – Animal Sacrifice in Antiquity

Shortly after Heyman's book came out, Maria-Zoe Petropoulou's *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200* was published. She argues that a change in notions about God was what caused the first Christians to stop sacrificing. She writes: "The powerful experience of Jesus' presence among the twelve disciples, and that of Paul's divine visions… apparently caused a change in the conception of God which these particular Jews had previously possessed."[14] She goes on to explain that the contact with Jesus "resulted in a new apprehension of God which, in turn, led to an exceptional change in cultic semiotics, namely, the tendency to abolish ancestral customs."[15] Eventually, in the second century, this "came to be the rule" among Christians and led to the abolition of sacrifice. The reason why some Jewish Christians continued to participate in the sacrificial cult in Jerusalem after Jesus' death was that this new notion of God had not yet been fully grasped by them.

1.2.5. Timothy Wardle – The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity

Timothy Wardle's monograph from 2010, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*,[16] shares the aforementioned books' interest in the question of why the early Christians stopped participating in sacrificial cultic worship, but differs from them in that its main focus is on the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood rather than on sacrifice. Wardle argues that it was notions of priestly defilement that led the earliest Christians to reject the Jerusalem temple cult and instead begin to view their own community as the "new temple." They were not the first Jewish group to abandon the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood for reasons of piety. In Wardle's opinion, then, the

[14] M.-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 292.
[15] Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 293.
[16] T. Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

Christian rejection of the cult was not (primarily, at least) the necessary consequence of Jesus' death as a "sacrifice", but was rather based on specific historical circumstances related to matters of temple purity.

1.2.6. Daniel Ullucci – Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice

In 2012, Daniel Ullucci's study *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* was published. Ullucci goes against the oft-held view that Christianity's break with the practice of animal sacrifice was theologically inevitable and followed as a natural consequence of Jesus' sacrificial death (Daly, Heyman and Petropoulou could all be said to represent such views).[17] According to Ullucci's reading of the New Testament texts, it is only the letter to the Hebrews that clearly takes a stance against animal sacrifice. Paul, for instance, did not claim that the Jewish sacrificial cult had been abrogated through Christ's death. It was not theological reasons but rather the destruction of the Jerusalem temple which forced Christians to stop sacrificing. Only after it had become impossible to perform sacrifices, and Christians had already become non-sacrificers, did the church fathers explain that this had been God's plan all along.

1.3. Contribution of this Study

What contribution will this study make to the landscape of research that has just been presented?

First, all of the abovementioned monographs survey a broad range of early Christian writings in order to make assertions about early Christian positions on sacrifice and temple cult. The downside of such comprehensive surveys is that the authors are often unable to form their own informed opinions on particular writings and passages. They are thus often forced to rely heavily on other scholars' work on the texts. There are plenty of studies that focus only

[17] D. Ullucci reviews both Heyman's and Petropoulou's studies in *The Christian Rejection of Animal Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 226–33.

on Paul's views on sacrifice or the letter to the Hebrews' views on sacrifice, but there are no studies that try to combine something of the wider perspective, looking at more than the work of one author, while forming independent opinions on individual passages. In this study, I will attempt to do something of both.

Secondly, the tendency among the studies mentioned above is to work within fairly strong theoretical frameworks (Young's study being the exception), and towards generalizations. Thus, the studies of Heyman, Petropoulou, Wardle and Ullucci all have solid theoretical bases for making judgments on a general level, but they do not have much interest in accounting for the differences of opinion that existed in the early Christian movement. To bring some further nuance to the discussion I will therefore focus on the literary relationships between the writings that I will investigate. Questions of how they are related and what effect those relationships have for their particular views will be asked.

Thirdly, First Clement has been fairly neglected in these studies. Among Christian writings, only the letter to the Hebrews has more to say in the first hundred years after Jesus' death about matters related to the Jerusalem cult. It will therefore be a valuable contribution to add the testimony of this early Christian letter to the broader discussion.

1.4. Outline of this Study

The next two chapters will be concerned with matters of theory and method. In chapter two I will present and discuss the communication model that will form the foundation of the interpretive work of this study. Chapter three will deepen and develop the theoretical framework of chapter two by examining issues of literary dependence.

In chapter four I will turn to Paul's letters (Romans and 1 Corinthians) and investigate the use of cultic and sacrificial terms and concepts. Chapter five will then seek to establish a literary link between Paul's letters and the letter to the Hebrews. Having established this link, chapter six will be concerned with understanding how the letter to the Hebrews transforms the cultic terminology and ideas in Paul's two letters.

In chapters seven and eight I follow the same procedure as before but now with Hebrews and First Clement. Chapter seven consists of an attempt at

establishing the literary relationship between Hebrews and First Clement, while chapter eight discusses the question of how First Clement transforms the cultic concepts and terms found in Hebrews.

The study concludes in chapter nine with a summary, conclusions, and suggestions for further investigation.

2. Encoding/Decoding

In *Refiguring Mass Communication: A History* from 2010, Peter Simonson, a professor of communication and media studies, calls the apostle Paul "one of the world's great theorists and initiators of mass communication."[18] This perspective on Paul's legacy may seem foreign to New Testament specialists who are accustomed to emphasizing the occasional nature of Paul's correspondence. However, these two approaches to Paul's ministry do not need to be seen in opposition to one another. Simonson explains:

> Thanks to missionary activity and empire, Paul's letters took on world-historical significance. His theoretical work was interpretive, normative, and rhetorical, generated from the position of an active participant in the Jesus movement of the first century of the Common Era (C.E.). Through discourse addressed to audiences both particular and universal, he offered a vision of customary practice and advocated it as regulative. His letters helped call into existence one of the oldest and most influential media of mass communication, the Body of Christ.[19]

The perspective on early Christian epistolography that I will take in this study is very much in line with Simonson's viewpoint and understanding of Paul in the quoted paragraph. Since this is a somewhat uncommon view among New Testament scholars, I will devote both this and the next chapter to an exploration of its implications.

The mass communication perspective is closely connected to the questions that I asked in the introductory chapter concerning how one should

[18] P. Simonson, *Refiguring Mass Communication: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 30.

[19] Simonson, *Refiguring*, 30.

understand the way that early Christian writers used other Christian writings. In order to answer such questions, I want to be able to say something both about what they originally may have meant and how that original message was changed and/or preserved as it was received and re-appropriated.

A theoretical model that deals with both sides of communication and addresses questions about their conditions, as well as what happens in-between, is the Encoding/Decoding Model, which was developed by communication theorist Stuart Hall. Before turning to that model, I will give a more general background to communication theory by briefly presenting some earlier models.

2.1. Communication Theory: Background

2.1.1. Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver – The Transmission Model

An early and important communication model was offered in 1949 by Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver in their study *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*.[20] The main objective behind the development of this model was "to work out a way in which the channels of communication could be used most efficiently."[21] Their concern was to understand how a message could be sent from point A to point B with the greatest possible degree of *accuracy* and *efficiency*. Disturbances to this process were called "noise." Technical problems with, for instance, telephone wires, is one example of noise. Another type is "semantic noise" which is defined as "any distortion of meaning occurring in the communication process which is not intended by the source but which affects the reception of the message at its destination."[22]

[20] C. E. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949).
[21] J. Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1990), 6.
[22] Fiske, *Introduction*, 8.

At any point in the chain of communication, noise can make an intrusion and, regardless of its nature, it "always confuses the intention of the sender and thus limits the amount of desired information that can be sent in a given situation in a given time."[23] This model can be said to focus on the intentions of the sender and that person's interest in effectively allowing his or her message to come across in the anticipated manner.

2.1.2. Roman Jakobson – The Functions of Language

A model that is more sensitive to the social aspects of communication was proposed by structural linguist Roman Jakobson. According to Jakobson:

> If we analyze language from the standpoint of the information it carries, we cannot restrict the notion of information to the cognitive aspect of language. A man, using expressive features to indicate his angry or ironic attitude, conveys ostensible information, and evidently this verbal behavior cannot be likened to such nonsemiotic, nutritive activities as "eating grapefruit."[24]

Language and communication involves much more than just transmitting information between different parties.

According to Jakobson, "Language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions."[25] These functions are related to what he calls "the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication," and are presented in the following quote:

> The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to ("referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and the

[23] Fiske, *Introduction*, 8.

[24] R. Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. T. Sebeok (New York: Wiley, 1960), 350–77, here 354.

[25] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 353.

> addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication.[26]

The six constitutive factors, capitalized in this quotation, each correspond to a different function of language. The six functions are: *referential* (imparting information; oriented towards the context), *expressive* (expressing feelings or attitudes; oriented towards the addresser), *conative* (influencing behavior; oriented towards the addressee), *phatic* (establishing or maintaining social relationships; oriented towards the contact), *metalingual* (referring to the nature of the interaction; oriented towards the code), and *poetic* (foregrounding textual features; oriented towards the message).[27]

Daniel Chandler explains:

> Unlike the basic transmission model, Jakobson's model thus avoids the reduction of language to purely informational communication. Though one of the potential functions is referential (or informational), this function is not always foregrounded. Jakobson argued that in any given situation several functions may operate in a "hierarchical order," but that a dominant function influences the general character of the "message."[28]

While Jakobson's model certainly constitutes a step forward for our purposes in that it specifically takes the communicative context into account (or "the contingency of speech events"[29]), it is still largely focused on the perspective of the sender. It is the active use of language, and not the reception of it, that is the primary object of theorization.

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[26] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 353.
[27] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 353–57.
[28] D. Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2007), 184–85.
[29] Chandler, *Semiotics*, 185.

2.1.3. Umberto Eco – Aberrant Decoding

A theory that places a greater interest in the receiving end of communication was offered by Umberto Eco in a paper from 1965 entitled "Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message." In it Eco directed attention to television audiences and their comprehension of televisual messages. The approach is semiotic as he discusses "television outputs as a system of signs." He explains:

> As is true of every **system of signs**, signs and their correlations are to be seen in relation to a **sender** and an **addressee**; based on a **code** supposed to be common to both; emitted in a **context** of communication which determines the meaning of the three previous terms.[30]

With this perspective on content and meaning, Eco asks concerning televisual mass communication: "When I send a message, what do different individuals in different environments actually receive? Do they receive the same message? A similar one? A totally different one?"[31]

He then introduces the concept of "aberrant decoding." In mass communication, it is inevitable that different parts of the audience will decode the message in a number of different ways—that is, they will interpret and apply it according to their own situation—and some of these decodings will be foreign to the sender's intention. While aberrant decoding was "the unexpected exception" in times past when communication primarily took place between parties that shared the same codes, it is now "the rule in the mass media."[32]

Some examples that Eco gives of situations in which aberrant decodings may occur are:

a. "first of all for foreign people who didn't know that particular code";

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[30] U. Eco, "Towards a Semiotic Inquiry into the Television Message," in *Internationalizing Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, ed. A. Abbas and J. Nguyet, trans. P. Splendore (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 237–52, here 238 (emphasis in original).

[31] Eco, "Semiotic Inquiry," 238.

[32] Eco, "Semiotic Inquiry," 239.

b. "for future generations, or people from a different culture who would superimpose a different code on the message";
c. "for different hermeneutic traditions";
d. "for different cultural traditions, which understand the message as if it were based on their code rather than on that in which it was originally cast".[33]

It is clear that although this particular paper is mainly concerned with televisual mass communication, the concept of aberrant decoding can be applied to other types of media as well. The historical examples of aberrant decoding mentioned in the paper are actually all tied to other forms of communication, such as painting, poetry, and scholarly writing.[34]

The great value of Eco's article lies in its focus on the receiving end of the chain of communication, the theorizing of decoding practices, and that it brings communication failure to the fore. While Jakobson had stressed the social factors that determine communication events, Eco directed attention to situations in which social factors, such as cultural differences on the side of the addresser and the addressee, cause communication to collapse.

2.2. Stuart Hall – The Encoding/Decoding Model

"A model is like a map;" it "represents selected features of its territory" and can never claim to be comprehensive.[35] "This means," writes John Fiske in his *Introduction to Communication Studies*, "that we have to be purposeful and deliberate in our choice of map; we have to know *why* we have turned to it and what insights we require from it."[36] This is important to keep in mind as we now turn to the specific model that I will use for this study.

Stuart Hall's article "Encoding/Decoding" from 1973 has many things in common with Eco's paper. It too was concerned with mass communication, particularly televisual broadcasting, and while Eco spoke of "aberrant

[33] Eco, "Semiotic Inquiry," 238–39.
[34] Cf. C. Munteanu, "Aberrant Decoding and Its Linguistic Expression (An Attempt to Restore the Original Concept)," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 63 (2012): 229–41.
[35] Fiske, *Introduction*, 37.
[36] Fiske, *Introduction*, 37.

decoding," Hall used the phrase "systematically distorted communication" to describe a similar phenomenon.[37] I will attempt to present the essence of the model in four points.

First of all, Hall makes clear that communication can never be neutral. There is no such thing as a mere report of an event, and this should cause the interpreter to pay attention to what the encoder aims to do through her/his report. Hall writes:

> A "raw" historical event cannot, *in that form*, be transmitted by, say, a television newscast. Events can only be signified within the aural-visual forms of the televisual discourse. In the moment when a historical event passes under the sign of discourse, it is subject to all the complex formal "rules" by which language signifies. To put it paradoxically, the event must become a "story" before it can become a *communicative event*.[38]

The same thing is, of course, equally as true when it comes to written communication. A report of reality can never capture reality in a way that is value-free or neutral.

What Hall's model encourages us to do, therefore, is to go beyond questions of whether or not a report is faithful to the events that are being described and instead focus on the "story" that is being told through this report and to ask questions concerning what purpose this particular story has. A related question that presents itself is what the encoder is trying to achieve in her/his audience through this narration.

Secondly, Hall theorizes about communication in terms of several "linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/

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[37] S. Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*, rev. ed., ed. M. G. Durham and D. M. Kellner (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 163–73, here 170. I wish to point out that my presentation of Hall's article and arguments here is adapted to the particular use that I make of his model and deliberately omits significant theoretical aspects of his original discussion. For Hall, the concept of "systematically distorted communication" is closely connected to a structural Marxist framework in which mass communication is viewed as a tool of power and subjection. The interpretation and use of Hall's encoding/decoding model in the present investigation excludes all concerns for class struggle.

[38] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 164 (emphasis in original).

consumption, reproduction."[39] While it is in the encoder's interest to have her or his message come across fully intact, Hall stresses that,

> no one moment can fully guarantee the next moment with which it is articulated [i.e. connected]. Since each has its specific modality and conditions of existence, each can constitute its own break or interruption of the "passage of forms" on whose continuity the flow of effective production (that is, "reproduction") depends.[40]

As the message must travel through these different moments, Hall concludes that "there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding."[41] It is not merely the fact that "noise," in Shannon and Weaver's model, can disturb the message. Rather, each moment is determined by meaning structures that influence the content of communication and which, in a way, transform the message.

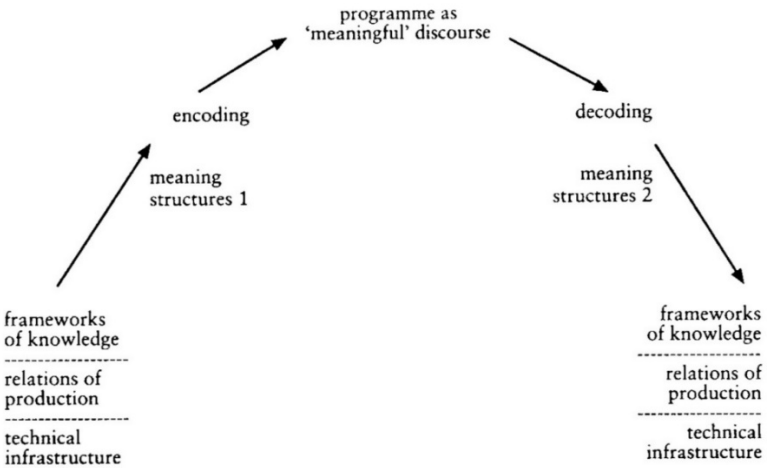

Fig. 1. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding schema.[42]

[39] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 163.
[40] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 164.
[41] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 170.
[42] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 165.

Thirdly, Hall comes to the question of misunderstandings through this general approach to communication. He writes:

> Television producers who find their message "failing to get across" are frequently concerned to straighten out the kinks in the communication chain, thus facilitating the "effectiveness" of their communication. Much research which claims the objectivity of "policy-oriented analysis" reproduces this administrative goal by attempting to discover how much of a message the audience recalls and to improve the extent of understanding. No doubt misunderstandings of a literal kind do exist. The viewer does not know the terms employed, cannot follow the complex logic of argument or exposition, is unfamiliar with the language, finds the concepts too alien or difficult or is foxed by the expository narrative. But more often broadcasters are concerned that the audience has failed to take the meaning as they – the broadcasters – intended. What they really mean to say is that viewers are not operating within the "dominant" or "preferred" code. Their ideal is "perfectly transparent communication". Instead what they have to confront is "systematically distorted communication."[43]

Instead of focusing on Eco's "aberrant decodings" which arise through various forms of misunderstanding, Hall is thus mainly interested in deviant decodings, instances when "the audience has failed to take the meaning as they – the broadcasters – intended." What this means is that the audience does not reproduce the message in the intended way, as they fail to act and think in accordance with the original intention.

Fourthly, from the foregoing discussion, Hall formulates a model of the relationship between encoding and decoding by presenting "*three* hypothetical positions from which decodings of a televisual discourse may be constructed."[44] What Hall calls "perfectly transparent communication" is when "the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in

[43] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 170.
[44] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 171.

terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded."[45] This is also called the "preferred reading" and entails a successful communication event from the perspective of the addresser.

The two other decoding positions are called "the negotiated position" and "the oppositional position." Concerning the first of these two, Hall writes:

> Decoding within the *negotiated version* contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule.[46]

The third and final position, the oppositional position, is taken when the encoded message is rejected and opposite action is taken to what the preferred decoding position suggests. These hypothetical positions suggest a pattern for investigating the relationship between encoded and decoded meanings.

In relating this model to the questions and material of this study I will first take a look at the issue of early Christian letters as mass communication media. The scholarly perspective has often been to emphasize that the New Testament letters were situational letters aimed at responding to very specific problems faced by the first congregations. In contrast to this view I will approach the material of this investigation as artefacts of mass communication. I will then discuss the meaning and function of the important, but sometimes criticized, concept of the "preferred reading" and how it will be used in this study.

[45] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 171.
[46] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 172.

2.3. The Early Christian Letter as a Medium of Mass Communication

In this section, I will first make a general reflection on the meaning structures connected to the letter as a medium of communication in antiquity. I will then comment on the category of the early Christian letter as a sub-category of the ancient letter. Finally, I will conclude by directly addressing the question of the early Christian letter as a medium of mass communication.

2.3.1. The Letter as a Medium of Communication in Antiquity

As a medium of communication in the ancient Greco-Roman world, the letter was characterized by several forms of tension.

First of all, it was characterized by a tension between *presence* and *absence*. On the one hand, it was common to describe and reflect on letter writing as a medium that made an absent person present through that person's written words.[47] The letter made it possible to continue a friendly and intimate conversation with a companion that had become physically absent.[48] On the other hand, it was common for ancient letter writers to reflect on the fact that the addressed friend was absent from them. Paul often emphasized how much he longed to be present with the congregations that he wrote to (Rom 1:11; Phil 1:8; 4:1; 1 Thess 3:6). The letter was thus understood to enable the overcoming of geographical distance, but in another sense, it could make that distance feel even more tangible.

Secondly, there is a tension between *orality* and *writtenness* connected to the ancient letter. The letter is speech in a written format, as many ancients

[47] Cf. J. M. Lieu, "Letters and the Topography of Early Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 62 (2016): 167–82, here 170–74.

[48] Cicero once defined the letter as "the communion of friends in absence" (*Philippics* 2, 4, 7). Similarly, Seneca wrote: "I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friend are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences of an absent friend!" (*Ep.* 40 trans. A Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 29).

observe. At the same time, there are things that set the letter apart from the spoken word. The letter is a kind of gift, which according to Amanda Wilcox, even functioned as an instrument of social negotiation in the way of gift exchange.[49] The letter could also "enable one to raise issues that would be embarrassing to bring up in person," since, in the words of Cicero, "a letter has no blushes" (*Fam.* 5, 12, 1).[50] More than just a substitute for spoken communication, the letter could have certain advantages for the sender as well as the receiver. At the same time, most of the letters of the New Testament were addressed to congregated groups of Christian believers and were thus intended to be experienced orally/aurally. And while Plato is certainly correct that a written text, such as a letter, cannot be requested to explain what it intends to say when its content is unclear (*Phaedr.* 275d–e), the letter has the advantage that one can return to it over and over again to experience and re-experience its message. It is also possible to make copies of a letter and distribute it to several geographically dispersed audiences (cf. Col 4:16).

Thirdly, there is a tension between *private* and *public* in relation to the medium of the ancient letter.[51] While Cicero can, at times, distinguish between private and public letters (*Flac.* 37), it is clear that this separation was not upheld in practice. On several occasions, Cicero himself expresses the wish that his private letters would remain withheld from the public (*Att.* 10, 12, 3), something which in itself reveals his awareness of the fact that his letters were being widely distributed.

At other times, Cicero addressed a letter to someone close to him while the style of the writing makes it obvious that it was intended to be read by a wider audience. An example of this is his first letter to his brother, Quintus.[52] The fictitious letters from Seneca to Lucilius are an obvious example of when the dichotomy of private and public letters breaks down.[53] In the words of Stanley

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[49] A. Wilcox, *The Gift of Correspondence in Classical Rome: Friendship in Cicero's* Ad Familiares *and Seneca's* Moral Epistles (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

[50] H-J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1998, 2006), 161.

[51] Cf. M. L. Stirewalt, Jr, *Studies in Ancient Greek Epistolography* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 15–20.

[52] Cf. Klauck, *Letters*, 158–60; R. D. Anderson Jr. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 122–23.

[53] H. Cancik-Lindemaier, "Seneca's Collection of Epistles: A Medium of Philosophical Communication," in *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture: Essays in*

Stowers, "The letter was one of the most characteristic means of expression for ancient philosophy."[54] In the New Testament, the Pastoral Epistles are perhaps the most solid example of private letters (albeit fictitious also in this case) which are really intended for the general public among believers.

What these examples show is that there was a public interest in reading of, or taking part in, more or less private correspondence. Important authors of letters were aware of this and sometimes conscientiously utilized it, but at all times we must expect that they *knew* that other people could be listening in on the conversation. As Klauck points out, "the very fact that people collected these letters from the beginning already points beyond their immediate occasion of writing."[55]

Fourthly, and connected to the last point, is the tension between the *particular* and the *general*. Important authors of letters, such as Epicurus, Cicero, Seneca, or the apostle Paul, would have been aware of public interest in their writing, resulting in a tension arising within the content of the letters between the particular and the general. As these authors begin to take into account that their conversation was being "overheard" by those other than the explicit addressee, they would presumably adapt their writing to this reality.

For these authors, the line dividing "open letters" from more private letters would not be very sharp and would at times probably become completely blurred. When we read and study the letters of such authors we must not interpret them as if this tension between the particular and the general did not exist. Sometimes the explicit addressee of a letter may not have been much more than the one to whom the letter-work was dedicated, as in the case of Lucilius in Seneca's *Moral Epistles*.[56]

2.3.2. The Early Christian Letter

While it is necessary to understand early Christian letters against the background of their wider Greco-Roman context (and certainly much can be gained from this), it is also a fact that the letter genre in which Paul writes,

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Honor of Hans Dieter Betz, ed. A. Y. Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 88–109, esp. 102.

[54] S. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 38.

[55] Klauck, *Letters*, 157.

[56] Cf. Klauck, *Letters*, 167.

and which later Christian writers emulate, was new in several respects. As Klauck notes, "the most influential letter writer of antiquity, despite Cicero's impressive correspondence, was an early Christian author, the Apostle Paul."[57]

John L. White discusses the relationship between "apostolicity" and the letter medium in the earliest centuries, in the New Testament and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. He calls Paul the "founder of the apostolic letter" and notes first that Paul's letters are "longer and more literary than ordinary correspondence."[58] White continues:

> These features are joined by the official, albeit familiar, tone of his letters. Paul always wrote in his capacity as an apostle; and, with the possible exception of Philemon, his letters were communal in nature, intended to be read aloud to the Christian communities which he addressed. That Paul envisioned the worship setting as he composed his letters is evident in the manner in which he altered customary conventions and/or by the way in which he used Christian formularies as a substitute for set epistolary phrases… Consequently, the religious nature of the epistolary setting, acting in conjunction with the apostle's own creativity, gave formal expression and recognizable identity to Paul's letters.[59]

While it is possible, as White observes, to note a number of differences between Paul's genuine letters and the other, later, "apostolic" letters in the New Testament, he nevertheless claims that the "Pauline letter is foundational" and that "all, or most, of the other NT letters were influenced specifically by his practice."[60]

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[57] Klauck, *Letters*, 442.

[58] J. L. White, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 433–44, here 436. See also R. F. Collins, *Letters that Paul Did Not Write: The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pseudepigrapha* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1988), 71–72; D. H. Liebert, "The 'Apostolic Form of Writing.' Group Letters Before and After 1 Corinthians," in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. R. Bieringer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 433–40.

[59] White, "Apostolic Letter," 436–37.

[60] White, "Apostolic Letter," 442. Cf. W. G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 21.

Another background that can shed light on some of the aspects of the "apostolic" letter is that of Jewish epistolography. Lutz Doering points out, in his monograph *Ancient Jewish Letters and the Beginnings of Christian Epistolography*, that the earliest Christian letter writers, who were all Jews, "would have been aware of Jewish epistolary praxis, for example, letters relating to community affairs, as well as (at least some of) the literary letters in Jewish scripture and literature."[61]

Concerning Paul's letter writing, Doering comments that:

> Writing to communities, as well as employing co-senders, points away from private correspondence towards official letter writing. However, the new network is not a *polis* or state, but rather resembles clubs or associations. We are thus looking at *quasi-official* letter writing, addressing an *inner public sphere* rather than the outer public sphere of a *polis* or the institutional public sphere of the Roman Empire.[62]

Doering does not deny that Paul drew on Greco-Roman letter types such as the "letter of friendship" or the "philosophical letter," but aims to add to the picture by designating them as "quasi-official," as he compares them to letters that Jewish community officials sent to other officials and communities.[63]

The early Christian letters written after Paul are even more "official" in their address.[64] Doering suggests that these are "closely related to Jewish Diaspora letters," pointing to the letter in Jer 29:1–23 and the introductory letters to 2 Maccabees (1:1–9; 1:10–2:18) as prototypes for this kind of letter.[65] In the concluding chapter of his book, Doering reflects on the early development of Christian letter writing:

> It was the blending of features derivative of Jewish epistolary praxis with letter writing traditions more widely available in the Graeco-

[61] L. Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters and the Beginnings of Christian Epistolography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 507.
[62] Doering, *Jewish Letters*, 508.
[63] Doering, *Jewish Letters*, 38
[64] Cf. White, "Apostolic Letter," 442.
[65] Doering, *Jewish Letters*, 429–31.

> Roman world that led to a more varied, and probably more intense, deployment of letters by Paul as compared to the Jewish models he would have been familiar with. For example, integrating aspects of the letter of friendship allowed Paul to reflect some of the personal connections to the churches founded by him. In some of his letters, most notably Romans, he used the epistolary form in order to expound aspects of his teaching, thereby interacting with the tradition of the philosophical letter, as represented, for example, by the letters of Epicurus or Seneca. But as we have seen, other early Christian writers were only partly willing and able to follow Paul's epistolary mode: writing for wider, less personally acquainted circles of addressees, they partly appropriated features of encyclical letters rooted in scriptural tradition and Jewish praxis.[66]

Both White and Doering emphasize the significance of the particular religious and cultural context that gave rise to Christian letter writing. This is important to keep in mind when comparing early Christian texts to other ancient writings, so as not to be carried away by superficial resemblances and similarities.

2.3.3. The Early Christian Letter as a Medium of Mass Communication

I will read a number of early Christian letters from a mass communication perspective, making use of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model. This, I would argue, is defensible for two different reasons. The first is that the authors of these letters would, to a higher degree than is often assumed or acknowledged, have realized and taken advantage of the fact that their writings would have been distributed beyond the letters' explicit addressees.

There are several reasons for this that follow from the discussions above. First, the tension between private and public in relation to the letter medium would have brought expectations that the material in these letters could apply to groups other than the named addressees. Secondly, an examination of the

[66] Doering, *Jewish Letters*, 514.

content of these letters reveals that they are very different from what one would expect from more private or delineated forms of communication. Their very length, literary character, thoroughly executed argumentation, and relative universality of topic, all point in the direction that they were meant for a wider audience than a single congregation, even if this was the primary addressee. Thirdly, the early and widespread phenomenon of the purely fictional pseudepigraphical apostolic letter testifies to how the non-pseudepigraphical early Christian letters functioned. Even if a specific addressee was mentioned, the letter was nevertheless widely assumed to have applicability elsewhere as well. This assumption was necessary if the pseudepigraphical letters were to work.

The second defense of reading the letters as mass communication media is that whether or not the letters were intended to function as such, regardless, they fairly soon began to function in this way. It is a matter of fact that Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, for example, or First Clement, which was also originally addressed to Corinth, began to be read by groups and people outside of Corinth and started to be applied to their own situations in their own cities. Thus, it is in a form of mass communication media that they were read and experienced by the writers of Hebrews and First Clement, the two "readers" that are discussed in this study.

2.4. The "Preferred" Reading

In the investigation that follows I will perform "readings" of the letters that comprise the material of this study, with the goal of understanding what characterized the early use of Christian writings. I will use Stuart Hall's concept of the "preferred reading" to envision and construct a type of ideal reading that is in line with the encoded message. I will then compare this preferred reading with the reading that I find in the reproduction/re-appropriation of the text in the decoding reader's writing. Thus, for instance, I will compare the "preferred" reading of Hebrews with the reading of Hebrews that I find in First Clement's use of Hebrews.

It is important to stress that I consistently take a reader's perspective on the material. When I speak in my readings about what a particular author, such as Paul, says or does, it is still the reader who is responsible for making these

comments. The observations are strictly based on what the reader finds in the text and the basic knowledge that the reader has about the author and the world around them both.

Two things must be further commented on in this area. First, I want to comment on the purpose of performing these readings in relationship to the overall goals of this study. And second, I want to make some clarifications concerning the preferred reading and who the imagined reader is.

2.4.1. The Readings

Rather than isolating the particular passages and verses that use cultic terminology and concepts, I will perform and present readings of the letters in their entirety. This is to acquire a sense of the meaning structures that form the discourse and to gain an understanding of the communicative function of various pieces and parts of the text.

The readings clearly separate this study from others that are concerned with matters of cult as they bring many other aspects of the texts into the discussion. The obvious disadvantage with following this path is that I run the risk of bringing unnecessary discussions on controversial subjects into the study. These may, on the one hand, damage the scholarly credibility of this work as I am forced to speak on things that I am not an expert on, and on the other hand, test the patience of the reader of this work, who may wonder about the relevance of some of these discussions.

In spite of these weighty objections, there are three reasons why I nevertheless choose this method. The first one is transparency. Every scholar who wants to write about a particular subject in a specific text has to have a general idea about the content of that text at large, and how the particular subject fits with that overall content. In my opinion, there is great value in openly disclosing how one reads the entire work.

The second reason is that it helps one to avoid making strong connections based on shallow similarities. When a scholar focuses on a limited subject in a number of different texts, there is a great risk that she or he overestimates the significance of links between various instances. Attention must therefore be paid to the function of the topic in each of the writings before a proper comparison between instances can be made. This is accomplished through the performance of readings.

The third reason is that it discourages any overestimating of the significance of the specific subject, in this case cultic matters, to the particular material. It is not uncommon for topical studies to elevate the importance of the issue central to the study in the material that is used for investigation. When a reading of a text is performed, the reader is forced to follow the text on its terms, something which makes the type of selective reading that leads to such overestimation more easily detected.

2.4.2. The Reader

Who is the reader of these readings? The reader is an *ideal* reader in the sense that it operates within the preferred code and thus interprets and understands concepts and circumstances with a general degree of accuracy. The reader is a fictional construct in the sense that it has no historical counterpart that one can name or point to. We can have no hope that archaeologists or text-critics will one day unearth or otherwise discover some artifact that will either confirm or falsify the readings that I present in this study. Instead they are the products of informed imagination which encounters the texts. As such, they are open to scholarly scrutiny and debate.

Finally, it should be noted that the reader encounters the text in the form of mass communication. The reader does not have any specific knowledge about the particular circumstances that are addressed in the message but reads it as someone who listens in on the conversation. Also, the reader cannot be assumed to have knowledge about other works of the same author. This reader is thus bound to interpret the ideas, situations, and events that the author is speaking about in line with the accounts given in the text.

3. Literary Dependence and Oral/Aural Literacy

The concept of literary dependence is of central importance for answering the questions posed in this study. In the present chapter, I will examine some of the prevailing understandings of literary dependence among scholars and offer some suggestions for how to develop our concepts in this area with regard to early Christian texts.

3.1. Traditional Theoretical Perspectives on Literary Dependence

It has often been recognized that reception or literary dependence will look very differently depending on the particular nature of both the source document and the receiving or dependent document.[67] Hypothetical dependence on Homeric epics in the canonical gospels is very different from various forms of use of the Septuagint or the Hebrew Bible in a Pauline letter; hypothetical dependence on Pauline letters in the Acts of the Apostles is very different from the way that two of the authors of the Synoptic Gospels used one or two other Synoptic Gospels; the dependence on the genuine Pauline letters by the writers of pseudo-Pauline letters is different from the use of any New Testament writing by the church fathers.

[67] Cf. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett, "Reflections on Method: What Constitutes the Use of the Writings that later formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers," in *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers,* ed. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61–81; R. Reuter, "Clarifying the Issue of Literary Dependence," in *The Early Reception of Paul*, ed. K. Liljeström (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 23–35.

In spite of this, in an article called "Clarifying the Issue of Literary Dependence," Rainer Reuter suggests that the Synoptic problem in particular "has unconsciously influenced our [i.e. biblical scholars] idea of literary dependence."[68] On the one hand, the idea that the evangelists worked as "conservative redactors… collecting traditional materials, editing them carefully and connecting them to a coherent story,"[69] has influenced the way scholars expect literary reception or dependence to function.

On the other hand, Reuter suggests that,

> the Synoptics has influenced our general view of which phenomena have to be present before we can speak of literary dependence in general. These phenomena are: a large number of parallels, parallels that are not only related to single verses but to whole passages, the same sequence of at least certain passages, and of course an extensive verbatim agreement of the parallels observed.[70]

There are, to be sure, examples of this type of dependence outside the Synoptics in the New Testament,[71] but there are also other forms of dependence that are quite dissimilar. Reuter specifically mentions cases in which "only single verses, single phrases or single expressions are taken over."[72]

To differentiate between the two forms of literary dependence, Reuter labels the first type "incorporation" (Synoptics, 1–2 Thessalonians etc.), and the second type "selective use of materials."[73] He then moves on to try to establish criteria by which the second type, "selective use of materials", can be recognized and proven.

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[68] Reuter, "Clarifying," 24.

[69] Reuter, "Clarifying," 24.

[70] Reuter, "Clarifying," 25.

[71] Reuter, "Clarifying," 26. Ephesians' dependence on Colossians, 2 Thessalonians' dependence on 1 Thessalonians, and 2 Peter's dependence on Jude, are all mentioned as examples of works that have literary connections that are similar to those of the Synoptics.

[72] Reuter, "Clarifying," 27. Examples of this, that he mentions, are Colossians' use of the Pauline epistles, or 2 Peter's use of the Pauline epistles.

[73] Reuter, "Clarifying," 26–28.

In doing so, he especially follows E. P. Sanders, who, in an investigation into Colossians' dependence on the Pauline epistles,[74] puts a strong emphasis on terminological overlap:

> According to Sanders, a fundamental precondition of proving literary dependence is a significant verbatim agreement of the texts compared to each other. A parallel which only relates to the content is not sufficient. The verbatim agreement of two passages has to consist of "three or more words… within a short space." This minimum demand is only lowered if the agreeing "words are sufficiently significant and unusual."[75]

Reuter thus follows a cautious path and is satisfied with nothing less than certitude. "Only verbatim agreement," Sanders declared, "can show possible literary dependence." Passages "in which the thought was the same, but in which no verbatim agreement" existed did not suffice as evidence for literary dependence.[76]

Another theoretical discussion of this issue, written a few years prior to Reuter's essay, is offered in Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett's article, "Reflections on Method: What Constitutes the Use of the Writings that later formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers?" What Gregory and Tuckett are primarily interested in is identifying "quotations and allusions," and they especially concern themselves with the issue of how one can find "references" to earlier works "in the absence of formal markers."[77]

It should be noted that this terminology carries certain implications regarding the nature of the "use" that one is looking for—implications that have to do with *intentionality*. It appears to rule out instances in which an author has been strongly inspired or influenced by another writer's work on a subtler level and, as a result, more or less unknowingly incorporates aspects of the earlier work into her or his own writing.

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[74] Cf. E. P. Sanders, "Literary Dependence in Colossians," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 (1966): 28–45.

[75] Reuter, "Clarifying," 33.

[76] Sanders, "Colossians," 30.

[77] Gregory and Tuckett, "Reflections," 63–68.

Gregory and Tuckett then, commendably, divide their discussion into different sections, discussing the identification of the use of the synoptic tradition under one heading, followed by a section on "John and Acts," and one on "the use of the letters and the Apocalypse." It is noteworthy that the discussion of the use of the synoptic tradition takes up nine pages, while the section on "John and Acts" is barely one page long, and that of "the letters and the Apocalypse" two pages, plainly revealing where the authors' primary interest lies.

Having discussed the issues related to the Gospels and Acts they note concerning the epistolary literature that:

> Letters present slightly different issues. Their nature as occasional documents means that they were written in response to particular circumstances at particular times. They are likely to have been written over a relatively short period of time, and not to have gone through a period of oral development, although the possibility of multiple recensions may not be excluded altogether.[78]

This statement is problematic as the generalizing remarks here are only true for a minority of the New Testament letters. Most of the letters are in fact pseudepigraphical writings and thus are not essentially "occasional documents… written in response to particular circumstances at particular times," but may instead have come into existence through a rather long and complicated redaction process.

When it comes to criteria for identifying "quotations" from New Testament letters, Gregory and Tuckett accept Andreas Lindemann's opinions on this matter. They write,

> Lindemann argues that quotations may be identified securely only when they are explicitly designated as such by an introductory formula… But he also allows that the presence of a quotation may be considered probable when a later text includes a form of words which is clearly reminiscent of Paul in terms of grammar, wording, content, provided that they cannot be attributed to a common

[78] Gregory and Tuckett, "Reflections," 79.

> tradition… He argues further that quotations may be present even if their wording only loosely resembles that of Paul, provided that the text in which they are found shows other indications of an acquaintance with the Pauline letters or with Pauline theology.[79]

Lindemann's, and thus also Gregory and Tuckett's, criteria for establishing dependence is more or less the same as those of Sanders and Reuter, since the "loose wording"-quotation cases only count when there exist other instances that have already established dependence on the same writing.[80] Gregory and Tuckett conclude the section by asserting that Lindemann's "criteria are balanced and consistent, and they may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to all the letters contained in the New Testament."[81]

In sum, what the scholars discussed under this heading have in common is a very careful approach when it comes to determining whether or not a writing is literarily dependent on another one. They are generally skeptical about authors' knowledge of other writings and prefer, in this respect, to err on the side of caution. They also appear to operate with a particular, and undisclosed, view of authorial intentionality in relation to the subject of dependence and reception; literary dependence is only present when the author has intentionally made use of an earlier writing.

3.2. Other Perspectives: Imitation and Re-writing

A somewhat different approach to the issue of literary dependence from that discussed above is taken by scholars who work with concepts of literary imitation and "writing as rewriting." Thomas Brodie, who has written extensively about these matters, points to the fact that the ancient literary world was characterized by a "deep-seated custom of preservation and re-

[79] Gregory and Tuckett, "Reflections," 80.
[80] Gregory and Tuckett, "Reflections," 80.
[81] Gregory and Tuckett, "Reflections," 80.

use."[82] Not only preservation but even *imitation* of the great writers became an ideal to strive for in the Greco-Roman world. This was acceptable "not only because the general tendency was to preserve the heritage of the past but also because that heritage was not copyrighted or individualized, but was rather regarded as common property."[83] In contrast to the modern preference for originality, Brodie asserts that "What was not acceptable was sheer invention, the fabrication of plots or myths that were unrelated to the common traditions. One had to show solid roots."[84]

Having surveyed a great amount of Greco-Roman works that illustrate the phenomena of imitation and rewriting, Brodie concludes that "just as the history and sociology of the Greco-Roman world are vital to New Testament studies, so is a study of Greco-Roman literature. Ultimately, of course, *each literary relationship must be examined on its own*."[85] When Brodie, later in his book, presents his "criteria for judging literary dependence," these are clearly created for the specific purpose of establishing the particular connection that he wishes to make between some specific books of the Hebrew Bible and the Gospel of Luke.[86]

Another list of criteria, that has much in common with Brodie's and which is intended for a wider application to narrative texts, has been developed by Dennis R. MacDonald, a scholar who has carried out work on literary dependence in a number of different ancient and biblical writings. The criteria are:

1) *Accessibility*, or *availability*, "assesses the likeliness that the author had access to the hypotext. The more widespread the proposed target of imitation, the stronger the case for imitation."[87]

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[82] T. L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2004), 3.

[83] Brodie, *Birthing*, 4.

[84] Brodie, *Birthing*, 4.

[85] Brodie, *Birthing*, 22 (emphasis mine). Another extensive survey and discussion of Greco-Roman re-writing practices is found in A. M. O'Leary (PBVM), *Matthew's Judaization of Mark: Examined in the Context of the Use of Sources in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 9–57.

[86] Brodie, *Birthing*, 44–49. For another similar discussion of criteria, see O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization*, 18–23.

[87] D. R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 8.

2) *Analogy* "seeks to place the proposed… parallels within a tradition of imitations of the same model."[88] If it can be shown that a particular story or passage was imitated by other ancient authors then that increases the likelihood that it is imitated in another document.
3) *Density*. MacDonald writes:

> Density… pertains to the volume of contacts between two texts. Density is determined by bulk, not by count; parallels between two texts may be numerous but trivial, such as "he said," "they went," "she replied." Not even a legion of such parallels would demonstrate imitation. On the other hand, as few as two or three weighty similarities may suffice.[89]

4) *Order* "is related to density insofar as it assesses the sequence of the parallels. The more often two texts share content in the same order, the stronger the case for literary dependence."[90]

5) *Distinctiveness*. MacDonald writes:

> Occasionally two texts contain distinguishing characteristics, such as peculiar characterizations, or a sudden, unexpected change of venue, or an unusual word or phrase. Some interpreters consider this the best test of dependence, "where a rare word or expression in one passage picks up a corresponding rarity in a predecessor passage, serving thus as an unequivocal marker of allusion." Frequently these rarities are flags for readers to compare the imitating texts with their models.[91]

[88] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8.
[89] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8.
[90] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8.
[91] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8–9.

6) *Interpretability*, or *intelligibility*, "the capacity of the proposed hypotext to make sense of the hypertext."[92] MacDonald writes:

> This may include the solution to a peculiar problem that has eluded other explanations. It also may include emulation, or transvaluation. Can one understand why the author targeted the particular antecedent and how she transformed it to serve her own ends?[93]

Relating this last criterion to the other ones, MacDonald notes:

> Criteria one and two are environmental, having to do with literary activity in the author's cultural milieu. Criteria three, four, and five test for similarities between two texts, including potential flags of literary dependence. This sixth criterion, however, looks for differences between texts as evidence of emulation.[94]

Several important things should be noted as one compares the discussions of literary dependence in Brodie and MacDonald's works with the more traditional perspectives discussed above.

First, there is a greater appreciation for the complexity of the issue and the relative value of lists of criteria. MacDonald points out correctly that "no list of criteria, however sophisticated, can altogether clarify the fuzzy logic of intertextual referencing. Criteria are tests, not laws."[95] Similarly, Brodie asserts:

> [I]mitation is not a narrow category of literary dependence. It is, rather, a whole world of transformation, the broad context within which diverse writers combine tradition and innovation. It is not

[92] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 9.
[93] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 9.
[94] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 9.
[95] MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8.

> tidy and predictable. On the contrary, since it is a complex arena of artistry, it allows for constant surprises.[96]

While they both evidently find lists of criteria to be useful, they stress the flexibility and unpredictability of these phenomena.

Another scholar who is heavily dependent on Brodie and MacDonald's discussions of criteria, Tom Dykstra, is content to reduce the number of criteria to three: availability, similarity, and intelligibility.[97] I agree that these three constitute a good starting point for any discussion of literary dependence.

Secondly, in contrast to the traditional model, these scholars search for and present ancient analogies of literary dependence in forming their criteria instead of simply basing them on modern assumptions of what it should look like. Somewhat surprisingly, Reuter devotes an entire section of his article to the "creative use of literary sources by Greco-Roman authors."[98] In it, he clearly demonstrates his awareness of the fact that Greco-Roman authors dealt with their sources in a flexible manner.[99] Concerning Josephus' use of sources, Reuter comments that Josephus "shows omissions, additions, changes in wording and changes in contents. The changes are so far-reaching that the agreements often consist of 'only short phrases and individual words'."[100] Reuter concludes the section by observing that "To rework literary sources in this way was an integral part of the education of orators and writers."[101] In spite of this, he does not allow this insight to affect his discussion of criteria, in which he simply opts for E. P. Sanders' model.

Thirdly, the scholars who understand literary dependence in terms of re-writing and imitation are more open for accepting cases of dependence where there exists only similarity of motifs and thought-patterns without verbatim correspondences. This is, of course, closely related to the two earlier points, and stems from the fact that MacDonald and Brodie have a more historically and empirically based perspective on these questions.

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[96] Brodie, *Birthing*, 8.

[97] T. Dykstra, *Mark, Canonizer of Paul: A New Look at Intertextuality in Mark's Gospel* (St Paul: OCABS, 2012), 204–7.

[98] Reuter, "Clarifying," 29–30.

[99] Reuter, "Clarifying," 29.

[100] Reuter, "Clarifying," 29–30.

[101] Reuter, "Clarifying," 30.

Fourthly, these authors are generally skeptical about hypothetical "third common sources," that is, the recurring scholarly idea that parallel material in two writings could and should be explained by their mutual dependence on an unknown third source. The prevalence of this solution appears to stem from modern assumptions concerning what constitutes respectful use of a text. Brodie writes:

> As the discussion of New Testament sources stands at the moment, when the comparison of texts proves difficult, there is a tendency to "explain" the difficulty by appealing to some unknown quantity—an oral tradition that is not defined, or a document (e.g. Q, a Signs Source) that is lost. These hypotheses imply a complexity of sources rather than a complexity in the authors' methods. They may have a certain validity, but part of the reason they seem relatively successful is precisely because being unknown quantities, they can be made to fill almost any gap in any solution.[102]

Instead of such hypotheses, Brodie suggests that "[a]llowance for authorial complexity opens the way to connecting extant texts."[103] Before postulating unknown sources, authorial complexity should thus be carefully considered.[104]

While I am in general agreement with scholars such as Brodie and MacDonald with regard to this issue, there is, however, one aspect that they fail to develop properly, in my opinion, and that is the oral/aural nature of ancient scribal activity.

Brodie notes correctly that "[u]nlike modern writing, which is generally geared to the eye, to being seen on the page, previous writing was largely geared to the ear, to being read aloud."[105] The argument that he makes from this is that the "pervasiveness of oral traits in ancient texts may at times cause confusion: it may lead to the premature conclusion that a particular text is dependent on oral tradition."[106] However, he misses the most important consequence to be drawn from this fact, namely, that it has strong effects on

[102] Brodie, *Birthing*, 20–21.
[103] Brodie, *Birthing*, 21.
[104] In a way, Hall's encoding/decoding model presupposes such "authorial complexity" as a rule rather than an exception.
[105] Brodie, *Birthing*, 5.
[106] Brodie, *Birthing*, 5.

how literary dependence worked in antiquity. It is to this aspect that I will now turn.

3.3. Literary Dependence and Oral/Aural Literacy

Writing about literacy in the Palestinian Jewish society of the last centuries of the Second Temple period, Martin S. Jaffee points out that "for all its literacy, this was not a 'bookish' society of the type that has existed in the modern world since the development of mass-produced, printed literature."[107] Although "[c]omplex works of literature… were composed and circulated," and books were "revered… as symbols of identity and authenticity," they were rare things for several reasons.[108]

First of all, it must be understood that reading skills were limited to a small percentage of society and were thus "regarded as esoteric professional acquisitions rather than a general cultural patrimony"; the individuals who possessed them were usually "members of elite scribal guilds associated with official institutions of palace, law court, and temple."[109]

Secondly, books were rare: "[T]he consumption of a literary text was not commonly a matter of an individual reader communing silently with a text in a moment of privacy, as in modern times," since they were "expensive and time-consuming to produce and copy by hand."[110] Books were therefore "primarily objects of the official, rather than the domestic, domain," and even "commonly functioned as ritual objects whose iconic significance transcended

[107] M. S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

[108] Jaffee, *Torah*, 15. Eva Mroczek insists that the concept of a "book" is so alien to the world of early Judaism that it can only function as a metaphor in scholarly discussions. Since it is such a common metaphor, it is easy to forget that it is just that. She therefore suggests that other metaphors should be used in order to reconfigure scholarly imaginations of ancient literary landscapes, see *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10–11.

[109] Jaffee, *Torah*, 15. Cf. M. L. Satlow, *How the Bible Became Holy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 26–27.

[110] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16.

that of the information they preserved."[111] Books were not typically "read" in antiquity, then, but rather they were "heard."[112]

Collections of books were generally not found in private homes in Palestine during the Second Temple period, and there is only "slender literary evidence (and virtually no uncontroversial physical evidence) of institutionalized libraries accessible to a broad public of readers."[113] Instead, it would have been only priestly groups, either tied to the Jerusalem Temple or "dissident communities of the kind that stood behind at least some of the Dead Sea Scrolls" that would have created and kept substantial collections of books.[114] Jaffee specifically rejects the suggestion made earlier by historians "to posit the existence of a large number of 'lay scribes' serving the needs and political-religious interests of a nonpriestly urban middle class," on the basis that it is "difficult to account for in economic terms."[115] Rather, he insists that "scribal literary culture was largely a phenomenon associated with priests or those trained in priestly milieus, whose economic existence was sustained by ideologically committed sociopolitical communities."[116]

Even in these elite literary circles, "there was commonly a distance between the physical book and its audience."[117] As the codex had not yet made its breakthrough in the first century CE, books regularly meant scrolls, and scrolls were only suited for particular forms of usage. Jaffee writes:

> [U]nless one wanted to read a book from beginning to end in one or a series of sittings, the scroll was virtually useless as a handy source of information. One might have to scroll many yards through a text to consult a particular passage. Accordingly, the most effective use of the scroll for information retrieval was available only to people—scribes themselves or others closely associated with textual performance—who were so familiar with the text that they would know more or less where in the scroll to find what they needed. In other words, those best able to use the scroll for what we might call

[111] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16.
[112] Jaffee, *Torah*, 17–18.
[113] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16.
[114] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16.
[115] Jaffee, *Torah*, 21.
[116] Jaffee, *Torah*, 22.
[117] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16.

> "informational" purposes would be people who in a basic sense already knew its contents through approximate memorization.[118]

A consequence of this material aspect of the ancient book is that "the scroll encouraged readers to view it as a mnemonic safety device—a storage system for texts already held substantially in the memory—rather than a reference source of information outside the reader's knowledge."[119] Memorization and internalization would have been important parts of what it meant to be a scribe, and this has important implications, of course, for ancient concepts of literacy. There is thus a sense in which the "main textual reservoir was the memory."[120]

Finally, the aural/oral nature of ancient literacy meant that there was a substantial amount of fluidity to ancient literary works.

> [A] given book normally circulated in a variety of textual forms, some longer and some shorter, one copy distinct in a variety of ways from any other. The line between the authorial creator of a book, its scribal copyists, and its interpretive audience was a rather blurry one and was often crossed in ways no longer retrievable by literary criticism of the surviving texts. To the degree that a book *was* its oral declamation and aural appropriation (rather than its mere material copy), the manuscript substrate of the book often bore the influence of the performative contexts in which it was shared.[121]

The "original" of a literary work, understood in this perspective, was not that which an author dictated or a scribe wrote down, but rather "the version whose words reached the audience at a given performative reading."[122] This is, then, yet another aspect which further complicates the issues of literary dependence.[123]

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[118] Jaffee, *Torah*, 16–17.
[119] Jaffee, *Torah*, 17.
[120] Jaffee, *Torah*, 18.
[121] Jaffee, *Torah*, 18 (emphasis in original).
[122] Jaffee, *Torah*, 18.
[123] In this context, it is also worth considering what Satlow notes about scribal activity: "Scribes were scholarly and creative, not human photocopy machines. When they did sit down to

The example of literacy in ancient Palestine is instructive for understanding the conditions, very different from modern ones, under which book production and consumption functioned and were active. But what are some of the specific implications of the oral/aural perspective on literacy for the topic of literary dependence?

First of all, it offers a historical setting for understanding the circumstances of literary use and practices. The authors of the works investigated in this study would all have belonged to an elite section of society that can be characterized as "scribal." They were not some poor fishermen who spent their pastime writing theological treatises, but must have been trained and educated professionals who possessed the skills and financial means necessary to produce this type of complex literature.

Secondly, it provides a background to, and offers a greater understanding of, why literary dependence worked the way it did in antiquity. We cannot expect ancient writers to have been able to keep copies of various works ready at hand; works would rather have been drawn from memory and, in the process, their content would have been transformed, not least by combining various works known to the author. The interplay between memory, written text, and performance, would have been integral to how a literary work would have been perceived, which means that it was characterized by a great degree of fluidity.[124]

Thirdly, this perspective on literacy also serves to justify the use of Stuart Hall's theory of mass communication in this study. In one sense, ancient literacy can be said to have more in common with modern forms of audio-visual communication than with common forms of modern literacy.

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copy older texts—whether because the text was in poor physical condition or because they wanted a copy for their own enjoyment—they 'corrected' and revised them according to their tastes" (*Bible Became Holy*, 39). On scribal activity and the fluent nature of ancient texts, see also E. W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Editorial Practice & the* Corpus Paulinum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16–41.

[124] This point is confirmed by the fact that ancient works have typically been preserved in many different versions, i.e. with great variations between different manuscripts. A recent study that emphasizes this fact is B. W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

3.4. A "Paradigm of Communication"

In comparing the traditional theoretical perspectives on literary dependence to the ones represented primarily by Brodie and MacDonald, a tendency was revealed to the effect that the latter perspectives are open to seeing genetic literary relationships in cases where the former are more skeptical. Tom Dykstra points out that "The belief in an early Christianity separated into multiple hermetically sealed units that were unaware of what the others were doing does not fit what we know about travel and communication in Greco-Roman society in this period."[125] In spite of this, conclusions concerning literary dependence often rest upon the unexamined presupposition that it is more likely that early Christian authors were unaware of each other's work than that they had access to them. I wonder if it should not rather be the other way around.

Brodie has protested against the "paradigm of fragmentation and isolation" which he sees lurking in the background of much New Testament research. During the twentieth century, "[t]here was emphasis on communities but little sense that the communities were in communication, or that the various New Testament writers may have known one another or one another's work."[126] Brodie suggests that in the last few decades a shift of paradigm has taken place so that we now see a "paradigm of communication" become more dominant, something that he regards positively.[127]

There are, in my opinion, at least four important aspects that could be related to a "paradigm of communication" which should be considered in relation to the criterion of availability discussed above.

First, Richard Bauckham has noted that "mobility and communication in the first-century Roman world were exceptionally high."[128] Bauckham writes:

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[125] Dykstra, *Canonizer of Paul*, 213.

[126] Brodie, *Birthing*, 72.

[127] Brodie, *Birthing*, 74–75.

[128] R. Bauckham, "For Whom Were Gospels Written?" in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9–48, here 32.

> Unprecedentedly good roads and unprecedentedly safe travel by both land and sea made the Mediterranean world of this time more closely interconnected than any large area of the ancient world had ever been. People traveled on business as merchants, traders, and bankers, on pilgrimage to religious festivals, in search of health and healing at the healing shrines and spas, to consult the oracles which flourished in this period, to attend the pan-Hellenic games and the various lesser versions of these all over the empire, as soldiers in the legions, as government personnel of many kinds, and even on vacation and as sightseers.[129]

Not only wealthy individuals but also "quite ordinary people" traveled for various reasons. As Bauckham notes, "[t]ravel was usually by foot and so was cheap."[130] More than merely a possibility, it was *necessary* for many people to travel, "including merchants (buying, selling, and shipping), freedmen in pursuit of new jobs, letter carriers, artisans, actors, athletes, runaway slaves, teachers, students, the sick seeking mineral springs and places for healing, government officials, soldiers, and tourists."[131] Thus, even a person who did not travel, if that person lived in a city, would have plenty of opportunity to meet people from other parts of the empire.[132] And with people traveled books.

Secondly, if the opportunity of communication was there for the earliest Christ believers, as the first point showed, the Christian ideals of travel, hospitality, and community would have sparked communities and individuals to make the most of it. Jesus is frequently portrayed as an itinerant preacher and healer; his followers are given the title ἀπόστολοι, the earliest traditions describe the leadership as being constantly "on the road," and the imagery of a travelling people is frequently used for the Christ-believing communities.

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[129] Bauckham, "For Whom," 32. Cf. L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974).

[130] Bauckham, "For Whom," 32.

[131] M. B. Thompson, "The Holy Internet: Communication between Churches in the First Christian Generation," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 49–70, here 56.

[132] Bauckham, "For Whom," 32.

The other side of this ideology is the receiving one: on the one hand, hospitality is frequently urged and held up as a virtue, but on the other, a recurring cause for concern expressed in early Christian writings is trouble related to visiting prophets and preachers. Finally, there is the ideal of the wider Christian community and communion among congregations of different cities. To what extent the sense of communion was fully realized is, of course, difficult to say, but it is clear that there was a movement which aimed to bring Christ believers together and make them feel part of one universal community.

Thirdly, an aspect of this issue that is seldom considered is the fact that the Christian producers of books, that is, the Christian scribes, must have been a relatively small, elite group.[133] These individuals should not have had difficulties in locating and communicating with each other. People would have known who they were. They would likely have formed their own scribal network as one part of the larger network between Christ-believing communities. Further, their literary production would probably have been geographically confined to a limited number of centers, where access to book collections and scribal material would have been provided by wealthy beneficiaries.

Thomas Brodie has compared the early Christian literary community with the Qumran community, and called it "a community of vision, integrity, scholarship, and solidarity—but without Qumran's restriction to one place."[134] With such a network or community in mind, we should expect that individual writers were aware of each other's work to a high degree. More than that, as professionals it would have been their role and duty to keep track of the works that were produced within their scribal circle.[135]

Fourthly, ancient modes of "publication" would have suited the situation pictured in the three earlier points, as it regularly "took place in the context of social relations between persons interested in literature, and subsequent copies of the work circulated along paths of friendship or personal

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[133] Cf. the discussion of the work of Jaffee above and his estimations concerning expert literacy in Second Temple Palestine.

[134] Brodie, *Birthing*, 70.

[135] One type of evidence for this is the prevalence of doctrinal conflict in early Christian writings. This point is used by Bauckham to support his "picture of the early Christian movement as a network of communities in constant communication" ("For Whom," 43).

acquaintance."[136] Loveday Alexander points out that there was an "expectation that books are for sharing, and that acquiring a particular book for oneself means having one's own copy made."[137] Thus, the letters of Paul and other early Christian writings inevitably spread through a process of copying when scribes among the Christ believers attained access to them. Alexander notes that "[c]ommitting one's ideas to writing is by no means an inevitable process: but once the Rubicon is crossed, it is almost as if the mere existence of a written text demands a wider audience."[138] The learned instruction found in Paul's letters would no doubt have been of interest (whether or not one agreed fully with the apostle) to any intellectually inclined Christian scribe, and as has been argued throughout this study, they would immediately have regarded the instruction as having a wider application beyond the original writing situation.[139]

It should also not be forgotten that the authors themselves were a force to be counted on in the process of publication and dissemination. Sometimes writers urged explicitly that addressees would see to it that other audiences also gained access to the work (Col 4:16), and even when this was not openly expressed, it can be assumed that it was the intention of the author that a carefully crafted work with an important theme would have as wide an audience as possible.

3.5. Conclusions

As I turn to investigate the relationship between Hebrews and the letters of Paul in the following chapters, I will do this by testing the relationship through the three criteria mentioned earlier in this chapter: "availability," "similarity," and "intelligibility." In discussing availability, I will specifically take the paradigm of communication as a point of departure. The discussion

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[136] H. Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 85.

[137] L. Alexander, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 71–111, here 92.

[138] Alexander, "Book Production," 93.

[139] Cf. Pol. *Phil.* 13, where insight is gained into how letters by important individuals were shared and spread among the congregations.

related to the criterion of similarity will focus attention on the specific nature of these texts and the particular relationship between them without making theoretical assumptions about them that cannot be defended from a historical perspective. Finally, the criterion of intelligibility will be discussed by way of explaining how the message is transformed in the literarily dependent writing.

4. Reading Paul

In this chapter, I will discuss cultic concepts and terminology in two of Paul's most important letters, Romans and 1 Corinthians. I have chosen to investigate only these two writings by Paul because they are the writings most likely to have been known and used by the authors of Hebrews and First Clement. As Romans and 1 Corinthians also figure prominently in discussions concerning cultic aspects in Paul's letters, it seemed appropriate to limit the investigation of Paul to readings of these two.

This choice does not mean, however, that I exclude the possibility that other Pauline letters could have been known and used by the authors of Hebrews and First Clement, or that discussions in, say, 2 Corinthians or Galatians may have influenced their views concerning matters of cult. Instead it means that the possibility of such suggestions lies outside the scope of this study.

I will begin this chapter by giving an overview of scholarly discussions regarding Paul and cult. The overview will provide a context for the issue at hand and offer alternatives of interpretation. I will then turn to the preferred readings of Romans and 1 Corinthians, according to the canonical order. Finally, I will draw some conclusions concerning Paul and cult based on the readings.

4.1. Paul and Cult: *Status Quaestionis*

According to Robert Daly, "Paul's letters contain a rather full theology of Christian sacrifice."[140] This "remarkably full and balanced theology of Christian sacrifice" contains three aspects: "(1) the Christian community as the new temple, (2) the sacrifice of Christ, and (3) the sacrifice of the

[140] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 230.

Christian."[141] In Daly's opinion, Paul's use of cultic metaphors is part of Christianity's taking over and assimilating Jewish elements to "form into something at once both strongly traditional and totally new: the religion of Jesus Christ."[142]

Along a similar line of thought, James Dunn writes that, for Paul, the "immediate indwelling of God in individual and people… made redundant any continuing (or for Gentile converts, new) loyalty to the Jerusalem temple."[143] The sacrifices that Paul instead called for was "the offering up of oneself in one's corporeal relationships, in the relationships of every day" (cf. Rom 12:1).[144] Dunn explains that Paul "transforms the holy place into the marketplace. He 'secularizes' the sanctuary by sanctifying the business of every day."[145] The apostle has thus intentionally built "a religious association without cult centre, without priests, without sacrifices,"[146] and the foundation of this cult-free faith community was Jesus' sacrifice. "One of the most powerful images used by Paul to explicate the significance of Christ's death is that of the cultic sacrifice, or more precisely the 'sin offering'."[147] According to the traditional perspectives of Daly and Dunn, then, Paul has fashioned a theology that deliberately separated his communities from the Jewish temple cult by replacing concrete cultic actions with metaphorical sacrifices, temples, and priests.[148]

In more recent times the notion that the apostle aimed to replace the Jerusalem temple with a "spiritual" cult has come to be questioned. Instead, a growing group of scholars have insisted that Paul held that "God's spirit dwells *both* in Jerusalem's temple *and* in the 'new temple' of the believers and

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[141] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 261–62.
[142] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 260.
[143] J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 545.
[144] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 544.
[145] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 544.
[146] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 548.
[147] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 212.
[148] Other proponents of this traditional view are S. Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul's Cultic Atonement Metaphors* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004); N. Gupta, *Worship that makes Sense to Paul: A New Approach to the Theology and Ethics of Paul's Cultic Metaphors* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Heyman, *Power of Sacrifice*, 111–22; M-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 292–93.

of the community" (cf. Rom. 9:4).[149] Paula Fredriksen, for instances, argues that,

> Had he [Paul] valued the temple less, he would not have used it to exemplify his communities; if he had challenged the function and probity of the laws of sacrifice, he would not have used them as the binding metaphor for his mission.[150]

It is specifically the "language… of the Jerusalem temple" that Paul "mobilizes" in order to explain the "mechanism of this redemption."[151] While strongly disagreeing with scholars like Daly and Dunn on the issue of Pauline supersessionism, Fredriksen no doubt shares their opinion that the Jewish temple cult and theories concerning its function was a cornerstone in Paul's theological thinking.

Still, others have insisted that Jewish cultic imagery was peripheral to Paul's thought; at least when it comes to soteriology, and have instead turned to other models. Sam K. Williams pointed especially to portrayals of individuals dying for the sake of others in the plays of Euripides and in 2 and 4 Maccabees, and argued that this was the primary background for Paul's soteriological understanding.[152] Building on Williams' conclusions, David Seeley later argued that Greco-Roman concepts of "noble death" were much more important to Paul for interpreting Jesus' death than Jewish cultic imagery was.[153]

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[149] P. Fredriksen, *Sin: The Early History of* an *Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 38–39. Cf. P. Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: Harper One, 2009), 157; A. Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 383–85; J. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 219–21; Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 77–78.

[150] Fredriksen, *Sin*, 38.

[151] Fredriksen, *Sin*, 36.

[152] S. K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975). M. Hengel also noted the significance of Euripides' plays for understanding New Testament notions of the atonement (*The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1980], 20–21).

[153] D. Seeley, *The Noble Death: Greco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990). Seely compared Jesus' death in Paul's writing not

Another scholar who belongs to this camp is B. Hudson McLean, who investigated Jewish understandings of sacrifice in light of the research of Jacob Milgrom,[154] and concluded that "When Paul's theology is compared with Jewish sacrifice, it is the contrasts—not the similarities—which abound." [155] Thus, McLean claimed, "there is no theological or textual justification to describe Paul's cursed and sinful Christ as sacrificial."[156] McLean instead suggested that "Mediterranean apotropaic rituals"[157] make up the background of Paul's thought concerning the efficacy of Jesus' death.[158]

More recently, Aaron Glaim has argued "that there is no clear evidence to support the common scholarly position that the Pauline epistles express a sacrificial theology of Jesus' death based on biblical ideas about sacrifice and atonement."[159] Basing his understanding of Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death particularly on an exegesis of Rom 3:21–26, with the use of the term ἱλαστήριον in verse 25, Glaim suggests that "Paul viewed Jesus' death as an opportunity provided by God to recognize God's power over life and death, thereby acknowledging his majesty and rectifying the dishonor that they showed him through their adoption of idolatry."[160]

In sum, there are scholars who understand Paul to have been quite deliberate in constructing a cultic theology, either in opposition to the Jewish cult or in reverence of it. Others have, however, suggested that the categories that Paul worked with were quite different from the Jewish-cultic ones and that his use of cultic terminology should be regarded as accidental. Often, other spheres of influence than the Jewish cult should be sought to explain the sense of Paul's expressions.

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only to that of the Maccabean martyrs, but also to examples in the Greco-Roman philosophical literature, such as Socrates and Cato.

[154] E.g. J. Milgrom, "Sin-Offering or Purification-Offering?" *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971): 237–39.

[155] H. McLean, *The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 52.

[156] McLean, *Cursed Christ*, 52.

[157] Scapegoat rituals in which a human or an animal was cursed in order that the community would prosper.

[158] McLean, *Cursed Christ*, 143–45.

[159] A. Glaim, "Reciprocity, Sacrifice, and Salvation in Judean Religion at the Turn of the Era" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2014), 174. Much of Glaim's argument concerning Paul is based on the work of S. Stowers (*A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994]) and Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 69–79.

[160] Glaim, "Reciprocity," 208.

4.2. A "Preferred" Reading of Romans

As I now turn to the "preferred" reading of Romans, I want to remind the reader of the fact that my chosen method prohibits extensive discussions of secondary literature on questions related to cult and sacrifice. Several verses and passages in Romans have been of key importance for scholars who have tried to systematize Paul's understanding of these matters, among them 3:25, 8:3, and 12:1. This reading does not pretend to be the final word on what Paul *originally intended* or ultimately *had in mind* as he wrote this letter, which is what most of the secondary literature aims to do. Instead, it represents a suggestion for how to understand the letter in its entirety without presuming knowledge of other Pauline letters. This represents a different perspective on the letter from the one that most commentaries take, for instance, and will partly explain why this interpretation differs in some respects. I do not wish to deny that other readings of the letter may be equally acceptable since my aim is nothing more than to offer one historically plausible reading, given the particular circumstances that were laid out in section 2.4 above.

4.2.1. Introducing the Letter (Romans 1:1–3:20)

Reflection on the ministry of Paul is at the forefront in the introductory passage,[161] as he introduces his apostleship in verses 1–6, and particularly emphasizes his mission to "bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name" (v. 5). Paul asserts that he serves God in his spirit "by announcing the gospel of his son" (v. 9), and that he has intended to visit the Romans "In order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians" (vv. 13b–14a). The universal scope of Paul's mission is thus

[161] Scholars frequently note, with reference to the unusually long self-identification in the letter's opening, that Romans stands out among Paul's genuine letters in that Paul had never visited the addressees in this city, and was "not personally known" by them. E.g. C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1962), 15; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), 1.

accentuated here in the beginning of the letter, a theme that is closely related to the fundamental message of the letter as a whole.[162]

The expression "whom I serve in my spirit" in verse 9 (ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου) has sometimes been understood to carry cultic overtones since λατρεύω is predominantly used in the LXX with reference to cultic service.[163] The connection between the introductory passage and 15:14–33 makes such an interpretation probable (see especially 15:16).[164] Whether or not one should understand it to imply "that Paul is deliberately contrasting the worship appropriate in relation to the gospel with the typically cult-oriented worship of his fellow Jews,"[165] as Dunn suggests, is difficult to say, however.

In 1:16–17 Paul states the main thesis of the letter.[166] The gospel is,

> the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

A number of key terms and concepts appear in this statement that will gradually be expounded in the letter. Before Paul unpacks this statement, he turns to paint the background against which they should be apprehended.

First, in 1:18–32, Paul announces God's judgment on the gentile peoples.[167] God's response to their sinful behavior was that he "gave them up" (παρέδωκεν αὐτούς, 1:24, 26, 28). The gentile world thus became enslaved to powers that made it impossible for them to obey God and this woeful state of the world is itself a revelation of God's wrath (1:18). And in 2:1–3:20 Paul explains that at this present stage in history the Jews are no better off than the

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[162] Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Nashville: Nelson, 1988), 25–26; R. Jewett draws on rhetorical categories for his interpretation of this passage and regards it as a part of the *exordium*, see *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 96.

[163] E. g. S. Byrskog, *Romarbrevet 1–8* (Stockholm: EFS-förlaget, 2006), 23.

[164] Byrskog, *Romarbrevet*, 28.

[165] Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 29.

[166] Jewett, *Romans*, 135: "That this passage contains the theme or thesis of Romans is almost universally accepted among commentators."

[167] Barrett, *Romans*, 31–41; P. F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 145–50; Stowers, *Rereading,* 85–100. Many scholars think that Paul is including the Jews in this description: see Byrskog, *Romarbrevet*, 45; Cranfield, *Romans*, 28; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 70–76.

non-Jews: "both Jews and Greeks are under the power of sin" (3:9); "there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:22b–23). The problem that is addressed in these chapters is that some appear to imagine that it is enough to be "hearers of the law" to be "righteous in God's sight" (2:13). These individuals are accused by Paul because they do not act in accordance with their claims to be proper observers of the Torah (2:17–28).

4.2.2. The Salvation of Christ (Rom 3:21–26)

That the first three chapters in Romans should be understood in a context of apocalyptic end-time revelation is signaled by Paul's frequent use of "disclosure"-terminology.[168] Perhaps the most explicit example of this end-time perspective is found in 3:26, where Paul announces that God has acted "to prove [πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν] *at the present time* [ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ] that he himself is righteous." These chapters do not present a timeless philosophic reflection on human incapacity to act morally. Instead, Paul argues historically that God first allowed the power of sin to spread among the gentile nations in the past, and now, to "reveal his righteousness," God allowed sinful hardening to get a grip on large parts of the Jewish people, in order to show that he is "the God of gentiles also" (3:29).[169]

What God has revealed in these final days is the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: "the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ" (3:22). Jesus is the *model* of faith and the *object* of faith.[170] He has become the ultimate pattern of the "obedience of faith" (cf. 1:5) when he remained "faithful" until the end.[171]

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[168] "[T]he righteousness of God is revealed [ἀποκαλύπτεται]" (1:17); "the wrath of God is revealed [ἀποκαλύπτεται]" (1:18); "the righteousness of God has been disclosed [πεφανέρωται]" (3:21); God "put forth [προέθετο]" Christ "to show [εἰς ἔνδειξιν] his righteousness" (3:25).

[169] Later in the letter he puts it in the following way: "God has imprisoned all in obedience so that he may be merciful to all" (11:32).

[170] Cf. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 166*:* "[T]he phrase [διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] is potentially ambiguous, since πίστις can mean both 'faith' and 'faithfulness'… and since the genitive construction can be taken in different ways ('faith given by Jesus Christ,' 'Jesus Christ's faith=faithfulness')."

[171] Cf. Stowers, *Rereading*, 37–38.

Those who believe that God has established a new form of righteousness are "justified as a gift, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:24, δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). The "justification" spoken of here concerns an acquittal of previously committed sins (cf. 4:7–8), but perhaps most importantly, an *empowerment* to act in accordance with that which one knows to be ethically correct behavior.[172]

In 3:25 Paul writes of Jesus that "God put him forth as a means of atonement, through faith, in his blood" (προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι). A common opinion concerning this verse is that ἱλαστήριον should be understood as referring to the mercy-seat in the Jerusalem temple, and that Jesus is thus presented here as "the new temple."[173]

Those who favor this interpretation point to the fact that in the LXX ἱλαστήριον is consistently used as a technical term for the "mercy-seat" and it is this meaning that the term has in its only other occurrence in the New Testament (Heb 9:5). In Rom 5:2, Paul uses language of "access" that some have understood in the cultic sense of heavenly temple-access, which perhaps could strengthen the idea of Jesus as a "temple."[174] Further, early interpreters such as Origen and Theodoret of Cyrus favored this interpretation.[175] Related to this view are the suggestions that this verse speaks of Jesus' death as

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[172] Cf. Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*, ed. and trans. G. L. Bray (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009), 29. Contra the common opinion among scholars that "justification" in Paul is only related to the "objective" side of human salvation and not the "subjective", see, for example, Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 385–89; S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 261–96.

[173] E.g. Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 213–15; Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 140–57; Jewett, *Romans*, 284–90.

[174] Gupta argues that the statement that believers "have obtained access [τὴν προσαγωγήν] to this grace in which we stand" (5:2) should be understood as speaking of believers' "privilege of access to the glorious temple presence of God" (Gupta, *Worship*, 118). But this reference is vague and Paul never appears elsewhere to envision God as dwelling in a heavenly temple as some other Jewish writers did (e.g. 1 En. 14.8–25; T. Levi 3:5–6; Heb 8:1–5).

[175] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Books 1–5*, trans. T. P. Scheck (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 216–26. Origen's interpretation is based on the assumption of the "unity" of the Christian Bible which leads him to search for types of the gospel message in the Jewish Bible. See also Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Letters of St Paul, vol. 1*, ed. and trans. R. C. Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox, 2001), 64.

prefigured in the Day of Atonement,[176] and that Jesus' sacrifice is related to a heavenly temple inauguration.[177]

On the other hand, Josephus and 4 Maccabees used ἱλαστήριον to speak of atonement or appeasement in a more general sense (*Ant.*16.7.1; 4 Macc 17:22), and many early Christian commentators did not read Rom 3:25 as referring to the mercy-seat.[178] It is also difficult to make good sense of the meaning of the passage if the mercy-seat is what is intended here.[179] First of all, how would it help Jews and Gentiles enslaved to sin that Jesus was put forth as a new mercy-seat? Secondly, how can one make sense of the phrase ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, if ἱλαστήριον is taken as "mercy-seat"? Translations that include "mercy-seat" are necessarily strained.[180] It is thus better to understand this phrase as saying that Jesus has, through the faithful endurance by which he shed his own blood, become a pattern of God's righteousness and a "means of atonement" for those who take part in his ἀπολύτρωσις.

Paul's language in these verses is clearly sacrificial ("atonement," "blood," "sins," "redemption"), but the image does not point to an ordinary sacrifice performed in the Jerusalem temple. The sacrifices of the temple were offered by humans as gifts to God in worship. The "sacrifice" of Christ, by contrast, was offered *by God* (cf. 8:32), in order to release humanity from the grips of sin and cause a saving transformation in them. The sacrificial imagery in this passage points to the *cleansing* effect of Jesus' blood.[181]

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[176] D. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 202–4.

[177] W. Kraus, *Der Tod Jesu als Heiligtumsweihe: Eine Untersuchung zum Umfeld der Sühnevorstellung in Römer 3,25-26a* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991).

[178] Cf. Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries*, 29; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 7; Pelagius, *Pelagius' Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, ed. and trans. T. S. de Bruyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 82.

[179] Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*,75–76.

[180] Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 268: "Christ Jesus, 'whom God put forth as a mercy seat' through faith 'in his blood' for a demonstration of his righteousness." Jewett adds the comment that "The strange wording is explained by Paul's redactional insertion" (288).

[181] Cf. John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 7. Dunn writes: "The imagery is more of the removal of a corrosive stain or the neutralization of a life-threatening virus than of anger appeased by punishment" (*Theology of Paul*, 214–15).

4.2.3. Boasting in the Law and in Hope (3:27–6:11)

Paul continues by asking "Then what becomes of boasting?" (3:27). It is not boasting (καύχησις) in general that Paul has in mind but a particular type of boasting.[182] In 2:17, Paul has accused his Jewish interlocutor, saying, "[you] rely on the law and boast [καυχᾶσαι] of your relation to God," and he now asks the rhetorical question, "Or is God the God of Jews only?" (3:29). The matter of discussion is whether God has unduly privileged the Jews, or whether it can be said that he has been righteous in his dealings with the world's nations.

The faith principle—or the "law of faith" as he now calls it (3:27c)—has been operative all along and the Jewish law has given testimony to it (cf. 3:21). It was through faith in God's promise that Abraham was declared righteous. While other ancient interpreters had sought the basis of Abraham's election in his pious deeds (cf. Jub. 11.14–12.24; *L. A. B.* 18.5; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.154–155, 183),[183] Paul's reading of Genesis makes Abraham into one "who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly [ἀσεβής]" (4:5). Having received the promise from God, Abraham lived in and by the obedience of faith (4:18, 20–21).

In the beginning of chapter 5, Paul discusses again the subject of καύχησις, "boasting" (vv. 2, 3, 11). Now that God has revealed that boasting about the law of Moses is excluded (3:27), the proper thing to boast about is the new hope in Christ.

In 5:6–11, Paul returns to the topic of Jesus' death for others. There was no shortage of examples in the ancient world of stories of individuals who courageously died for others, and early Christian writers were well aware of this (cf. 1 Clem. 55:1; Origen, *Cels.* 1.31). It is against this background that Paul can say "Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die" (5:7). What makes Jesus unique, however, is that he dies for "sinners" and "enemies" of God (vv. 8, 10). They are changed from being enemies to having become

[182] Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* 185; Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 168. Contra Jewett, *Romans*, 295–96.
[183] Cf. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* 205.

"reconciled" (vv. 10–11).[184] It is the death of Jesus that releases them from bondage, and it is God who, in his love, is active in this event (v. 8).[185]

In 5:12–21 Jesus is compared to Adam, who is called "a type of the one who was to come" (v. 14c). We do not learn in what way Adam's first transgression has made sin enter into the world and spread throughout humanity,[186] but it is a similar principle that is at work now that Christ's righteousness is spreading and exercising dominion (vv. 18–19). The Jewish law is only a historical parenthesis which, if anything, made matters worse (5:20).

After presenting Adam's transgression as analogous to Christ's accomplishment in order to explain its logic, in chapter 6 Paul turns to the notion of "union with Christ". The destiny of Christ is shared by the believer so that the believer can also be said to have died and risen with Christ (6:9–11). Significantly, these two chapters contain no references to cultic atonement.

4.2.4. The Law and the Spirit (chs. 7–8)

Parallel with the thought in chapter 6 that with Christ, believers have died to sin, Paul insists in chapter 7 that they have also died to the Jewish law. In 7:5–12 Paul explains in what way the Jewish law multiplied trespasses (cf. 5:20). Sin, here a living force and active agent, seized "an opportunity in the commandment, [and] produced in me all kinds of covetousness" (v. 8, cf. v. 11). The law is not bad or sinful; the problem is that "the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin" (7:14).

The solution to the dilemma set forth in chapter 7 is given in chapter 8 (vv. 3–4), when Paul writes:

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[184] καταλλαγ-terms do not belong to the cultic sphere but to the social, cf. C. Breytenbach, *Grace, Reconciliation, Concord: The Death of Christ in Graeco-Roman Metaphors* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 172–79.

[185] Cf. Jewett, *Romans*, 364: To turn this into a drama of assuaging God's anger or counterbalancing divine justice is to impose later theories of the atonement onto a passage where they do not belong."

[186] Dunn observes (*Romans 1–8,* 272) that "unlike most of his contemporaries Paul does not speculate about the way in which sin entered the world," whether through Satan (Wis 2:24), Eve (Sir 25:23), or the "evil heart" (4 Ezra 4:30).

> God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh could not do: by sending his own son in the form of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

The phrase which the NRSV translates "to deal with sin," περὶ ἁμαρτίας, has sometimes been understood to refer to the "sin offering" (cf. LXX usage).[187] There are several things, however, that speak in favor of the NRSV rendering.[188] First, the Septuagint is not consistent in the way that it translates the Hebrew noun *ḥaṭṭāʾt* ("sin offering").[189] Glaim thus points out that,

> even in the unlikely scenario that Paul assumed that his addressees possessed intimate technical knowledge of the Septuagint's cultic idioms, it remains doubtful that they would construe the phrase *peri hamartias*, "on account of error/sin" as the phrase, "as an error/sin sacrifice," for the Septuagint provides no consistent precedent for this construal.[190]

Secondly, Glaim notes that the preposition εἰς rather than περί is what we would have expected if the phrase were to be taken in the sense of "sin offering" and in line with Septuagint use.[191] Thirdly, according to Leviticus, the animal presented as a sin offering should be "without blemish" (4:3, 23, 27, 32), but Paul emphasizes that the son is sent "in the form [ὁμοίωμα] of sinful flesh" (8:3). Fourthly, the blood which is of such importance to the expiation rites in Lev 4, and which was mentioned in Rom 3:25, is not part of the argument here. Fifthly, justification and forgiveness are also absent

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[187] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 239; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 216.

[188] The patristic commentators show no awareness of this possibility. Cf. Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries*, 62; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 13; Pelagius, *Romans*, 106; Theodoret, *Letters of St Paul*, 88; Origen, *Comm. Rom.*, 366. Modern commentators are also often either unaware of, or simply ignore, this possibility, e.g. Barrett, *Romans*, 156; Cranfield, *Romans*, 177.

[189] See Glaim, "Reciprocity," 188–94, for in depth linguistic discussion and examples.

[190] Glaim, "Reciprocity," 190.

[191] Glaim, "Reciprocity," 190–92.

concepts in this context. Paul is thus using a different model here from that in 3:25 for interpreting the function of Jesus' death.[192]

The explanation in 8:3–4 instead parallels those of chapters 5 and 6 where Jesus' righteousness is understood to spread throughout humanity through mystical union with Christ. A consequence of this union is that believers become partakers of the divine spirit. It is by walking "according to the spirit" that believers are able to defeat the flesh that is enslaved to sin (8:1–14). The union with Christ further comes to expression through divine adoption (8:14–17) and participation in Christ's sufferings (v. 17; cf. 5:3–5).

What Paul says in 8:32 ("He who did not withhold his own son, but gave him up for all of us") has been understood to contain an allusion to Gen 22:12 and the sacrifice of Isaac ("the Aqedah").[193] As in the earlier passages that have been discussed, it is *God's* faithful and loving character that is revealed through Jesus' sacrifice. Believers can be certain that God will not accuse them since he has proved to them through the death and resurrection of Christ that he has forgiven their sins and is on their side (vv. 33–34).

Some verses later, in 8:36, believers are portrayed in sacrificial imagery as they are likened to sheep that are to be slaughtered. Paul is quoting from Ps 44:23 with the purpose of strengthening the believers in the conviction that their suffering is in accordance with the will of God and is not to be taken as a sign that God has abandoned them. Since they are "predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family" (8:29), it is fitting that they suffer sacrificially just as Christ suffered as a sacrifice. [194]

4.2.5. Israel and God's Faithfulness (chs. 9–11)

Is there a conflict between God's righteousness and his faithfulness? If Paul argued in the first chapters of the letter that God's righteousness demanded

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[192] McLean (*Cursed Christ*, 140–41) proposes that an expulsion ritual is the background for Paul's statement here. Cf. Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 114–16; Jewett, *Romans,* 484.

[193] E.g. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 182; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 501; Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 172–73; R. B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 61–62. Jewett has a good discussion of the evidence against this supposition (*Romans*, 537).

[194] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 240–41; Gupta, *Worship,* 124; Hays, *Echoes*, 62–63.

that he justified the gentiles by faith, then what about the negative consequences that this had for Israel? Does not the faith principle imply that God is unfaithful to his covenant with Israel? Aware of the force of such questions, Paul assures his audience that he has "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" in his heart for Israel's sake (9:2). Numbering the blessings that Israel has received in the past, Paul writes:

> They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory [ἡ δόξα], the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship [ἡ λατρεία], and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (vv. 4–5)

This statement has caused several interpreters to understand Paul as considering "the temple cultus as a central and continuing privilege of the Jews."[195] Fredriksen argues that the reference to God's δόξα is proof that Paul considered God's temple presence to still dwell in Jerusalem.[196] It does not, however, make sense for Paul to first say, "I am in anguish and wish that I could be accursed for their sake," only to declare in the next sentence that "all is well with Israel." The point is rather that all these gifts and blessings have been given to the people in the past and they are proof that God will not *ultimately* abandon the Jewish people, even though he has turned his back on them for the moment (cf. 11:32).[197]

The rest of chapter 9 is about divine election and the freedom that God has in relation to humankind. Ultimately, as Paul writes, God "has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses" (9:18). God is at this time abandoning Israel in order to show mercy to the gentiles (9:25–26). In the end, God will be glorified through all these events: "For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all" (11:32).

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[195] Stowers, *Rereading*, 130. Also Fredriksen, *Sin*, 38–39.

[196] Fredriksen, *Sin*, 39. Against this view, see Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 281.

[197] I thus agree with Hogeterp's remark concerning 9:4 that "Paul's perspective on the Israelite prerogatives, including the Temple cult, is determined by faith which enlightens traditions" (*God's Temple*, 282).

Chapters 9–11 contain two references to "Zion," both of which appear in scriptural quotations. 9:33 reads: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame" (cf. Isa 28:16; 8:14). What Paul is asserting in this passage is that Israel "stumbled over the stumbling stone" (v. 32); they lacked faith in Christ. The reason behind the reference to Zion is thus that the death and resurrection of Jesus took place in Jerusalem and it is this that caused the majority of Jews to stumble.[198]

The second reference to Zion is in 11:26; "Out of Zion will come the deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob" (cf. Isa 59:20). Paul has just explained that God cannot be said to have rejected Israel since he always kept a "remnant, chosen by grace" (11:5) that remained faithful (cf. 9:27–28). And while Israel has been caused to stumble, it is not so as to fall (11:11). God has planned all along for their full inclusion when the time is right (11:12, 26), and it is about this future moment that the quotation in 11:26 speaks.[199]

4.2.6. Bodies as Sacrifice (12:1–15:13)

The next section begins with one of the letter's most important sacrificial expressions:

> I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship [παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν]. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may

[198] Cf. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (Nashville: Nelson, 1988), 583–85; Jewett, *Romans*, 611–12.

[199] A common interpretation of this verse is to understand Zion here as referring to "the heavenly Jerusalem" (cf. Gal 4:26) from whence Jesus will return (cf. Cranfield, *Romans,* 283; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 682; Jewett, *Romans*, 704). Such an interpretation only suggests itself if one uses the Galatians passage as an interpretive key for this passage. There is nothing in Rom 11 that points in that direction.

> discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (12:1–2)

These verses are generally considered to mark a turning point in the letter.[200] There are several words and expressions that echo the earlier content of the letter. In 1:9 obedience to God's will and full dedication to his cause is spoken of in cultic terms as Paul describes his own service. The sense is similar here, in 12:1, when Paul appeals to his audience to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. In 6:19 he had exhorted them—using the same verb as in 12:1, παρίστημι—to "present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification."[201] The implication of Paul's use of this imagery is that nothing less than complete dedication to God is demanded.

It is this sense that also lies behind the stress, in 12:1–2, on both the rational principle (λογικὴ λατρεία, νοῦς) and on the bodily aspect (σῶμα), thus embracing the full totality of the human person.[202] Paul is not presenting a more spiritual alternative to Israel's earthly temple service,[203] but is rather asserting that true obedience is a pleasing gift of sacrifice to God.[204]

As he unpacks the appeal in the following chapters it becomes clear that in Paul's view God has a claim on every aspect of the life of believers. They are not to "think" of themselves more highly than they ought to, but to "think" with sober judgment (12:3);[205] their love should be genuine (v. 9); they should bless even those who persecute them (v. 14);[206] and they are to pay respect to,

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[200] Or, as Jewett puts it, "There is a consensus among current exegetes that these two verses provide the main theme, the introduction, summary, or a kind of title paragraph for the subsequent chapters of moral exhortation" (*Romans*, 724).

[201] Cf. Gupta, *Worship*, 119.

[202] Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 294; Dunn, *Romans 9–16,* 709.

[203] Contra Dunn: "[Paul] was deliberately breaking with the typical understanding of a religious community dependent on cult centre, office of priest, and act of ritual sacrifice" (Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 548). Neither is it likely that it is "directed against mechanical externalism" or "outward rites" as many older commentators posited, e.g. Barrett, *Romans*, 231; J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 2:112.

[204] Cf. Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 284–86.

[205] This is related to Paul's emphasis on having a renewed mind in 12:2.

[206] Some scholars have interpreted Paul's emphasis on presenting the σῶμα as a sacrifice in 12:1 as a reference to bodily suffering in a context of persecution (cf. 8:36). Cf. Gupta, *Worship,* 124; Hays, *Echoes*, 62–63.

and submit themselves to, the governing authorities (13:1). With regard to their communal life they should accept those who observe ceremonial ordinances that they do not themselves abide by (14:1–15:13). In sum, Paul declares:

> We do not live for ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (14:7–8)

4.2.7. Closing the Letter (15:14–16:27)

As Paul approaches the end of the letter, he ties the discourse to the letter-beginning and reflects again on his own ministry and role in writing. He has written to them "rather boldly by way of reminder" (15:14–15),

> because of the grace given me by God to be a minister [λειτουργός] of Christ Jesus to the gentiles in the priestly service [ἱερουργέω] of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the holy spirit [ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ]. (15:15b–16)

Apart from the reference to Paul's priestly gospel service, which has a parallel in 1:9, references to the obedience (ὑπακοή) of the gentile believers (1:5; 15:18) and to the spiritual gifts that Paul has (1:11; 15:19), are present both here and in the beginning of the letter. The notion and motif of Paul offering up the gentiles in their obedience to God thus frames the whole message and appears to be an important image for how he conceives of his mission.

Jerusalem comes into focus again in chapter 15. Paul states in verse 19 that "from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ," a statement that implies that Paul understood Jerusalem to be the geographic center of his world and the place from which all mission had its origin.[207]

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[207] Jewett, *Romans*, 913.

Some verses later, in discussing his travel plans, Paul again mentions Jerusalem and that he is headed there "in a ministry to the saints; for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem" (15:25b–26). The argument that Paul then gives for the collection is that the gentiles have a debt to pay to the saints in Jerusalem: "if the gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things" (15:27).[208] Paul's point is thus that the gospel originally *belongs* to the Jews; they are the "natural branches" (11:24) who have an organic connection to the "holy root" of the olive tree of God, to which the gentiles have been grafted in (11:16–17).

Despite this positive emphasis, Paul has an ambiguous relationship to Jerusalem, which comes to expression in 15:30–31: "I appeal to you… to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." For Paul, Jerusalem is now a place "between glories"; it had its former glory days and these days will again return, but at the present time Judea is mainly a place of unbelief. Even his relationship with the believing "remnant" in Jerusalem appears to be strained causing Paul to be uncertain regarding the reception of the monetary gift (v. 31).

4.2.8. Conclusions

According to this preferred reading, the dominant use of sacrificial language and imagery in Romans occurs in relation to believers' obedience to God. Several times Paul speaks of himself as a priest or a temple servant who officiates in sacrificial service before God, and it is the community of believers that make up the well-pleasing sacrifice. It is impossible, however, to draw conclusions about his views concerning the status of the Jerusalem cult from the use of this imagery in Romans.

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[208] Hogeterp observes that in verse 27 Paul uses the verb λειτουργέω to speak of the gentiles' "service" to the saints in Jerusalem and makes the suggestion that "This passage about the other part of Paul's service, which is related to the Jerusalem church, establishes the other half of the cultic metaphor which Paul began in Rom 15:16" (*God's Temple*, 288). Cf. Dunn who sees here "the implication of the tables having been turned—Gentiles ministering (as priests) to Jews" (*Romans 9–16*, 876).

Jesus' death is central to Paul's argument in Romans as it is said to cause a fundamental moral and spiritual transformation in the lives of believers; it is what sets believers free from bondage in sin. While sacrificial terminology and imagery is used concerning Jesus' death, it is clear that it is a very different type of sacrifice from those that are regularly offered in the Jerusalem temple. The similarity consists in the fact that Jesus' sacrificial death is portrayed as having a cleansing effect. The major difference, however, is that God is not presented as the receiver of this sacrificial gift but rather the transformed believers themselves are.

I understand Paul's insistence that the Jews are truly privileged in the sight of God to be genuine, and thus one may at least speculate that Paul's hope for the restoration of Israel means that the Jewish religious institutions will be renewed and not surpassed. At the same time, Paul shows no interest in the Jerusalem temple in Romans. When he refers to Jerusalem it is because of its connection to the events—prior and future—connected to Christ, and the "saints" who dwell there.

4.3. A "Preferred" Reading of 1 Corinthians

I will next turn to a reading of 1 Corinthians, a letter that also contains several significant passages related to matters concerned with cult and sacrifice. Among the most important such passages are those which speak of the community and the believing individual as a temple of God (3:16–17; 6:19), that which calls Christ a paschal lamb (5:7), and the comparison between the eucharist and animal sacrifice in 10:16–21.

Discussions in the secondary literature concerning 1 Corinthians frequently emphasize the occasional nature of this writing. It is important to keep in mind that the "preferred" reading that I propose here does not take knowledge of the immediate circumstances on the part of the reader into account. Instead I imagine a reading situation in which the reader receives the message in the form of mass communication. It is then understood as a message that is applicable to all Christ-believers.

4.3.1. Eloquent Wisdom and the Message of the Cross (1:1–3:3)

In the greeting of the letter opening (1:1–3), Paul greets not only those who are "called to be saints" in Corinth, but he greets them "together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:2). The Corinthians are part of a wider movement and Paul's message has applicability across all congregations of believers.

In verses 4–9, Paul gives thanks to God for the Corinthians' *enrichment* "in *speech* and *knowledge* of every kind" (v. 5) so that they are "not lacking in any spiritual gift" (v. 7). This functions rhetorically as a kind of *captatio benevolentiae*,[209] but Paul will later accuse them by using similar terminology: "I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in *lofty words* or wisdom" (2:1); "Already you have become *rich*!" (4:8); "*Knowledge* puffs up" (8:1). Thus, some of the main themes of the letter are introduced in these verses.[210]

In verses 10–17 Paul introduces the subject of divisions, urging the Corinthians not to divide themselves into different parties by associating themselves with one or another particular leader of the movement. Much of the content in 1:12—"each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.'—is paralleled in 3:4: "one says: 'I belong to Paul,' and another, 'I belong to Apollos.'"[211] In the section that separates these two verses Paul does not directly address the issue of divisions but rather focuses on matters of wisdom and eloquence. What holds these themes together is that in Paul's view, the cause for disunity in Corinth lies in the fact that individuals "boast" (καυχάομαι) in things other than God (1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7).[212]

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[209] R. F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 58.

[210] Cf. M. M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 194.

[211] Scholars have had disagreements over how these phrases should be translated. For a thorough discussion, see Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 83–86.

[212] B. Witherington, *Community and Conflict in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 8: "The Corinthian people… lived within an honor-shame cultural orientation, where public recognition was often more important than facts and where the worst thing that could happen was for one's reputation to be publicly tarnished. In such a culture a person's sense of worth is based on recognition by others of one's accomplishments."

In 2:1 and the passage that follows, Paul claims that he deliberately abstained from speaking in accordance with conventional wisdom in order that the Corinthians' faith "might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God" (2:5).[213] Further into chapter 3 the apostle turns the thesis that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those that perish" (1:18) into exhortations as he urges his audience:

> Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God… So let no one boast about human leaders. (3:18–19, 21)

These verses are found in a passage where Paul has moved back to discussing community and the perils of division. Wisdom and boastfulness threatens to destroy what God's grace has accomplished since it leads to divisiveness.

4.3.2. The Builders and the Building (3:4–4:21)

In 3:16, Paul asks the Corinthians "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" The notion of the community as a temple would prove to be influential as both the Paulinist who wrote Ephesians and the author of 1 Peter would take over this imagery and develop it.[214] But what does it refer to in 1 Corinthians 3?

In order to understand that, one has to pay close attention to the literary context. Paul had just criticized those who would form sub-groups based on claims that they belonged to some particular leader in the Christ-believing community (1:12; 3:4) and he understood sinful boasting to be a cause of such behavior (cf. 3:18–22). In 3:5 Paul asks "What then is Apollos? What is Paul?" and asserts that they are "Servants through whom you came to believe,

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[213] Cf. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 91: "Although Paul had professed that he did not use cleverness of speech in his proclamation of the gospel (v. 17) his exposition of the message of the cross is fraught with powerful literary and rhetorical devices." Collins goes on by noting that this passage contains parallelisms, rhetorical questioning, "comparison and contrast, repetition, *paronomasia*, gradation, and irony."

[214] Eph 2:19–22; 1 Pet 2:4–10. In the genuine Pauline letters, it also appears in 2 Cor 6:14–7:1.

as the Lord assigned to each." He then begins to use metaphors that some have interpreted as temple imagery—planting and watering (vv. 6–9)[215]—before turning to the main imagery of this section and one that recurs in the letter; that of building (8:1, 10; 10:23; 14:3–5, 12, 17, 26).

Paul stresses that the manner in which *those in leadership* "build" the community is decisive for their own ultimate fate. First of all, it is crucial that they build on the solid foundation that is Jesus Christ (3:11). Further, they must use the proper material as they build. When the day of judgment arrives, "the fire will test what sort of work each has done" (v. 14). To those who have been charged with the specific task of being community builders Paul has a word of caution: "If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire" (v. 15). If anyone, however, is guilty of the crime of not only building poorly but of actually destroying the building, then that person should be reminded that the building belongs to God—it is his temple (v. 16)—and therefore "God will destroy that person" (v. 17). The conclusion that the community is God's temple appears to stem from the building metaphor that Paul uses in this passage—it is a house of God, in other words, a temple. The cultic aspect is thus secondary to the general building metaphor. It is impossible to draw conclusions from this passage about the status of the Jerusalem temple cult.

Although Paul has spoken of himself and Apollos and Cephas as if he was discussing things that did not directly apply to his audience, he makes clear in 4:6–7 who he really has in mind:

> I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

It is these anonymous individuals, who have taken upon themselves roles as community builders, that Paul is warning. They are the ones that have

[215] Cf. G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 245–50; Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 318.

confused worldly wisdom with profound spirituality and are "boasting" for the wrong reasons. These individuals are called upon to reflect on their actions and consider the fact that it is God's work that they are involved in.

In the last passage of the section, 4:8–21, Paul stays on the issue of community leadership and reminds the Corinthians that "though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (4:15). With a threat of coming to them soon for a visitation (vv. 19–21) he then closes the first section of the letter.

4.3.3. Issues of Sexual Morality (5:1–7:40)

In 5:1 Paul begins a new section of his letter, devoted to matters of sexual morality (5:1–7:40). He turns to this subject by referring to a report that he has allegedly received, "for a man is living with his father's wife" (5:1). This form of behavior is repulsive and the only right thing would have been to shun the individual that was found guilty of it (vv. 2–5).

Paul writes:

> Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? [7] Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. [8] Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (5:6b–8)

According to Exodus 12:15, the Israelites were not permitted to eat or even keep leavened bread in their homes during Passover week. In line with a hermeneutical principle laid out later in the letter—"These things happened to them [the Israelites] to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (10:11)[216]—this

[216] Cf. M. M. Mitchell, *Paul, the Corinthians and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Mitchell notes that it is particularly in his correspondence with the Corinthians that Paul develops and discusses his hermeneutical method.

scriptural command is given the interpretation that the Christ-believing congregation must rid itself of sin.[217] What, then, should one make of the sacrificial reference in this passage?

While some scholars have interpreted this verse as a confirmation of the general "atonement theology" of the Pauline *corpus*,[218] others have pointed out that the Passover lamb was not commonly considered to have an "expiatory" or "atoning" significance.[219] When one pays attention to the verses that follow, it becomes quite evident what Paul's concern is in this chapter. In 5:11 he tells them "not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber." And he commands them: "Do not even eat with such a one." It is clear that Paul is not discussing the function of the death of Christ or how it relates to the Jewish cult in this passage. What he is explaining is rather that since they are living in the last days they are to be a purified and holy community. The imagery of Christ as paschal lamb—perhaps a previously known picture—is brought in to support and strengthen the metaphor.[220]

Paul appears to switch subject in 6:1–11 to discuss a case of a believer bringing another believer to court. However one wishes to explain the apparent interruption of the flow of argument,[221] Paul returns to the issue of sexual morality again in 6:12–20. In these verses, he focuses specifically on the bodily implications of the believers' salvation through Christ, as he explains that "The body is meant… for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (v. 13b).

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[217] Cf. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 214: "Paul offers a midrashic interpretation of the Passover festival."

[218] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice,* 237, 240; Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 216–17.

[219] C. Eberhart, *The Sacrifice of Jesus: Understanding Atonement Biblically* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 119–20; McLean, *Cursed Christ*, 34–35; Seeley, *Noble Death*, 32; Stowers, *Rereading*, 211; Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 76.

[220] Cf. Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 159: "The point of the illustration is that tolerating this immorality could tempt others to see how far they could push things. The bad apple will spoil the barrel if it is not thrown out."

[221] See, for instance, the suggestion of W. Deming that there was "a legal struggle among the Corinthians over the sexual misconduct in 5:1" in "The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 289–312, here 289. For a critique of Deming's view, see A. S. May, *"The Body for the Lord": Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5–7* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 80–91.

The idea in this passage, which becomes explicit in verse 20, is that God has purchased the believers and therefore their bodies belong to God. They are now the "members of Christ" (v. 15) with a mission to act on his behalf in the world. What do believers receive in return? In verse 14, Paul reminds them that "God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power"—they will continue to live in their bodies forever, even after death.

It is in this context that Paul tells them: "your body is a temple of the holy spirit within you" (v. 19). As with the reference to the congregation as temple in chapter 3, this occurrence of temple terminology is meant as a warning.[222] With the privilege of having the spirit dwell among them and in them comes a great responsibility to live worthily of that presence. They must at all times act morally and in accordance with the will of God, as transgressions against the divine will may have fatal consequences (cf. 11:30–32).

It is noteworthy that "figurative application of temple imagery to the body appears to be foreign to pagan Hellenistic thought in Paul's time."[223] Paul's eschatological idea that God's spirit has come to dwell among his people in the last days is probably the reason for this original concept. Thus, this temple reference should be understood against a similar background to that in chapter 3.[224]

To help his audience interpret what the divine will is regarding sexual matters, Paul devotes chapter 7 to discussing and giving his judgment and advice on how each one should handle their relations: "To the unmarried and the widows I say…" (v. 8); "To the married I give this command..." (v. 10); "To the rest I say…" (v. 12); "Now concerning virgins…" (v. 25).

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[222] Cf. A. S. May, *"The Body for the Lord"*, 129.

[223] Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 342. In his second edition of *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Black, 1971), Barrett points to a quotation by Epictetus (II.viii.14) which he understands to parallel what Paul says here (90), but Epictetus clearly does not consider the individuals' material aspect, the *body* (σῶμα), to be a temple. Among Jewish writers, Philo makes references to the human soul as "the house of God" and "the holy temple" (*Somn.* 1.149), statements that are closer in meaning to the Epictetus quotation than to 1 Cor 6:18.

[224] Cf. A. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 474: "The corporate aspect of the community as the Spirit's temple in 3:16 receives a more individual application here, which arises in the context of the personal lifestyles at issue in this chapter." Cf. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 151; Witherington, *Community and Conflict*, 169.

4.3.4. Freedom and Idolatry (8:1–11:1)

In chapter 8 Paul switches to another topic and begins to speak on the subject of "food sacrificed to idols" (v. 1). As was done earlier in the letter, he contrasts the arrogant and boastful attitude of individuals who claim to have "knowledge" with the humble disposition for which he himself stands as a model. On the one hand, Paul appears to accept the rationality of the "enlightened" position (vv. 4–6), but on the other, he cannot consent to it being (indiscriminately?) put into practice, as one then runs the risk of "becoming a stumbling block to the weak" (v. 9). If this is the case, says Paul, then it is better to "never eat meat" to be on the safe side (v. 13).

Expecting this argument to meet with some disapproval, Paul explains in chapter 9 how he applies this teaching in his own life.[225] Even though he, as an apostle, has plenty of rights that he could make use of, he chooses not to (vv. 5, 11–12a).[226] The principle that he lives by is formulated in verse 19 thus: "For though I am free [ελεύθερος] with respect to all, I have made myself a slave [ἐδούλωσα] to all, so that I might win more of them." In his understanding, the gospel freedom is a demanding form of freedom: "I punish my body and enslave [δουλαγωγῶ] it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified" (v. 27).

As part of the argument about Paul's apostolic rights, he compares his service to that of the priests of the Jerusalem temple:[227]

> Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? In the same way, the Lord

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[225] Cf. J. Delobel, "Coherence and Relevance of 1 Cor 8–10," in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. R. Bieringer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 175–90, esp. 178–86. See also Barrett, *First Epistle*, 199–200; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 328–29; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 661–63. Paul is not, as Hogeterp thinks, presenting "an apologetic defence of [his] freedom and rights as an apostle" in this passage (*God's Temple*, 347). Such an understanding does not take the relationship between chapter 9 and the two surrounding chapters enough into account.

[226] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 329: "'freedom' (*eleutheria*) and 'right/s' (*exousia*) belong to the same semantic domain. They are almost correlative terms."

[227] G. D. Fee suggests that Paul is here speaking of pagan temples, see *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 412–13. See also Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 348–51, for a rebuttal of Fee's suggestion.

> commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (vv. 13–14)

We understand from these verses that Paul regards the Jerusalem cult as having divine origin—it was God who willed that the priests should eat of the sacrificed meat.

In chapter 10, Paul returns from the more general topic of gospel freedom to the specific issue of food sacrificed to idols, telling them "Do not become idolaters" (v. 7). In the first part of the chapter, Paul draws a parallel between the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness and his audience of believers "on whom the ends of the ages have come" (v. 11). The wilderness wanderers "all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink… Nevertheless, God was not pleased with them, and they were struck down in the wilderness" (vv. 3–5). Why was God not pleased with them? Because some of them became idolaters when, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play" (v. 7; quotation from Exod 32:6). The point is that an individual's participation in the Lord's supper, which he will speak more about in the next chapter, can offer no guarantee that God is pleased with that person.

In 10:18 Paul again calls his audience's attention to the example of Israel: "Consider Israel according to the flesh [τὸν Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα];[228] are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?" Some have taken this verse to be a statement about the Jerusalem cult, brought in as an example to inform believers about the theological significance of the Lord's supper (cf. 10:16–17).[229] This interpretation does not, however, fully take into account the fact that Paul is primarily discussing idol meat in this section. The reason why Paul mentions the topic of the Lord's supper at all in this section is because it involved an act of sacred eating and drinking and in that way paralleled the matter of discussion.[230]

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[228] The NRSV translates the Greek phrase "the people of Israel."

[229] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice,* 231; Hogeterp, *God's Temple*, 359.

[230] Cf. Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 73. On cultic meals and Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians, see A. B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 31–33. According to McGowan, "The Christians' participation in the blood and body of Christ is for Paul concrete, communal, and cultic. Paul's presentation of the Corinthian common meals relies not on belief that it was a sacrifice per se but on the nexus between sacrifice and meal common in Jewish and Greek religion" (33).

In this wider section (8:1–11:1) and in this particular chapter Paul is warning his audience about associating themselves with sacrifices offered to idols. He is *not* concerned with sacrifices offered to the God of Israel in the Jerusalem temple.[231] What Paul, in verse 18, is urging his audience to consider thus refers back to the example of the wandering Israelites in the desert who became idolaters, and who "were struck down in the wilderness" (v. 5) for this reason.[232]

4.3.5. Communal Gatherings (11:2–14:40)

Chapters 11–14 contain Paul's instructions concerning the gatherings of Christ-believers. The principle that seems to run through these chapters is made explicit in the section's last verse: "all things should be done decently and in order [κατὰ τάξιν]" (14:40).

The first issue that he discusses in relation to communal gatherings is order with reference to gender (vv. 2–16). According to Paul's worldview it is clear that there is a hierarchy of the sexes and it is important that no one crosses the boundaries that God has set up.

The second issue that Paul turns to is order in connection to the Lord's supper. Paul claims that the meetings of the Corinthian believers are tainted by divisions (11:18–19). He then reproaches them by describing their shameful behavior in vv. 20–21. They are told that the Lord's supper is a reenactment of Jesus' last meal, in which he told his followers to "Do this in remembrance of me" (vv. 23–24). Rehearsing the account that he claims to have received, Paul says that after the bread had been broken, Jesus "took the cup also, after the supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'" (v. 25).

There are at least three aspects of this verse that have cultic significance. First, there is the drinking of the sacred cup, which is done "in *remembrance*" of Jesus.[233] Secondly, there is a reference to the "new covenant" (ἡ καινὴ

[231] Whatever Paul may have thought of the Jewish cult, there is nothing to suggest that he would have considered it to be idolatrous. It is therefore unlikely that he would complicate matters by turning to the subject of Jewish sacrifices in this context. In verse 20 he even makes explicit that he is speaking about "what pagans sacrifice."

[232] See further discussions in Hays, *Echoes*, 91–94; Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 771–72.

[233] On meals and remembrance in the Hellenistic context, see Collins, *First Corinthians*, 428.

διαθήκη), which together with the third aspect, the "blood," points in the direction of a covenant ratification ceremony (cf. Gen 15:9–21; Exod 24:6–8).[234] Commentators also frequently note parallels between the description in this passage and the Jewish Passover celebration.[235] What Paul envisions here is a type of cultic meal in which Jesus' death is symbolically understood in a sacrificial manner. The notion of a "new covenant" (cf. Jer 31:31) is an eschatological concept and its mention here "suggests that the meal and Jesus' death are given ultimate, eschatological significance."[236] The overarching aim of this passage, however, is to make the addressees show proper respect and reverence at these gatherings (cf. vv. 27–34).

In the three chapters that follow (12–14), Paul continues to speak about matters related to the group meetings. He focuses particularly on issues concerning the use of "spiritual gifts"—especially supernatural abilities, such as the performance of healing miracles, speaking in foreign languages, and prophesying—during these gatherings. Apparently, such acts were an important part of the congregational meetings, but Paul insists that the higher purposes of holding the community together (12:12–31) and of "building up" fellow believers must be the goal of all such exercises (14:26). Love is the principle that should guide believers at all times (ch. 13). Chaos and disarray is unacceptable, "for God is a God not of disorder but of peace" (14:33).

4.3.6. The Resurrection of the Dead (15:1–58)

The last major theme that Paul discusses in the letter is the resurrection of the dead. It is fundamental, he says, that they have a correct understanding of this notion, as they otherwise "have come to believe in vain" (v. 1). Questions concerning how Jesus saves have not been dealt with much in this letter, but as he turns to the topic of Jesus' resurrection, soteriological matters come into focus. Paul claims that he handed on the tradition "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (vv. 3–4).

Later in the chapter, Paul explains that the resurrection of Christ is a necessary aspect of his work of salvation: "For since death came through a

[234] Finlan, *Atonement Metaphors*, 71.
[235] E.g. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 887.
[236] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 427.

human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being, for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (vv. 20–22).

The Christ-Adam parallel appears again as he discusses the resurrection body in an argument that is difficult to follow unless one knows the exegetical tradition that Paul is referring to here (vv. 47–50). Philo asserts that there is "a vast difference between man as generated now, and the first man who was made according to the image of God."[237] The human race on earth is not created in God's image; rather, it is created in the image *of the image* of God.[238] Paul's interests, however, are different. Barrett explains how Paul develops the Philonic-type[239] exegesis of Gen 1–2 in an eschatological fashion.

> The heavenly Man with his spiritual body was not a Platonic pattern of humanity, but an eschatological figure (verse 47). For the rest of mankind too the spiritual body, made in the image of the heavenly Man, belongs to the eschatological future (verse 49), and depends not on the essential nature of things but on a free and gracious act of God.[240]

Christ came from heaven in order that he would transform believers into a higher state of being. Through his victorious life, death, and resurrection, Christ has accomplished salvation for believers. Cultic and sacrificial categories are thus absent in this important section of the letter where one might have expected it as it deals with issues of soteriology.

Paul ends this letter with some notes about the Jerusalem collection (16:1–4),[241] his future travel plans (vv. 5–9), a few updates on the plans of his companions (vv. 10–12), some final words of caution and exhortation (vv. 15–18), and greetings (vv. 19–24).

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[237] Philo, *Opif.* 1.46. See also *Leg.* 1.12.

[238] For a full discussion of these themes in Philo, see J. R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 63–88.

[239] Cf. Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1284: "It is important to note that 'whether Paul read Philo' has little bearing on the issues."

[240] Barrett, *First Epistle*, 375.

[241] Cf. the discussion above concerning the collection in Romans.

4.3.7. Conclusions

In 1 Corinthians Paul presents the believing community as a cultic community. He uses temple language to speak of them, both on an individual and a group level, and they share a cultic sacred meal together. It is probably, then, no coincidence that Paul understands his own ministry to parallel that of the Jewish priests; this too is part of his cultic understanding of the community of believers. However, in all of these discussions Paul is silent on how he regards the Jerusalem temple cult. He neither endorses nor criticizes this Jewish institution, but appears to be rather indifferent to it.

Jesus' death is imagined in sacrificial terms in relation to the paschal lamb and to the covenantal meal. Both these references are closely related to the life and practices of the community and are not intended to explain in what sense Jesus' death atones or saves. Neither can these references be said to be clear on how Paul understood Jewish temple sacrifices.

Finally, we may note that since Paul made an argument concerning his own apostolic rights based on the institution of the Jerusalem cult, he appears to have regarded it as having a divine origin. Whether or not he understood it as having been abrogated is left without comment.

4.4. Results: Paul and Cult

Did Paul replace the Jewish cult with a Christian alternative? In the two letters that have been investigated I have not found anything that conclusively suggests so. Jesus' death is compared to a sacrifice on several occasions, but when its atoning effects are discussed it is clear that it is God who provides the offering; he is not the receiver of this sacrificial gift. The comparison to animal sacrifice is made because of the *cleansing effect* that was understood to be common to both (some) Jewish sacrifices and the death of Jesus. Paul's understanding of the soteriological function of Christ's sacrifice seems to be centered on a notion of transformative participation in Christ's resurrection life, a concept that is not primarily linked to cultic categories.

If Paul does not frequently draw on cultic imagery in relation to Jesus' death, he does so much more often when he imagines the moral lives of the communities that he writes to. They are to regard themselves—their lives and

their bodies—as consecrated to God, owing him complete obedience. In communicating this he speaks of them both as temple and as sacrifice.

Paul regards himself as a priestly servant who ministers to God by offering up the obedience of the communities. This type of language is pervasive in the letters that have been investigated but it would be wrong to see a Pauline "cultic theory" behind the usage. There appears to be no clear system to this language and parallels for much of it exist in contemporary Jewish writings.

In the discussion of the Lord's supper, there are notions of a cultic meal in which the Christ event is celebrated in covenantal-cultic terms. The relationship between this cultic act and the Jerusalem temple worship is not touched upon, however. It is therefore certainly possible to regard it as a parallel phenomenon to the Jewish temple cult which was not intended to replace it.

From the apostle's discussions about Israel and the Jewish law in Romans it can perhaps be gathered that Paul, in a similar manner to the Qumran covenanters, regarded the temple as temporarily defiled because of the unbelief of Israel, but that it was to be renewed and re-sanctified in the end. At the same time, it must be admitted that Paul does not with one syllable hint at what he thought of the Jerusalem temple—a silence that I am inclined to interpret as actual indifference. It is not impossible that Paul would have been pleased with the vision of the glorified Jerusalem as it is found in Rev 21:22: "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb."

5. Hebrews' Use of the Letters of Paul

5.1. Introducing the Problem

Did the author of Hebrews have access to, and use some of, Paul's letters? The dominant opinion today seems to be that he did not know or use any of them but that the overlaps in themes and terminology between Hebrews and Paul's letters are instead best explained by a shared access to widespread early Christian traditions.[242]

Andreas Lindemann's minimalist investigation into the issue is helpful for understanding the argumentation behind this widely held assumption.[243] He mentions that while there are several passages in Hebrews that are reminiscent of parts of Paul's letters,[244] these differ quite a lot in meaning when understood in their respective and proper contexts. Key terms used by both the author of Hebrews and by Paul, such as πίστις and νόμος, which on a superficial level appear to connect the two authors, rather separate them upon closer scrutiny, as these terms carry very different meanings for the two.[245]

"In welchem Verhältnis steht also die Theologie des Hebr zur Paulus-Tradition?" asks Lindemann. Apart from the letter-ending (13:22–25) with its reference to Timothy, which Lindemann understands to be completely out

[242] Cf. L. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 124; C. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 55–56; W. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8* (Nashville: Nelson, 1991), cxi; A. Lincoln, *Hebrews: A Guide* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 41; V. Pfitzner, *Hebrews* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 37.

[243] A. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), 233–40.

[244] For instance, the imagery of Heb 5:12–14 is held in common with 1 Cor 3:1–3, the christological statement in Heb 7:25 is similar to what Paul writes in Rom 8:34, and just as Hab 2:4 is quoted in Heb 10:38, Paul had quoted this verse in Rom 1:17 and Gal 3:11 (Lindemann, *Paulus*, 235–36).

[245] Lindemann, *Paulus*, 237–38.

of place, there is "keinerlei Indiz dafür, daß der Vf des Hebr paulinsche Briefe oder paulinische Überlieferung gekannt hat; die bisweilen genannten Parallelen zu Paulus sind als gemeinchristlichen Tradition zu erklären."[246] In Lindemann's opinion, the author of Hebrews was not a "Paulinist" in any sense of the word since his theology was too far removed from that of Paul to be counted as such. The parallels between them even serve to prove that the author of Hebrews had no knowledge of Paul's letters, as Lindemann doubts that he could have known the Pauline sense of the loaded terms that he used and still have given them such a different meaning.

Another author who is of a similar opinion is L. D. Hurst, who has written a monograph about the intellectual background of Hebrews. Acknowledging that there are some impressive points of contact between the letters of Paul and Hebrews, he eventually reaches the conclusion that these do not stem from literary dependence.

In Hurst's understanding, Hebrews and Paul's letters represent two distinct lines of development of a common tradition. He writes:

> In some cases this is seen in the same ideas being expressed by a different deployment of the same terms; in others these ideas are expressed in different language and imagery. Such unity and diversity are what one would expect if both writers are engaging in a deep interaction with the same traditions. Whether this points to the common pool of Christian tradition or to a form of pre-literary contact with Paul himself must remain an exercise of subtle scholarly judgment.[247]

In contrast to Lindemann, Hurst has no objections against understanding Hebrews as "deutero-Pauline" as long as it is understood that this does not entail a literary relationship:

> If it is recognized that there is a sense in which the apostolic tradition grew in a way in which Paul and his associates may have

[246] Lindemann, *Paulus*, 239–40.
[247] Hurst, *Background*, 124.

> had a significant part, there may be a basis for claiming Pauline influence in the epistle without recourse to the literary solution.[248]

In sum, both Lindemann and Hurst accept that there are significant points of contact between Paul and Hebrews, but they nevertheless maintain that these parallels cannot be explained by a literary connection. This cautious path appears for many scholars to be the "safe" solution to this problem.

Recently, however, there have been important challenges to these conclusions that will be discussed later in this chapter. Before I move on to discuss those challenges, I will turn to the criterion of availability, and ask the question of whether it is probable that the author of Hebrews would have had access to Paul's letters, in particular Romans and 1 Corinthians.

5.2. Availability

Not much can be said with any degree of certainty regarding the time and place of origin, or authorship, of the letter to the Hebrews. A timespan of 60–140 CE has been given as a careful suggestion for dating the letter.[249]

There appears to be no internal evidence that is strong enough to provide any certainty regarding the letter's origin. On the contrary, that evidence comes across as contradictory in many ways.[250] With respect to external evidence, the use of Hebrews in First Clement is the earliest proof of the

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[248] Hurst, *Background*, 124.

[249] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, lxii–lxiii. H. W. Attridge suggests a timespan between 60 to 100 CE in *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 9. Koester, meanwhile, suggests one between 60 and 90 CE (*Hebrews*, 50).

[250] Those who hold to a pre-70 CE date point to the fact that the Jewish cult is discussed in the present tense. Post-70 CE advocates point especially to 2:3 which reveals that it is not written by someone who "heard the Lord." Further, they focus on the developed theology of the letter which appears to be a relatively late product. It is commonly speculated that it was written in consequence of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in order to explain the significance of Christ's person and death in light of that pivotal event. See, for example, B. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

letter's existence, but then again, First Clement is also difficult to date.[251] A discussion of the availability of Paul's letters will therefore have to be general.

From the discussion in chapter three concerning a paradigm of communication, some preliminary assumptions follow about the circulation of Paul's letters during the first century CE. From what we know about ancient "publication" practices, at least two inferences can be drawn: (1) the letters would have emerged and spread to the general (interested) public more or less *immediately*, and (2) they would thus initially have reached their audiences *as single letters* and not as part of a significant Pauline letter collection.

Scholars have sometimes entertained so-called "lapsed interest" theories concerning Paul and his letters in the generation after his death.[252] According to such theories, the controversial nature of Paul's ministry and person, coupled with the fact that he was not one of the original disciples, caused his memory and status to fade in "proto-orthodox" circles for several decades. These were only later revived through the determined effort of a group of "Paulinists" who were responsible for publishing and promoting a Pauline letter collection.[253]

Theories of this type seem difficult to uphold in light of a paradigm of communication. They underestimate the literary status of Paul's letters and the importance of Paul himself as one belonging to a privileged elite group of writers and intellectuals in the earliest movement. Regardless of what one thought of the apostle and his writings, one probably could not ignore his literary production. According to the mentioned paradigm, his writings would have spread relatively fast and been known throughout the Christian scribal network at an early point.

But is it possible that Hebrews was written at such an early date that Paul's letters had not yet been written or widely published? Even if one accepts a

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[251] See discussion of the date of First Clement in chapter seven, below.

[252] Cf. discussion in S. Porter, "When and How was the Pauline Canon Compiled? An Assessment of Theories," in *The Pauline Canon*, ed. S. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 95–127, esp. 103–7.

[253] A recent theory of this kind has been argued for in several publications by Markus Vinzent, who understands Marcion of Sinope to have been the one responsible for the revived interest in Paul. Cf. *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity and the Making of the New Testament* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014).

date prior to 70 CE for Hebrews, Heb 2:3 has generally kept scholars from dating it significantly earlier than that.[254]

5.3. Similarity

If it can be credibly asserted that the letters of Paul were accessible to the author of Hebrews, what specific evidence is there that he made use of them? This section will be devoted to discussing the points of contact between Hebrews and Paul's letters, especially by engaging the scholarly discussions on this topic. In my opinion, it is the cumulative weight of the arguments that follow that make the use of Romans and 1 Corinthians in Hebrews probable. While every individual argument can be justly questioned, it is the sum of them that accomplishes convincement.

5.3.1. Paul and the Early Reception of Hebrews

For a very long time it was a widely held opinion that Paul was the author of Hebrews.[255] Clement of Alexandria claimed, preserving a tradition that came from his teacher Pantanaeus (ca. 150 CE), that Hebrews was originally written in the Hebrew language by Paul and subsequently translated into Greek by Luke the evangelist.[256] Clement's intellectual successor in Alexandria, Origen, was more hesitant about Pauline authorship, however. He observed that,

> the thoughts are those of the apostle, but the diction and phraseology are those of someone who remembered the apostolic teachings, and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher. Therefore if any church holds that this epistle is by Paul,

[254] An exception is Montefiore, whose suggestion concerning Hebrews' authorship will be dealt with below.

[255] C. Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon: The History and Significance of the Pauline Attribution of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 5–6.

[256] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.2.

> let it be commended for this. For not without reason have the ancients handed it down as Paul's.[257]

Possible candidates mentioned by Origen are Clement of Rome and Luke the evangelist.

At about the same time, Tertullian testified to a tradition which names Barnabas, the companion of Paul, as the author of the letter, thus also placing the author within the Pauline sphere.[258] According to a recent article, the copy of Hebrews that Tertullian had access to contained a title or heading (lat. *titulus*) which bore the name of Barnabas.[259]

Jerome discusses all of the abovementioned alternatives but ultimately decides for Pauline authorship.[260] Jerome's contemporary John Chrysostom takes the tradition of Pauline authorship for granted in his discussion of the occasion of the letter.[261]

In addition to the patristic discussions that relate Hebrews to Paul, there is the early manuscript evidence in the Chester Beatty papyrus (P46) which places Hebrews in a collection of Pauline letters, as second in the order, after Romans and before 1 Corinthians. This placement clearly indicates that the editor of this early manuscript (third century CE) understood Hebrews to be written by Paul.[262] In sum, although construed in a number of different ways, it was generally accepted from the beginning that there was some particular relationship between Paul and the letter to the Hebrews.

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[257] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.13. Translation by A. C. McGiffert.

[258] *De pudicitia* 20.2.

[259] E. A. de Boer, "Tertullian on 'Barnabas' Letter to the Hebrews' in *De pudicitia* 20.1-5," *Vigiliae Christianae* 68 (2014): 243–63, 247–48.

[260] *De vir. illust.* 5.

[261] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*. Not only is Pauline authorship assumed but also other aspects of the original letter occasion that was discussed by Clement.

[262] According to C. P. Anderson, 1 Clement's use of Hebrews indicates that he knew it from a Pauline letter collection which also contained Romans and 1 Corinthians ("The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pauline Letter Collection," *Harvard Theological Review* 59 (1966): 429–38, 435). Cf. Rothschild, *Pseudepigraphon*, 6. In a later article Anderson appears to have changed his mind, however, as he there establishes that "[d]uring the first period Hebrews circulated as an anonymous writing, with no association with any Pauline letter. Clement of Rome knew and utilized Hebrews at this time," see "Hebrews among the Letters of Paul," *Sciences Religieuse* 5 (1975): 258–66, here 258. In my opinion, it is impossible to draw conclusions about any particular stance concerning authorship from the uses of Hebrews in 1 Clement.

5.3.2. Hebrews and Paul's Theology

As was noted in the beginning of this chapter, a number of scholars understand there to be a relationship between Hebrews and Paul that is not best described as being literary in nature. Instead, they hypothesize that the author of Hebrews may have been a disciple of Paul or that this individual in some other way has come into contact with Pauline teaching and theology apart from the apostle's letters.

Hurst presents a list of fifteen corresponding features between Hebrews and Paul's letters:[263]

> (1) A similar view of the incarnation, including Christ's previous glory and his role in creating and sustaining the cosmos (Heb 1:2, 3, 6; Col 1:15–17; 1 Cor 8:6; 2 Cor 4:4); (2) his humiliation (Heb 2:14–17; Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:7); (3) his obedience (Heb 5:8; Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8); (4) his offering for us (Heb 9:28; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; Gal 2:20); (5) Christ as an ἀπολύτρωσις for sin (Heb 9:15; Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30); (6) his intercession for us (Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34); (7) the inheritance of an exalted name (Heb 1:4; 5:10; Phil 2:9–11); (9) a reference to signs and wonders performed (Heb 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12) and gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit (Heb 2:4; 1 Cor 12:11); (10) the depiction of Christ as our brother (Heb 2:11; Rom 8:29); (11) the use of Abraham's faith as an example (Heb 11:11, 17–19; Rom 4:17–20); (12) the deterrent example of the wilderness generation (Heb 3:7 ff; 1 Cor 10:1 ff); (13) the Christian life as a race (Heb 12:1; 1 Cor 9:24 ff); (14) conversion as enlightenment (Heb 6:4; 10:32; 2 Cor 4:4); (15) the use of the same Old Testament passages (Ps 8 in Heb 2:6–9 and 1 Cor 15:27; Deut 32:35 in Heb 10:30 and Rom 12:19; Hab 2:4 in Heb 10:38, Rom 1:17, and Gal 3:11).[264]

[263] The list is dependent on H. Windisch, *Der Hebräerbrief* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1913), 128–29.

[264] Hurst, *Background*, 108.

He then adds eleven more points:

> (16) a view of Christ's death as the defeat of evil powers (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14); (17) a view of Christ's death as an expiation (ἱλάσκομαι, Heb 2:17; ἱλαστήριον, Rom 3:25) for sin; (18) a "waiting" for Christ's return (ἀπεκδέχομαι, Heb 9:28; Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor 1:7, etc.); (19) a "Pauline" style ending (Heb 13:18–25, which displays a number of distinctive Pauline terms and interests ending with a reference to Timothy, v. 24); (20) "righteousness by faith" (Heb 11:7; Rom 4:13 ff); (21) the description of Christians as "the descendants of Abraham" (Heb 2:16; Rom 9:7 ff; Gal 3:7); (22) Paul's mention of the gospel being "preached beforehand" to Abraham (Gal 3:8) and *Auctor*'s point that Abraham and others "saw and greeted" the promise "from afar"; (23) a rebuke of the readers as fit for milk, not meat (Heb 5:12 ff; 1 Cor 3:2); (24) a link of the last point to the term τέλειος; (25) Christian teaching as θεμέλιος (Heb 6:1; 1 Cor 3:10 f); (26) the nature of stewards as πιστός (Heb 3:2 ff; 1 Cor 4:1 ff).[265]

One may note that many of these parallels are quite literary in nature as the connections consist of terminological convergences. It is one thing to argue that shared doctrinal concerns may stem from a common setting,[266] but when it comes to use of particular metaphors, motifs, and terms, it is more difficult to comprehend how they can come from a similar intellectual environment. Again, while many of these parallels may be accidental, it is the sum of them that is striking.

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[265] Hurst, *Background*, 108.

[266] Cf. M. D. Hooker, "Christ, the 'End' of the Cult," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. R. Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 189–225, esp. 204–7. Having pointed to a large number of parallels, Hooker wonders whether the author of Hebrews knew Paul's letters and concludes that "dependence would be impossible to prove" (206).

5.3.3. Hebrews' Dependence on a Pauline Letter Collection

Despite the fact that most scholars are hesitant about positing a literary relationship between Hebrews and Paul's letters, there are some notable exceptions. In 1941 Albert E. Barnett devoted a section of his volume on Pauline influence on early Christian writings to Hebrews.[267] Barnett claimed that the very choice to use "the letter form for a nonepistolary message" reflected the impression that "the Pauline letter collection" had made on the author of Hebrews.[268] He thus asserted that "Pauline influence is clear and it is literary rather than personal."[269]

The method used by Barnett is traditional and focuses strictly on verbal agreements, and he comes to the conclusion that Hebrews reveals use of seven Pauline epistles. Romans and 1 Corinthians stand out as the two most frequently used letters. Philippians and Ephesians also have quite a significant amount of points of contact with Hebrews while 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians, fall in a third group, that all contain a few more-or-less weak parallels with the letter.[270]

The most in-depth treatment to date of possible parallels between Hebrews and the *corpus Paulinum* is made by Clare Rothschild. In her monograph *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, she develops the argument that Hebrews was written to be appended to an already existing Pauline letter collection. A central aspect of her argument consists in demonstrating that Hebrews is literarily dependent on such a collection. Her argument for dependence is in turn focused on two particular points: first, the Pauline imitation in the postscript of the letter (13:20–25), and, secondly, the scriptural allusions in Hebrews and Paul, which correspond with one another to a high degree.

Regarding the postscript, Rothschild claims that the author of Hebrews deliberately imitated Paul's phrasing and added a reference to Timothy, in order to have the writing pass off as a Pauline composition. When it comes to

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[267] A. E. Barnett, *Paul Becomes a Literary Influence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 69–88.

[268] Barnett, *Literary Influence*, 69.

[269] Barnett, *Literary Influence*, 70.

[270] Barnett, *Literary Influence*, 88.

the allusions to Scripture, Rothschild has illustrated the parallels in the following chart:[271]

1.	Gen 2	1 Cor 15:45 (Gen 2:7); 1 Cor 6:16 (Gen 2:24); Heb 4:4 (Gen 2:2)
2.	Gen 15:5*	Rom 4:18; Heb 11:12
3.	Gen 21:12*	Rom 9:7; Heb 11:18 (cf. Gal 4:30)
4.	Gen 22	Gal 3:8, 16 (Gen 22:18); Heb 6:13–14 (Gen 22:16–17); Heb 11:12 (Gen 22:17)
5.	Deut 17	1 Cor 5:13 (Deut 17:7); Heb 10:28 (Deut 17:6)
6.	Deut 29	Rom 11:8 (Deut 29:4); Heb 12:15 (Deut 29:18)
7.	Deut 32	1 Cor 10:20 (Deut 32:17); Rom 10:19, 1 Cor 10:22 (Deut 32:21); Heb 10:30 (Deut 32:36)
8.	Deut 32:35*	Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30a
9.	Deut 32:43*	Rom 15:10; Heb 1:6
10.	2 Sam 7:14*	2 Cor 6:18 (2 Sam 7:8, 14); Heb 1:5 (2 Sam 7:14)
11.	Ps 8:6	1 Cor 15:27 (Ps 8:6); Heb 2:6–8 (Ps 8:4–6)
12.	Ps 110:1	1 Cor 15:25 (110:1); Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12–13; 12:2
13.	Prov 3	2 Cor 8:21 (Prov 3:4); Heb 12:5–6 (Prov 3:11–12)
14.	Isa 8	Rom 9:33 (Isa 8:14); Heb 2:13 (Isa 8:17–18)
15.	Isa 53	Rom 10:16 (Isa 53:1); Heb 9:28 (Isa 53:12)
16.	Jer 31:33–34*	Rom 11:27 (Jer 31:33–34); Heb 8:8–12 (Jer 31:31–34) and Heb 10:16–17 (Jer 31:33–34)
17.	Hab 2:4*	Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11 (Hab 2:4); Heb 10:37–38 (Hab 2:3–4)

[271] Rothschild, *Pseudepigraphon*, 90. A star implies exclusive agreement between Hebrews and Paul within the New Testament. This argument is accepted and slightly developed by D. Lincicum, "Learning Scripture in the School of Paul," in *The Early Reception of Paul*, ed. K. Liljeström (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2011), 148–170, esp. 153–55.

While Barnett and Rothschild may be right in their suggestions that the author of Hebrews knew and used a significant number of Pauline letters,[272] I find it striking that Romans and 1 Corinthians are so prevalent in both of their investigations. The rest of this chapter will focus on those two letters.

5.3.4. Hebrews' Dependence on Romans

There have recently been several attempts to demonstrate that a special literary relationship exists between Romans and Hebrews.

In a paper that was published in 2005, Dieter Georgi reflected on the significance of the placement of Hebrews in the Chester Beatty manuscript P46. Georgi proposed that the editorial choice to place Hebrews after Romans was part of a deliberate hermeneutical program to have the Pauline letter collection in general, and Paul's letter to the Romans in particular, interpreted in light of Hebrews.[273]

According to Georgi, the author of Hebrews wrote the letter at a point before the separation of church and synagogue had taken place but after the fall of the Jerusalem temple. The goal for this author was to lay out "the proper understanding of the biblical tradition and of the task of God's people, not understood as anti-Jewish but as pro-Jewish."[274] Paul's teachings in his letters could be used to serve such ends but the interpretation of them needed to be guided, and Hebrews was to function as such a guide: "Hebrews understood 'his' Paul as a new offer for synagogue and church, not only for their survival but also for their flourishing in a world that seemed overcome by the powers of a demonized state."[275]

Georgi explains in concrete terms how Hebrews was supposed to guide the reader of Paul's letters:

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[272] For a literary link between Hebrews and Galatians, see B. Witherington, "The Influence of Galatians on Hebrews," *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 146–52. For Hebrews and Colossians, see Anderson, "Hebrews among Letters."

[273] Ben Witherington makes the same argument concerning Galatians, which Hebrews is also placed next to in a number of canon lists ("Influence," 146).

[274] D. Georgi, "Hebrews and the Heritage of Paul," in *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods, New Insights*, ed. G. Gelardini (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 239–44, here 243.

[275] Georgi, "Heritage," 244.

> Hebrews redirects the understanding of righteousness, justification, and Christology as presented by Paul in Romans, so that they no longer function as points of polemics against or division from Jewish tradition, but rather provide a common basis. The writer of the original copy of Hebrews, by his conscious integration of Jewish martyrdom-theology, interprets πίστις as "trust" rather than as "faith/ belief."[276]

Georgi's proposal is intriguing and holds some promise. His paper is short and leaves it to others to develop the hypotheses that are put forth.

There are, however, two important problems with the suggestion that must be mentioned. First, it does not make a clear distinction analytically between original intention and reception history. As Georgi himself points out, P46 is unusual in the way it positions Hebrews,[277] and even if P46 is the earliest manuscript evidence of a Pauline letter collection, already a century or more separates the composition date of Hebrews and the publishing of the collection. The time aspect makes improbable the implicit suggestion that the later editor was expressing the original author's intention.

Secondly, a more probable explanation for the placement of Hebrews in P46 is instead that of length. As Richard Pervo recently noted concerning order in Pauline letter collections: "The two dominant criteria are arrangement by length, from longest to shortest, a system found in other ancient collections of texts, and the separation of community letters from those addressed to persons."[278] The order in P46 follows the pattern of these two principles.[279]

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[276] Georgi, "Heritage," 242–43.

[277] Georgi, "Heritage," 242. Cf. R. I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 29; W. H. P. Hatch, "The Position of Hebrews in the Canon of the New Testament," *Harvard Theological Review* 29 (1936): 133–51, 133. Hebrews also occurs after Romans in a Syrian canon from about 400 CE.

[278] Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 30.

[279] The order in P46 is: Romans, Hebrews, 1–2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, Philemon. For an in-depth treatment of the canonical placement of Hebrews in different contexts and the significance of this see Hatch, "Position."

Despite these problems with Georgi's theory, he makes an important point when he suggests that Hebrews transforms key concepts in Romans to suit a new setting and a different audience.

Independently of Georgi, Clare Rothschild, whose monograph was discussed above, has argued for a particular relationship between Romans and Hebrews.[280] She too begins her discussion by focusing on the question of order, but argues from the common placement of Hebrews at the end of Pauline collections.[281] As with Georgi, I disagree with her procedure since it is more likely that Hebrews was placed at the end because of its spurious nature as to its Pauline authorship, than for some hermeneutical purpose.

More convincing is Rothschild's discussion, first, when she repeats her argument about allusions to Scripture, but here with a specific focus on Romans, in which the great majority of the parallels is to be found,[282] and then in her discussion of particular instances in which Hebrews "imitates, explains and develops Romans."[283] These are thematically arranged into five categories: "(1) Jesus' sonship (υἱός); (2) the σκληρ- root; (3) Jesus as mercy seat (ἱλαστήριον); (4) Jesus' once-for-all death (ἐφάπαξ); and (5) the nature of πίστις."[284]

On the subject of Jesus' sonship, her argument consists in the fact that both letters open with claims that emphasize Jesus' role and position as υἱός (Rom 1:3, 4, 9; Heb 1:2, 5, 8). She notes that while the theme of Jesus' sonship also occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, it is "nevertheless not developed at length elsewhere."[285]

Regarding the second theme, Rothschild notes that both Rom 2:5 and Heb 3:8, 15 and 4:7 "share a somewhat rare early Christian interest in the σκληρ-

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[280] C. Rothschild, "Hebrews as a Guide to Reading Romans," in *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in Frühchristlichen Briefen*, ed. J. Frey et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 537–73.

[281] Rothschild, "Guide," 537–38. On the basis of Patricia Rosenmeyer's claim that "occasionally final letters serve as guides for letter collections," coupled with earlier suggestions that 1 Timothy (found towards the end of Pauline letter collections) was written to guide interpretations of the *corpus Paulinum*, Rothschild proposes that Hebrews' served such a purpose. Although there is no doubt whatsoever that both 1 Timothy and Hebrews have had a huge impact on how the other Pauline letters were interpreted, this is unrelated to their placement which was the result of other mechanisms. Again, see Hatch, "Position."

[282] See chart above.

[283] Rothschild, "Guide," 559.

[284] Rothschild, "Guide," 559.

[285] Rothschild, "Guide," 560.

root" and "both deploy the σκληρ- root actively blaming humans for their stubbornness."[286] The use of this terminology in Hebrews is "deliberatively imitative of Romans with the goal of instructing readers on how to apply Paul's message to a post-Pauline context of real or perceived persecution."[287]

The third theme, Jesus as ἱλαστήριον, is based on the observation that Rom 3:25 and Heb 9:5 are the only two occurrences of the term in the New Testament. Rothschild notes that Heb 8:1–10:18 "constitutes an exegetical homily on Jesus' sacrificial act," and she makes the suggestion that "[t]he entire section might be understood as an interpretation of Paul's general reference to Jesus as mercy seat."[288]

However, the connection is not without problems since the term seems to be used differently in the two places. She is therefore correct when she states that "[t]he uniqueness of ἱλαστήριον in early Christian literature is telling but not definitive."[289] Is there, then, some way to further strengthen the connection? Rothschild writes:

> As one aspect of a cumulative argument featuring both the *criticality and ambiguity* of Paul's summative solution to the *condicio humana* in Romans, the connection seems valid. Without Romans, the lengthy discussion of ritual atonement in Hebrews is almost anomalous in early Christian literature.[290]

Georgi had also mentioned this complex of themes as a connecting point between the two letters. They stand out among the writings in the New Testament as the only two that, apart from any concrete practical issue, discuss issues of soteriology at length, and by reference to cultic categories.

Rothschild's next argument concerns Jesus' death once-for-all. This is a central theme in Hebrews and one that occurs also in Rom 6:10, together with the rare adverb ἐφάπαξ (Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10). Apart from these instances the term is used only one other time in the New Testament, in 1

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[286] Rothschild, "Guide," 561.
[287] Rothschild, "Guide," 564.
[288] Rothschild, "Guide," 565–66. Rothschild accepts the interpretation of ἱλαστήριον as "mercy-seat" in Rom 3:25, a view on which I differ.
[289] Rothschild, "Guide," 566.
[290] Rothschild, "Guide," 566.

Cor 15:6 which speaks not of Jesus' death but of his appearance "to more than five hundred brothers at one time (ἐφάπαξ)."[291]

The fifth and final "echo" that Rothschild discusses is the concept of πίστις, which is "largely taken for granted by Paul in Rom 3," and yet "expounded at length in Hebrews."[292] She particularly sees a connection between Rom 3:25 and Heb 10:19, since she understands παρρησία to be synonymous to πίστις in the latter verse. "The only difference between the two texts," she claims, "is that in Hebrews, atonement is construed metaphorically as 'confidence to enter the sanctuary' and insists it is available, not to everyone through faith, but to everyone who sustains faith."[293] Again, this is an instance in which Rothschild understands Hebrews as transforming Paul's message for a new context.[294]

An article that develops Rothschild's proposal is Joshua Garroway's "A New Sort of Priest for a New Sort of People: Hebrews as an Interpretation of Romans." Garroway notes that Hebrews has a possible connection to Rome, something which strengthens the proposal about Hebrews as a type of explanatory appendix to Romans.[295] Further, he suggests that there is a gap in Paul's argumentation in Romans—a gap that caused serious, but understandable, misunderstandings with at least some of Paul's audiences (cf. Paul's letter to the Galatians). This gap had to do with the relationship between Jesus' sacrifice and the transformation that the Christ event is said to have effected in those who believe in Jesus.[296]

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[291] Rothschild refutes the suggestion that this was an early Christian "stock tradition" that both Hebrews' author and Paul had access to; one that is based on the fact that the same theme can be found also in 1 Pet 3:18, as well as similar notions in 2 Cor 5:14 and 1 Tim 2:5–6. The rareness of the term ἐφάπαξ and the prominence of the theme in Hebrews suggest a literary connection with Romans ("Guide," 567–69).

[292] Rothschild, "Guide," 569.

[293] Rothschild, "Guide," 571.

[294] "Hebrews, thus, seems to reflect an interpretation of Rom 3 for a context of apostasy perhaps the result of persecution [*sic*]" ("Guide," 571–72).

[295] J. D. Garroway, "A New Sort of Priest for a New Sort of People: Hebrews as an Interpretation of Romans," in *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology*, ed. S. E. Myers (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 301–17, here 307.

[296] Garroway writes: "As clear as Paul's reassessment of identity in terms of Christ is, however, its connection to the epoch-defining sacrifice described by Paul in Rom 3:25 is hardly transparent. How, exactly, did Christ's sacrifice transform so fundamentally the manner in which the terms of Jewish identity are to be reckoned?" ("New Sort," 302).

As Garroway notes, the transformation language in Romans relates to matters of kinship and ethnicity and must have given rise to several questions when it reached the first audiences: "Why should sharing the *faith* of Abraham make one his *heir* or *descendent*? And how, exactly, do Christ's sacrifice and the faith resulting from it turn *Gentiles* into 'the seed of Abraham,' into 'Jews,' into 'Israel'?[297] It was to provide an answer to questions such as these that Hebrews was written.[298]

Next to the points of similarity between Hebrews and Romans that have already been discussed in this section, Garroway adds yet a number of significant parallels. He notes that the concept of the "seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:10–18; Rom 4:10–16) is central to the soteriological argument of both writings.[299] "The notion that faith in Christ transforms even Gentile believers into authentic descendants of Abraham is *Paul's distinctive innovation*,"[300] and not an early Christian stock tradition as, for instance, Harold Attridge asserts.[301] Hebrews' concept of Jesus' priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek is, according to Garroway's reading, an extension of the same argument aimed at further filling the gaps that Paul left open in his argumentation in Romans.

Another important aspect of Garroway's argument has to do with the relationship between the concept of "righteousness" in Romans and the notion of "perfection" (τέλειος and cognate terms) in Hebrews.[302] He explains:

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[297] Garroway, "New Sort," 303.

[298] Garroway, "New Sort," 307: Hebrews "aimed to clarify Paul's terse and tantalizing allusion to Christ in Rom 3.21–26 as sacrifice that provided righteousness to Gentiles independent of the law and, just as importantly, made it possible for Gentile believers to become authentic descendants of Abraham."

[299] Garroway observes that Jesus' becoming a son of Abraham in order to die an atoning death for the sake of Abraham's seed in Heb 2:16–17 has many resemblances with Paul's argument in Rom 3–4 and can be seen as a clarification and expansion of it. The terminological parallel ἱλάσκομαι (Heb 2:17) / ἱλαστήριον (Rom 3:25) makes dependence all the more likely (Garroway, "New Sort," 309–10).

[300] Garroway, "New Sort," 309, emphasis added.

[301] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 95 n. 179. Garroway asserts that "apart from Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, no text from earlier than the second century makes faith in Christ a criterion for determining descent from Abraham" ("New Sort," 309).

[302] Perfection in Hebrews: the law is unable to furnish perfection (e.g. 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1; 11:40), Christ is perfect (2:10; 5:9; 7:28), Christ is able to furnish perfection for believers (9:11; 10:14; 12:23).

> The relationship between Christ and the law, for which Paul used the term τέλος [cf. Rom 10:4], is now put in terms of the various τελ- roots (τέλειος, τελειόω, τελειότης, τελείωσις) that convey the notion of perfection. Christ terminated and fulfilled the law, therefore, by realizing the perfection that remained forever inaccessible under the law. This perfection, in turn, made perfection (qua righteousness) available for all who believe.[303]

The argument demonstrates well how close Garroway imagines the link between the letters to be. This intricate relationship, which in this instance comes to expression as "playful punning," demands a detailed familiarity with the content and arguments of Romans to make the proper connections.

I find the evidence for literary dependence that has been presented by Rothschild and Garroway to be convincing. They are able to point to a great number of both terminological and thematic links between the letters that are best explained through such a hypothesis. While none of the presented links demands a literary relationship, the sum of them is what builds a significant case. While other scholars have rejected theories of literary dependence because of differences between the letters' use of certain terms and concepts, both Rothschild and Garroway have put much effort into explaining the reason behind these differences. They both regard the author of Hebrews as a creative thinker whose purpose in writing Hebrews was to "update" the message of Romans for a new audience and situation.

5.3.5. Hebrews' Dependence on 1 Corinthians

Next to Romans, 1 Corinthians is the Pauline letter which appears to have the strongest links to Hebrews. They are so many in number and so striking that Hugh Montefiore in his 1964 commentary on Hebrews suggested that 1 Corinthians was written as a kind of response to, and a corrective of, the letter to the Hebrews.[304] Montefiore's hypothesis was that Apollos, the teacher who is mentioned in 1 Corinthians (e.g. 3:6), had written Hebrews and that Hebrews was originally sent as a letter addressed to the Corinthians. The

[303] Garroway, "New Sort," 316.
[304] H. Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Black, 1964), 22–28.

congregation in Corinth had misinterpreted important aspects of Apollos' message, however; they had become puffed up and had even turned against Paul to some extent. The apostle therefore had to explain a few things to them, which he did through the canonical letter known as 1 Corinthians. As evidence for this hypothesis Montefiore points to thirteen significant points of contact between Hebrews and the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, and then adds three more from the rest of Paul's letter.[305]

There is good reason to believe that 1 Corinthians is the earlier of the two letters and thus the literary relationship between the two letters must be understood the other way around. What, then, are the points of contact between them?

Both letters speak of perseverance in faith until the end and of God's faithfulness in that connection (1 Cor 1:8–9; Heb 3:14; 10:23); both speak of the spiritually "mature" (τέλειος) who are able to handle certain teaching (1 Cor 2:6; Heb 5:14), and of spiritual babes who are not (1 Cor 14:20; Heb 5:13); both claim that nothing is hidden from God's sight and that he will judge all in the end (1 Cor 4:5; Heb 4:13); both mention the coming superiority of believers over the angels (1 Cor 6:3; Heb 2:5); both speak of believers having been washed clean from sin (1 Cor 6:11; Heb 10:22); both use the imagery of running a race (1 Cor 9:24–25; Heb 12:1); both speak of the blood of the covenant (1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:20); both speak of the Spirit distributing gifts according to his own will (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4). While much of this could be found in other early Christian writings as well, the amount of overlap between Hebrews and 1 Corinthians is what makes these parallels striking.

It is particularly indicative that several of the images that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 3 occur also in Hebrews. It is as if the author of Hebrews had been reflecting especially over this particular chapter when he wrote his letter. In 1 Cor 3:1–2 Paul speaks of "infants in Christ" being fed "with milk, not solid food," a metaphor that the author of Hebrews uses when he reproaches his audience in Heb 5:12–14.[306] Some verses later, Paul uses a metaphor of planting and watering God's field to get growth (1 Cor 3:6–9). Similar imagery appears in Heb 6:7–8 where the author depicts believers as "ground that drinks up the rain" and produces either good crops or thorns and thistles.

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[305] Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 23–27.

[306] "You need milk, not solid food; for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature."

Hebrews threatens that the cursed thorns and thistles will be burned (Heb 6:8), while 1 Cor 3:13 speaks of a "testing by fire." The next image that Paul uses is that of a building (1 Cor 3:9–11). This building has a "skilled master builder"—Paul himself—who has laid a solid "foundation" which is Christ (vv. 10–11). Heb 3:6 likewise proclaims that "we are [God's] house," but it is Jesus who is the builder of the house in Hebrews (3:3). The imagery of laying a foundation (θεμέλιος) appears later in Heb 6:1.

Another parallel between the two letters which has been noted by several scholars is that between 1 Cor 10:1–11 and Heb 3:7–4:3.[307] Both passages refer to events narrated in Numbers to make the point that not everyone who sets out on the journey towards the promised kingdom will make it there. Paul writes of the wilderness generation—which he calls "our ancestors" (πατέρες ἡμῶν)—that "God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness (ἔρημος)," (1 Cor 10:5; cf. Num 14:16). This happened in spite of the fact that they had been "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:2). The reasons for this were that they became idolaters (10:7; cf. Exod 32:6), they engaged in sexual immorality (10:8; cf. Num 25:1–9), they put the Lord to the test (πειράζω) (10:9; cf. Num 21:5–9), and they complained (10:10; cf. Num 16:41–50). All these things happened to them, writes Paul, "to serve as an example (τυπικῶς), and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (10:11, also 10:6).

In Heb 3:7–4:3 we find a number of references that are reminiscent of this passage in 1 Corinthians: the reference to the "ancestors" (πατέρες) (3:9; 1 Cor 10:1), Moses' leadership during the escape from Egypt (3:16; cf. 1 Cor 10:2), "the bodies [that] fell in the wilderness (ἔρημος)" (3:17; cf. Num 14:33; 1 Cor 10:5), and putting the Lord to the test (πειράζω) (3:9; 1 Cor 10:9). While it is clear the passage in Hebrews differs in many respects from that in 1 Corinthians, the fact that other parts of the letter suggest his familiarity with 1 Corinthians makes the parallel between these passages significant, especially as Paul here touches upon hermeneutical issues (cf. 1 Cor 10:11).

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[307] A. E. Barnett, "The Use of the Letters of Paul in Pre-Catholic Christian Literature" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1932), 88–89; E. J. Goodspeed, *New Solutions of New Testament Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 31; Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 28; Rothschild, *Pseudepigraphon*, 108. Lindars claims that these passages go back to "a standing example in Jewish moral teaching" (*Theology of Hebrews*, 48–49).

Finally, in 1 Cor 15:21 and the passage that follows, Paul discusses the victory of Christ. The apostle asserts that "since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (15:21–22). Something of the logic of these verses is reflected in Heb 2:14–15:

> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood [i.e. they are human], he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

The mechanism of salvation demands of Christ that he performs his work as a human and thereby defeats death. Of this both authors are in agreement.

In the verses that follow, Paul goes on to discuss the last events in relation to the subject of the resurrection. First, he alludes to Ps 110:1 and writes that Christ "must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor 15:25). Paul then makes clear that the main enemy to be put under Christ's feet is *death* (1 Cor 15:26, see again Heb 2:14–15). After this he turns to Ps 8:7 from which he cites: "For God has put all things in subjection under his feet" (1 Cor 15:27).[308]

Turning to Hebrews we also find these two psalms, 8 and 110, cited together in the first two chapters of the letter. The same lines that Paul used are quoted (Heb 1:13; 2:8) but in Hebrews they are expanded. In 1:13, Hebrews has a direct citation of Ps 110:1 where Paul has only an allusion in 1 Cor 15:25. Likewise, in 2:6–8 the author of Hebrews is not content to only quote from Ps 8:7, as Paul did, but quotes verses 5 and 6 of the psalm in addition to verse 7.

As in the case of 1 Corinthians 3, there is a sense that the author of Hebrews was inspired in some special way by this section in 1 Corinthians 15. Again, there is no doubt that there are important differences between what we find in 1 Corinthians 15 and in Hebrews,[309] but the parallels are so striking that it seems probable that the author of Hebrews knew and used 1 Corinthians.

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[308] Psalm 8 was commonly understood to refer to an Adamic figure, which explains the connection to the notion of the first and the last Adam a few verses earlier.

[309] As emphasized in Hurst, *Background*, 110–14, esp. 112.

5.4. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate that it is highly probable that the author of Hebrews knew and used Paul's letter to the Romans and his first letter to the Corinthians. Several recent (and some older) studies have argued for such hypotheses and I have, to a large degree, repeated their arguments and results.

Although I would accept that none of the individual arguments are convincing on their own, it is my opinion that the cumulative weight of the arguments that have been presented in this chapter together makes a strong case. It is also important to keep in mind that the transformation of the original messages of the Pauline letters when they are used in Hebrews is a crucial aspect of this argument. The author of Hebrews appears to have been conversant with the Pauline letters and to have built the composition of his own letter around Pauline themes and imagery.

6. Reading Hebrews, Transforming Paul

What characterizes the use of Paul's letters in Hebrews? In the last chapter, it became clear that the author of Hebrews had transformed the message and content of Paul's letters as he used and was influenced by them. The aim of this chapter is to gain a deeper understanding of this transformation.

I will approach this question in three steps in the present chapter. First, I will introduce the discussion by presenting some prior studies and solutions to the problem of the connection between Paul and Hebrews and their relationship to matters of cult. In the second step, I will present a "preferred reading" of Hebrews, allowing the letter to speak on its own terms. The third step will then be devoted to discussing the question of how Hebrews' author transformed the message and content of Paul's letters. "Intelligibility" is the title of this section and recalls the discussion of the criterion of intelligibility in chapter three.

6.1. Hebrews, Paul, and the Cult: Status *Quaestionis*

While there has been a lot of debate about the apostle Paul's relationship and views on the Jewish cult, there is a strong consensus among scholars when it comes to Hebrews and the Jewish cult, at least regarding the basic issues. A. N. Chester spells out what scholars are in agreement over:

> Hebrews is of obvious importance for any consideration of sacrifice in Christian theology. The Epistle as a whole is concerned, more fully and intensively than any other book in the New Testament, with the themes of priesthood and cult, and it sets these closely in

> relation to its interpretation of the death of Christ. Indeed, the main argument of Hebrews seems clear and simple enough: Jesus as high priest has made the perfect offering of himself, atoning for sin once and for all, and thus rendering obsolete the endless, ineffective sacrifice of the cult.[310]

Chester then turns against Robert Daly's view that "there is nothing in Hebrews that does not or cannot harmonize with Paul's teaching on sacrifice."[311] As in his treatment of Paul's letters, discussed in chapter four, Daly investigates Hebrews' sacrificial theology in relation to three categories: "(1) the Christian community as the new temple, (2) the sacrifice of Christ, and (3) the sacrifice of the Christian."[312] Highly critical of this approach, Chester pleads that "if the writer of Hebrews cannot be allowed to speak for himself, it would be better to leave him alone."[313]

Instead of beginning with these categories, Chester quite soundly suggests that one should examine Hebrews on its own terms. This means that one should particularly take into account that the argument of Hebrews is not abstract and general, but rather 'a word of consolation' (cf. 13:22) addressed to a specific situation.[314] The addressed situation is often understood as one in which the addressees are being influenced by Jewish or Jewish Christian teaching.[315]

According to Chester,

> the categories of priesthood and cult are forced upon the writer of Hebrews; it is not that he chooses them, from a number of possibilities, because they seem especially suitable. It is the fact that these categories have formed the central focus and frame of reference for the community the writer is addressing, and that this

[310] A. N. Chester, "Hebrews: The Final Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 57–72, here 57.

[311] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 57. Cf. Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 261–85.

[312] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 262.

[313] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 57.

[314] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 57–58.

[315] E.g. N. Young, "'Bearing His Reproach' (Heb 13.9–14)," *New Testament Studies* 48 (2002): 243–61.

> community is in danger of lapsing from its faith in Christ, that compels the writer to use these categories to explain the significance of Christ.[316]

Rather than falling into three categories, as Daly supposes, the cultic theology in Hebrews is upon closer examination quite paradoxical—something which has recently been pointed out and discussed by several influential interpreters.[317] Chester notes that "[t]here is a clear tension inherent within this argument, since the writer is working at the same time with both a positive appraisal of the cultic traditions and also the need to pass a radically negative judgment upon them."[318] What the author presents is therefore "a parody of the Jewish model he is using" as its purpose is to serve his "radical reinterpretation of the Jewish means of atonement for sin and access to God."[319]

This last point has been stressed by Daniel Ullucci. In his view, the author of Hebrews is deliberately redefining the purpose(s) of animal sacrifice.[320] Ullucci asserts that there are three main elements to Hebrews' position on sacrifice:

> First, the text argues that traditional animal sacrifice is a fundamentally insufficient religious practice. Second, this is based on an entirely new notion of what sacrifice ought to accomplish. Hebrews argues that proper sacrifice *should* remove sin and produce eternal life. Traditional sacrifice is deemed insufficient insofar as, according to Hebrews, it is unable to produce these two desired

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[316] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 59.

[317] R. B. Hays, "'Here We Have No Lasting City': New Covenantalism in Hebrews," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. R. Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 151–73; Rothschild, *Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon*, 205–14; A. Wedderburn, "Sawing Off the Branches: Theologizing Dangerously *Ad Hebraeos*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 56 (2005): 393–414.

[318] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 65–66. This is one of the main ideas in Wedderburn, "Theologizing Dangerously."

[319] Chester, "Final Sacrifice," 66.

[320] "Scholars have often misconstrued the text because they have been taken in by the rhetorical move made by the author; they have taken Hebrews' specific argument as descriptive of larger Judean and non-Judean views on sacrifice" (Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 91).

> outcomes. Finally, Hebrews presents Jesus as both a perfect high priest and a perfect sacrifice. As such, the text claims, Jesus supersedes and replaces imperfect animal sacrifices and priests.[321]

According to Ullucci, these points should be understood in sharp contrast to Paul, whom Ullucci argues was quite positive towards the Jerusalem cult. Hebrews' position is therefore closer to that of later Christian writers who clearly rejected forms of worship related to Judaism.[322]

To sum up, it is possible to distinguish a number of different positions as regards Hebrews' relationship to Paul and the cult. First, there is the position of continuity, represented by the work of Daly, according to which Hebrews develops systematically what was already there in Paul's letters. Secondly, there is the position represented by Chester, who emphasizes the specificity of the original context of Hebrews and therefore concludes that Hebrews' author has no "sacrificial theology" since cultic questions were forced upon him. A third position is also distinguishable, which may be described as containing elements of both the other positions. This position is represented by scholars such as Wedderburn, Hays, and Rothschild, and holds that Hebrews' argument concerning cult and sacrifice is quite deliberate and of his own choosing, but that it is characterized by tension and contradiction, nonetheless. The last position can be understood both in relationship to Paul's letters, as in Rothschild's study, or apart from Paul.

6.2. A "Preferred" Reading of Hebrews

Questions of cult, sacrifice, and priesthood are at the center of the message of Hebrews, something which clearly sets this letter apart from the two Pauline letters that were investigated in chapter four. In the preferred reading that follows I will not discuss parallels with the Pauline letters, but will follow the same procedure as in chapter four. The preferred reading represents a reader-oriented perspective which comes to the text from a mass communication point of view. It does not claim to be the only possible reading but rather a

[321] Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 90–91.
[322] Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 91.

plausible one given the particular framework that was discussed in chapter two.

6.2.1. The "Who" of Salvation (1:1–2:18)

"The initial paragraph functions as an exordium to the written address that follows. It introduces the theme of the superiority of God's son to all other previous modes of revelation."[323] More than just introducing the theme of the son's superiority, which will dominate the first part of the letter, this exordium also touches upon another central aspect of its message: the "how" of salvation.

The "who" of salvation is God's son (1:2), but since it is not immediately clear what one means by this expression, further information on the identity of this Son of God is given in 1:2b-3a, in which the Son of God is described in terms used elsewhere of personified Wisdom (Wis 7:25–26).

The "how" of salvation is then expressed in 1:3b-4: "when he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." The fact that he made "purification for sins" points to the son's priestly function. Quite a lot of effort will be put into the argument later on, explaining more precisely how this should be interpreted. Verse 4 further qualifies this statement by relating that the son has become superior to the angels through his accomplishment.

The first part of the argument begins, in 1:5-13, with proof from the Scriptures which demonstrates that the son, through whom humanity attains salvation, is a unique heavenly being and not simply one of the "ordinary" angels. Several of the characteristics that the Scriptures ascribe to the son, such as being called "my son" by God (v. 5), being worthy of the worship and service of angels (vv. 6–7), and reigning on a heavenly throne (vv. 8, 13), make it clear that the son is different from, and more exalted than, any of the angels.[324]

Continuing the argument, the Psalms are quoted in 1:14, promising exaltation for an individual that cannot be understood to be an angel. Instead, the verse suggests that it is a human prerogative to rule the earth (vv. 6–8).

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[323] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 9.

[324] Further, the son is said to have created the world (v. 10) and to be eternal and immutable (vv. 11–12).

Humankind taking dominion over the earth should not be understood as having happened already at creation (cf. Gen 1:26), but is a prophetic concept. 2:9–16 therefore explains and provides further proof for the notion that the son, who is now also referred to by his proper name, "Jesus" (v. 11), is a human being (vv. 11, 12, 14) and the one who will make human dominion over creation a reality.[325]

In 2:9–18 the concept of Jesus' suffering in death is introduced. Why did the son have to become lower than the angels and suffer? According to verse 17 this happened so that "he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people." The meaning and significance of this rich statement will be unpacked later in the discourse.

6.2.2. Faithfulness in Times of Testing (3:1–4:13)

The assertion that Jesus became a "merciful" high priest (2:17) who "is able to help those who are being tested" since he himself was tested (2:18), leads the author into a digression about perseverance in the face of testing (3:1–4:13). The faithfulness discussed in 3:5–6 is related to what 2:17 said of Jesus' high priesthood, namely that he was "faithful." A comparison is made between Jesus and Moses who were both faithful with regard to "God's house" (3:2–6). The purpose of this comparison seems to be to form a bridge to the discussion of the "testing in the wilderness" (3:7).[326]

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[325] How can Jesus be both a human being and a divine Son? The answer lies in the Jewish-Hellenistic concept of the "heavenly man", based on a Platonist reading of Genesis 1–2, which says that 1:27 and 2:7 speak of two separate events (Philo, *Leg.* 1.12; *Opif.* 1.46). In Gen 1:27 the "idea" of man is created in "the image of God." This is a semi-divine concept/being which represents perfect humanity and which in some philosophically minded Jewish authors has been connected to the person or concept of the "Logos" and/or the "Sophia." This entity can also properly be called the "*son*" of God as the "image of God"-concept points in such a direction (cf. Gen 5:3). According to Hebrews, Jesus is the heavenly man who has descended upon earth in order to exalt the human race. Cf. E. Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God*, trans. R. Harrisville and I. Sandberg (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 101–17.

[326] Cf. Attridge: "That God's 'house' is in fact God's people is made clear from the relative clause that specifies the house as 'ourselves' (ἡμεῖς). This metaphorical identification is not deployed for apologetic or polemical purposes, but rather to introduce the following

Another concept that is introduced in these verses and which appears to be important to the letter writer is παρρησία, "confidence." This term is used four times in the letter (3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35) and refers to one of the benefits that the people have acquired through Christ's death. Because of Jesus' high priestly sacrifice and service, believers can have confidence to approach the throne of God.[327] This is made clear in 4:16 and 10:19.

3:7–4:13 consists of, and makes conclusions from, a midrashic treatment of Ps 95:7–11.[328] There are two aspects of this section in particular that will become central to the overall message of the letter. One is the notion that those who belong to Christ have "faith" as their particular identity marker. This is especially noteworthy as Hebrews is often understood to stand out among the New Testament writings for its specific take on "faith" and for stressing its place in the life of those who belong to Christ.[329] The other is the salvation metaphor of movement. 3:7–4:13 encourages the addressees to view themselves as a new generation of wilderness wanderers, pressing on to enter their homeland in heaven, a theme that will again come into focus in chapter 11.[330]

6.2.3. The High Priesthood of the Son (4:14–7:28)

Several of the terms and ideas that were present in 2:18–3:6 reoccur in 4:14–16. Christ's high priesthood is mentioned (3:1; 4:14), the "confession" is mentioned (3:1; 4:14), the παρρησία is mentioned (3:6; 4:16), and the "testing" of Christ is mentioned (2:18; 4:15).

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paraenesis" (*Hebrews*, 111). Koester observes that Hebrews does *not* develop the idea of the community of faith as a temple here (*Hebrews*, 247).

[327] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 112.

[328] Cf. G. H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 129–30.

[329] Cf. Attridge, *Hebrews*, 311–14, Koester, *Hebrews*, 125–27. Πίστις is used in 4:1; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 38, 39; throughout chapter 11; 12:2 and 13:7. In addition to this, the verb πιστεύω is used twice (4:3; 11:6), as is the term for unbelief, ἀπιστία (3:12, 19). The number of uses alone is enough to demonstrate its importance in the letter.

[330] This motif in Hebrews has recently been investigated in B. H. Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 46–63.

The author now stresses that Jesus' humanity is a precondition for his priesthood (5:1). The Son cannot be an angelic creature, since then he would not have been naturally inclined to help his fellow human beings in his high priestly role (vv. 2–3). The reason why Jesus has become high priest is so that he could make atonement for the sins of the people (2:17). This is the primary duty and function of the high priest (5:1b) and the reason why it is so important for the author that the high priest be merciful (v. 2).[331]

Another important aspect of Jesus' high priesthood is introduced in 5:4–6, namely, that it is "according to the order of Melchizedek" (v. 6). This theme is brought up in relation to the issue of the appointment of the high priest (vv. 4–5) and becomes an important category in the argumentation that follows.

The point of the subsequent verses, 5:7–10, appears to be to strengthen the case that Jesus' humanity is necessary for his high priesthood. Not only was he appointed as such through the prophetic word of the Psalm (v. 6), but he also proved himself worthy of this title through his accomplishments in "the days of his flesh" (v. 7).[332] Jesus was not appointed high priest until after his death, since it is only after his trial of suffering (and atoning for his own sin, vv. 2–3) that he is "made perfect" (vv. 8–9).

A section of exhortations interrupts the argument concerning Jesus' high priesthood (5:11–6:12) as the author introduces an idea that soon became controversial among the early Christians, namely the impossibility of a second repentance (6:4–8; also in 10:26–31 and 12:16–17). According to the idealistic theology of Hebrews, those who belong to the covenant have been made "perfect" and it is therefore unthinkable that they would lapse. This is the entire point of the new covenant (8:8–12). This "perfectionism" is softened to a degree when it is later stated that it is "willful persistence in sin" that is impossible to repent of (10:26). Minor transgressions apparently did not require a new sacrifice but could be forgiven through other means, since Christ's sacrifice "once for all" could not be repeated (6:6; 10:26).

In 7:1–10 the author returns to the subject of Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek. A connection to the author's "heavenly man"-

[331] "The thought expressed in v 2 has no clear parallels in contemporary sources from Judaism" (Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 116).

[332] Verse 7 should not be understood as saying that Jesus performed high priestly duties already on earth, but is rather a statement about his obedience to God. Contra Attridge, *Hebrews*, 146–47; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 120. But cf. Lane, *Hebrews*, 184: "The acknowledgement that Jesus is a priest 'like Melchizedek' implies that he is priest by virtue of his resurrection."

christology is made through the reference to Melchizedek as one "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the son of God" (v. 3).[333] Up until this point, the main interest of the author has been to prove that Jesus is a *human* high priest. From here on he switches the emphasis.

Inherent flaws in the Levitical priesthood make it obvious that a different priesthood is needed. In 7:11 it is concluded that "perfection" cannot be attained through the Levitical ministry. Because of this flaw it is argued in 7:12–18 that the Scriptures themselves must be understood to override the specific stipulations of the Torah concerning the priesthood. The prophetic word concerning the priesthood "according to the order of Melchizedek" (v. 17) accomplishes this.

Even though Jesus is of the wrong tribe he has become priest "through the power of an indestructible life" (v. 16). This indestructability should not be understood as resulting directly from his heavenly origin but is rather connected to his obtainment of "perfection" through his obedient suffering (5:8–9).[334]

In 7:19–28 the new priesthood that Christ represents and the benefits that come from it are introduced. This priesthood, which was instituted through a divine oath (vv. 20–21), give a stronger assurance to those who "approach God through him" (vv. 19, 25). Having been made perfect, Jesus "holds his priesthood permanently" (v. 24) and will therefore "always live to make intercession for them" (v. 25). Another major benefit, which the author soon will return to, is that Jesus "has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (v. 22).

6.2.4. New Covenant Hermeneutics (8:1–10:18)

A new aspect of Jesus' priesthood is introduced in the beginning of chapter 8 where the subject of the proper *place* for the offering of the perfect sacrifice is discussed (v. 2). Jesus cannot present his sacrifice on earth since he is not a priest there (v. 4). His ministry is instead performed in the heavenly sanctuary "that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up" (v. 2).

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[333] On the "heavenly man" and the new priesthood, see Käsemann, *Wandering People*, 195–217.

[334] Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 184.

Analogous to the way that the son represents "ideal" humanity, his priesthood is the "ideal" priesthood.[335] This, in turn, implies that the earthly ministry "is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one" (v. 5). In verses 6–8a the "better covenant" that was mentioned earlier (7:22) is brought into focus, as the author asserts that there is also a covenantal aspect to the earthly/heavenly-dichotomy.

Jeremiah 31 is quoted at length and commented on in 8:8b–13. While the existing earthly order of things is temporary (v. 13) and incapable of producing morally perfect individuals (v. 9), the "new covenant" will have no such limitations (vv. 10–12). This recalls a concern that has been asserted earlier in the letter, the need for permanency, stressed by the recurring declaration that Jesus "holds his priesthood *permanently*, because he continues *forever*" (7:24 cf. 5:6; 7:3, 17, 21) and by the claim that he "has been made perfect forever" (7:28).

In 9:1–10 the author returns to discuss the earthly cult and claims that the pattern of this institution bears witness to the fulfilment in Christ. The twofold structure of the earthly sanctuary is, according to the same platonic hermeneutic that understands the earth-and-heaven-*dualism* to be central to the message of the Scriptures, a "παραβολή" that reveals that there is an earthly ministry and a heavenly one.[336] The heavenly ministry is prefigured by the limited annual access into the "second tent" by the high priest, while the "first tent" is where the regular ministry of the old covenant takes place. The old covenant and its cult are only efficacious in a temporary and outward manner and do not have the power to "perfect the conscience of the worshiper" (v. 9). The "first tent" will have to disappear so that the "second tent" can become the place of regular and permanent ministry.

Christ's accomplishment is explained in cultic terms in 9:11–15. He entered the perfect heavenly tent "once for all" (v. 11), an entry characterized by

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[335] Just as the perfect human being became revealed through the coming of the Son, so the perfect priesthood was revealed by the same event. Thus, the Scripture hermeneutic that finds a heavenly man in Gen 1–2 is again at work in verse 5, where Exod 25:40 is quoted to prove the existence of a heavenly sanctuary.

[336] The key to understanding the author's exegesis is to appreciate the importance of dualisms for his readings: heaven–earth, new–old, eternal–temporary, perfection–imperfection, internal–external, etc. This is why he understands the two tents of the sanctuary to be a code for something else. J. W. Thompson presents the religious-philosophical background to Hebrews' thought in his article "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 567–78.

permanence, to offer his own blood (v. 12). The effect of this offering is a purification of "our conscience from dead works to worship the living God" (v. 14), which thus provides a solution to the problem of the old cult (v. 9). Verse 15 relates this discussion back to the concept of the "new covenant." Jeremiah's prophecy declares that the Lord will deal with the people's problem of sin, but does not specify *how* this would be done. The Christ event has revealed that a perfect purification sacrifice was the means by which this would be done.

Having discussed Christ's sacrifice as an offering for sin, the author turns in 9:16–23 to speak about the same sacrifice in terms of a covenant ratification offering. Moses "took the blood of calves and goats" and sprinkled the scroll, the people, the tent, and the "vessels used in worship" (vv. 18–21). This was done in order to ritually cleanse these things. Verse 23 announces that the heavenly things are in need of a ritual cleansing too, but by a "better" sacrifice.

In 9:24–10:4 the author declares that Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary "once for all… to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26). The fact that the priests have to sacrifice over and over again proves that these have no lasting effect (10:2–4). Another prophetic text from the Psalms is brought into the argument and commented on in 10:5–10. This text confirms that Christ has abolished the Jewish sacrificial service and replaced it by his own sacrifice (v. 9).

6.2.5. Exhortations and Warnings (11:1–13:25)

In chapter 11 the author returns to some of the themes that were discussed in 3:1–4:13, especially those of faith, perseverance, and the people of God on the move.[337] By listing examples from Israel's Scriptures and history, Hebrews' author emphasizes that a pious life often leads to suffering and various trials. Sometimes it even leads to martyrdom (cf.11:35, 37). Jesus is put forth as "the pioneer and perfector of our faith" (12:2). Even though Jesus' death is unique in many respects, it is also an example to be followed.

A large section of exhortations and warnings, in which several cultic references are made, close the letter. In 12:18–24 the author explains that they "have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness,

[337] See discussion above.

and gloom" (v. 18) but instead, to "mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem… to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" (vv. 22–24). The audience is thus again presented with a dualism in which the old covenant belongs to the material, finite, and passing realm, while the new covenant is spiritual, heavenly, and "perfect."

Through the mediator, Jesus the high priest, they may now "offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe" (v. 28). The sacrifices that are to be offered under the new covenant are immaterial and not connected to any geographical location. This point is enforced in the next chapter, in 13:9–16, as the addressees are exhorted to "offer a sacrifice of praise to God" (v. 15), and to "do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (v. 16). These are forms of sacrificial worship that are acceptable to God under the new covenant.

In this section, they are also warned about "all kinds of strange teachings" and particularly those concerned with "regulations about food" (v. 9). This ambiguous expression[338] is connected to "those who officiate in the tent" (v. 10). It appears that the writer is concerned that the addressees will return to forms of obedience that understand the Torah literally and materially.[339] A parallel is drawn between bodies of animals offered as sin offerings that are "burned outside the camp" (v. 11), and Jesus' suffering "outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood" (v. 12). The point of this comparison is to urge the audience to "go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured" (v. 13). The camp is supposedly the Jewish camp ruled by the Jerusalem priests and their perceived successors.

6.2.6. Conclusions

The cultic ideas in Hebrews are to a great extent determined by the letter's foundational concept of the existence of two different realms, in which the old and new covenants each represent one realm. The old covenant is connected to the created, material world that is destined to pass away. For humankind to obtain ultimate salvation and eternal life something more lasting is needed. The new covenant brings the eternal realm to men and

[338] See discussion in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 394–96.
[339] Cf. Young, "Bearing."

women, and plants the seeds of eternity in human beings who were formerly subject to corruptibility. Jesus is the heavenly agent who is responsible for this process. It is in accordance with this conceptual framework that Israel's sacrificial cult is interpreted and applied to the new situation.

The sin offerings prescribed by the Torah are regarded as insufficient since they cannot produce a lasting effect of forgiveness and moral transformation for the offeror. Jesus has, therefore, once for all through his death, offered a sin sacrifice which cleanses the conscience of believers in a way that completely wipes out sin and produces "perfect" obedience. A consequence of this understanding of Jesus' sacrificial death is that it is impossible to repent if one "willfully persists in sin" (cf. 10:26). To return to sin after one has been cleansed is to imply that Christ's sacrifice was deficient somehow, something which is insulting to God.

A key idea in the letter which is related to Jesus' sacrifice is his high priesthood. When the believer has been made perfect through the sacrifice, the believer can access the heavenly realm through Jesus' priestly mediation. Jesus provides access to the temple that is not made by hands and in this sanctuary believers can offer spiritual worship and offerings to God.

According to Hebrews, God's true temple is in heaven and not on earth. In two occurrences, the believing community is called the "house of God" (3:6; 10:21), but this expression does not seem to refer to the temple but is rather a metaphor for the people of God. The temple in Jerusalem had the pedagogical purpose to be "a shadow of the good things to come" (cf. 10:1), but has definitely lost its function together with the rest of the Torah now that the true realities have been revealed.

6.3. Intelligibility: Hebrews' Author Reading Paul

The criterion of intelligibility, discussed in chapter three, has to do with how one can explain the transformation of a message when a writer uses or is dependent on an earlier text. I will divide the discussion into two parts, in which the first will be devoted to *identifying* differences in relation to a number of themes connected to cult and sacrifice. The second part is dedicated to *explaining* these differences.

6.3.1. Differences

The discussion in this section will be arranged according to the four themes: *sacrifice*, *high priesthood*, *temple*, and *Jerusalem*.

Sacrifice – The idea that the death of Christ was a type of sacrifice is not one that is prevalent in Paul (although it does exist, cf. Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7), but it is a key aspect of Hebrews' argument. While Paul is primarily interested in the concept of sacrifice as an image of obedience, and frequently uses sacrificial terminology metaphorically to portray and describe believers' devotion, the author of Hebrews is mainly interested in the *sin offering* with its guilt-cleansing effects. In Rom 3:25, Paul hinted at such an idea but for the most part he chose other imagery when he discussed matters of soteriology. The reason for this is probably that he regarded the similarities and analogies between Jesus' saving death on the cross and the sacrificial practices of the temple to be quite limited.[340]

Even if there are links to Paul's use in Rom 3:25, the author of Hebrews' understanding of sacrifice is completely unique at its time, as has been pointed out by Daniel Ullucci.[341] Hebrews criticizes Jewish sacrifice for not being able to accomplish something that it was never intended to accomplish. Thus, the author rethinks the concept of sacrifice in a way that Paul and other Jewish writers at the time probably didn't think to do. Again, while Paul clearly uses sacrificial imagery as one among many *metaphors* for explaining the saving effects of Christ's death, the author of Hebrews seems to understand there to be a *typological* and prophetic connection between the Jewish sacrificial cult and the death of Jesus. The death of Jesus is not only *like* an animal sacrifice of the Jewish cult, but rather, it is the reality that the cult was pointing forward to all along.

High priesthood – Paul never explicitly speaks of Christ in a high priestly role. In Rom 8:34 he speaks of Christ as being "at the right hand of God" and interceding for believers, but he doesn't develop this priestly picture in Romans or 1 Corinthians. For the author of Hebrews, Christ's ministry as high priest is central for understanding what he has accomplished in the past as well as what he is doing in the present. It is as high priest that Christ is able to offer the perfect sacrifice for sin in the heavenly holy of holies; it is as high priest that Christ leads believers into the presence of God; and it is as high

[340] McLean, *Cursed Christ*, 52.
[341] Ullucci, *Christian Rejection*, 93.

priest that Christ mediates for believers, bringing their praise and intercession before God.

That Paul did not fully take the step to conceive of Christ's ministry in high priestly terms is understandable for several reasons. First, there is the problem of lineage, a potential problem which is addressed in Hebrews (cf. 7:14). Secondly, there is the problem of what to do with the actual priests who ministered in Jerusalem. Paul does not explicitly criticize their legitimacy, but rather, at one point, calls attention to their rights (cf. 1 Cor 9:13). To claim that Christ is the true high priest would necessarily imply a critique of the existing Jerusalem priesthood, something which Paul may not have been prepared to do, in contrast to the author of Hebrews who mentions and rejects them in 13:10.

Temple – The way that the two authors conceive of the concept of God's temple is quite striking in their difference. In 1 Corinthians, Paul envisions the gathering of believers as a type of temple community or cultic community, where God is present in a special way and where cultic actions are performed, especially in the form of a sacred meal. The author of Hebrews, on the other hand, while retaining 1 Corinthians' notion of the believing community as a "house of God" (1 Cor 3:9–17; Heb 3:2–6), develops this concept in a different direction by making it a household metaphor rather than a cultic one (cf. Heb 3:7).

Also, while Paul is silent when it comes to the status of the physical temple in Jerusalem, it is very clear what the author of Hebrews thinks of it. In his opinion, it has lost its relevance now that the realities have been revealed. There is only one temple that is of any significance now and that is the heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers presently. The author of Hebrews does not like to think of God's glory as having "come down" to dwell among the believing communities, but prefers the perspective of the communities as having ascended to the heavens in order to enter the divine presence there. In Paul's letters, the notion of a heavenly temple is altogether absent.

Jerusalem – As was noted in chapter four, Paul's relationship to, and opinions of, Jerusalem appear to have been ambiguous. In Romans in particular, he makes several comments about the city that reveals its special significance to him, and implies that there is a lasting role for it to play, especially in relation to the last events. Jerusalem is also politically important to Paul, as is revealed by his efforts to collect money for the Jerusalem poor.

To the author of Hebrews, on the other hand, the only Jerusalem that is of any importance is the *heavenly* Jerusalem. Jesus was executed "outside the city

gate" (13:12) and believers are called upon to follow him in leaving "the camp" (13:13). According to Hebrews there is "no lasting city" on earth, and instead the gaze of believers should be raised to the sky. The former role of Jerusalem was simply one aspect of the divine pedagogy, meant to teach people about the "good things to come."

6.3.2. Explanations

So far, I have argued, in chapter five, that the author of Hebrews knew and used at least two of Paul's letters, and, in this chapter, I have demonstrated that there are significant differences between how shared concepts and motifs are used and presented in Hebrews and in Paul's letters. In this section, I will bring these two things, which are in seeming tension, together, and attempt to explain what characterizes Hebrews' use of Paul's letters. I will do this by using three terms that I believe can describe this process: *systematization*, *scripturization*, and *platonization*.

Systematization – Paul is often more confused and ambiguous in his imagery concerning cult and sacrifice than the author of Hebrews is. This is not to say that Paul is confused and ambiguous in his thought, but that he has a different approach to these things compared to that found in Hebrews. It was noted earlier that Paul cannot be said to have had a "theory of sacrifice," something which, however, can be said of Hebrews. Where Paul brings in cultic concepts and imagery whenever it suits his argument, the entire discourse of Hebrews is centered on these issues.

In forming a theory and system of sacrifice and cult, the author of Hebrews is guided by a theoretical framework which follows two lines in particular: scripturization and platonization. While, as shall be shown, both applications and use of the Jewish Scriptures and platonic thought are present in the letters of Paul, Hebrews systematically develops Paul's message in a way that substantially strengthens these frameworks.

Scripturization – What I mean by this term is the move to understand and interpret concepts through imagery, motifs, and expressions taken from the Jewish Scriptures. While the letters of Paul are filled with references and allusions to the Scriptures,[342] the author of Hebrews makes these more explicit

[342] E.g. Hays, *Echoes*.

and has a more consistently "biblical" theology. What follows are three examples of how Hebrews scripturizes Pauline concepts:

First, ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 and Hebrews' portrayal of Christ's self-sacrifice. While Paul's concept is most probably sacrificial, it is not easy to harmonize with regular Jewish notions of sacrifice around at the time. One of the greatest difficulties concerns the direction of this sacrificial gift—God is the one who sacrifices and not the one who receives this offering. Further, Jesus' salvific death is such a monumental event that sacrificial analogies cannot come close to describing its effect upon the universe.

Hebrews' author solves these problems by allowing the Pauline concept of Jesus' death to determine the meaning and purpose of Jewish sacrifice. He accepts the idea that Christ's death has led to "justification" for believers, only he prefers to speak of "perfection" instead.[343] Common to both these concepts is the notion of a fundamental transformation of the moral character and covenantal status of the believer. But while Paul considers cultic imagery to be inappropriate for communicating such ideas, in Hebrews it is insisted that the regular sin offerings *should* have accomplished this but *failed* to do so. Christ abrogates temple sacrifices and offers himself as the one true sacrifice that can satisfy these demands. The author of Hebrews thus appears to have reflected on Pauline soteriology in general, and Rom 3:25 in particular, in relation to the Jewish Scriptures and to have developed it accordingly. Perhaps the author himself only regarded what he was doing as a form of explication of what was already implied in Romans.

Secondly, there are several things in Paul's letters that may have inspired Hebrews' concept of Jesus' high priesthood. If the Scriptures contain shadows of the heavenly realities and the good things to come, and the sacrificial service points towards the Christ event, it is only natural to ask who or what the high priest signifies. Hebrews answers this question by asserting that Jesus is both priest and sacrifice. Some passages in Paul's letters may have led its author to this conclusion.

Both Rom 8:34 and 1 Cor 15:25 use language about Christ that is taken from Psalm 110,[344] thus implying that this psalm is about him. Turning to this psalm, one soon comes across the statement, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (v. 4), a verse that is quoted twice in

[343] Garroway, "New Sort," 316.

[344] Cf. D. M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 59–60.

Hebrews (5:6; 7:17). Again, the author of Hebrews has found something to be implied in Paul's letters and has brought it out into the open and built a theological construct on its foundation.

Thirdly, the recurring idea in Hebrews of believers' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary (4:16; 10:19) may build on what Paul says in Rom 5:1–2: "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have *obtained access* to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God." Although Paul nowhere speaks of a heavenly sanctuary and probably did not have it in mind even in this passage, it is likely that the author of Hebrews found a temple reference here. In accordance with the earlier examples, the author of Hebrews takes an ambiguous statement in Paul's letters and interprets it in light of a concrete Scripture category.[345] Thus, the notion of a heavenly sanctuary where Christ is present and into which believers can enter becomes yet another part of the theological system that the author of Hebrews has developed.

From the author's perspective, the pieces of the puzzle were there in Paul's letters all along and all he had to do was to put them together in the right places to cause the full picture to emerge. Originality or creativity was not a goal that this, or any ancient author, was striving for after all. Rather, he was trying to faithfully apply the old teachings of Paul in new areas and in response to new questions and challenges.

Platonization – As was noted earlier in this chapter, the author of Hebrews reads the Jewish Scriptures through a platonic lens, according to which there exists two realms; one that consists of mere shadows and one which contains the true realities of things (cf. Heb 8:5; 10:1). While the true realities are "eternal, unchanging, and perfect,"[346] the material world of shadows is fleeting, corruptible, and frail. In this author's mind, there is thus a strict ontological hierarchy which orders the universe in a particular and definite way. What follows are three examples of how this affects his transformation of Pauline concepts.

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[345] The author of Hebrews finds support for the notion of a heavenly sanctuary in Exod 25:40 (Heb 8:5).

[346] Cf. H. Räisänen's description of Middle Platonism in *The Rise of Christian Beliefs: The World of Early Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 51: "In it, a sharp distinction was made between the intelligible world on one hand and the sense-perceptible world on the other. In the former, the world of God, everything is eternal, unchanging, and perfect; this is the world of the Ideas, eternal models (perceptible only by the mind), of which the things of the sense-perceptible world are images."

First is the emphasis in Hebrews on the once-for-all character of Christ's sacrifice which parallels Paul's statement in Rom 6:10. Paul asserts concerning Christ that "[t]he death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God." Believers are, according to Paul, to think of themselves in the same way, as participants in the Christ event. In Hebrews, on the other hand, Christ's once-for-all sacrifice is compared to the Jewish temple sacrifices that "are continually offered year after year" (Heb 10:1).[347] Hebrews' author writes:

> And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God," and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. (10:11–14)

The reason why Christ's sacrifice only needed to be offered once is that it is the real thing that the shadows—the Jerusalem temple sacrifices—were pointing forward to (cf. 10:1). He offered his sacrifice in the true sanctuary in heaven (9:24), in the eternal and unchanging realm where real and lasting effects are accomplished.

Secondly, the platonization of Paul's theology in Hebrews surfaces in relation to the understanding of temple. As was noted above, the author of Hebrews found a reference to a heavenly sanctuary in Rom 5:2, and appears at the same time to be uninterested in the concept of the community or individual believer as a temple (cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19). This is probably due to Hebrews' vertically upward-moving theology in which the goal is for believers to transcend into the heavenly realm rather than for the divine to descend to earth. Immaterial sacrifices of good deeds and praise suits the author of Hebrews much better (cf. Heb 12:28; 13:15–16) than notions of a cultic meal (cf. 1 Cor 11:23–26).[348] There is no future for the created realm and therefore all truly good things are placed in a different, exalted reality.

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[347] Note that this is also a case of scripturization.

[348] Some have seen a eucharistic reference in Heb 13:10: "We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat." In the verse before (v. 9), the author has,

Thirdly, while Paul understood there to be a future role for Jerusalem to play, the platonizing tendency of Hebrews disallows any such hopes. Since there is "no lasting city" on earth (13:14), it is really only the *heavenly* Jerusalem that can properly be called "the city of the living God" (12:22). This is a spiritual city inhabited by celestial beings (12:22–24). If Paul understood Jerusalem to be of importance because of its role as the scene where the Christ event played out, for the author of Hebrews it is only the place of the ultimate rejection of Jesus (13:12–13). Hebrews has nothing redeeming to say about the earthly Judean capital but concludes instead that the earthly, created, Jerusalem will be removed and the faithful will receive "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (12:28).[349]

6.4. Conclusions

According to the communication model developed by Stuart Hall, the meaning of a text goes through a transformation at the moment of its initial broadcast. Plato was aware that once a discourse was put to writing and circulated widely it was impossible to safeguard that the original intention behind the words would remain intact and understood. Readers come to texts with their own questions and expectations, and often it is the case that these do not match those of the original author. In this chapter, I have investigated one of the earliest "readers" (semiotically speaking) of Paul's letters, the author of Hebrews, and examined, through his own production, the meaning that these letters had to this author.

I have emphasized that the material circumstances of this "reading" are different from modern ones and that this has had an effect on the literary relationships discussed in this chapter. The author of Hebrews belonged to a relatively small, specialist group with regard to literary consumption and

however, explicitly made clear that "foods" are of no spiritual benefit, and by this appears to reject all notions of a material cultic meal.

[349] Paul refers to a "Jerusalem above" in Gal 4:26, which may well have been a source of inspiration for the author of Hebrews. My point is not that Platonist tendencies are completely missing in Paul; instead my claim is that Hebrews has further platonized the Pauline message.

production, and he would most likely have repeatedly experienced and internalized the content of writings that were important to him.

This chapter shows that in the process of reading and internalizing Paul's letters, and subsequently producing his own work, the cultic ideas, which have been the focus of my readings, have gone through significant transformations. Although this writer was probably guided by conservative ideals and wrote with the intention of being intellectually faithful to Paul, the great apostle, he nevertheless created a new synthesis of ideas that in certain respects constitutes a significant departure from the original thoughts of Paul.

In relating the relationship between Hebrews and Paul's letters to Stuart Hall's model, we may compare it to Hall's *negotiated* reading, which

> contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule.[350]

The author of Hebrews accepts and is willing to adapt his understanding to what he finds in Paul's letters, but is also prepared to make his "own ground rules" when it comes to "a more restricted, situational (situated) level."

Whether or not the development of Paul's ideas in a direction that both further scripturized and platonized his message was a legitimate step to take is not a question that is of concern for this study. The point is rather to emphasize that communication is fleeting and messages constantly change, even from the very outset.

[350] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 172.

7. First Clement's Use of Hebrews

As I mentioned in the introduction of this study, the present project began with a question about First Clement's use of Hebrews. So far, I have discussed communication theory, issues of literary dependence and ancient literacy, and investigated the relationship between Hebrews and two of Paul's letters. As I return to this problem, I approach it from a different direction than I did years back when I postulated an unknown mediating source rather than direct literary dependence. I believe that it is more or less certain that the author of First Clement knew and used Hebrews, something that will be demonstrated in this chapter.

An important issue in the remaining chapters of this book will be to compare the characteristics of the use of Hebrews by First Clement with the use of Paul's letters by the author of Hebrews. Are there any discernable rules or regularities to the early Christian use of other Christian writings? In order to be able to answer that question, I will go through the same steps with these letters that I did with Paul's letters and Hebrews.

7.1. Introducing the Problem

In some of the earliest known discussions about First Clement, the letter is connected to Hebrews. Origen suggested that Hebrews might be written by Clement of Rome because of the similarities between them.[351] Eusebius, who held to Pauline authorship of Hebrews, writes concerning First Clement:

> In this epistle he [Clement] gives many thoughts drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also quotes verbally some of its

[351] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.14.

> expressions, thus showing most plainly that it is not a recent production. Wherefore it has seemed reasonable to reckon it [Hebrews] with the other writings of the apostle. For as Paul had written to the Hebrews in his native tongue, some say that the evangelist Luke, others that this Clement himself, translated the epistle. The latter seems more probable, because the epistle of Clement and that to the Hebrews have a similar character in regard to style, and still further because the thoughts contained in the two works are not very different.[352]

In *De Viris Illustribus*, Jerome, in a short description of First Clement, comments on the letter's relationship to Hebrews, and agrees with Eusebius that the style is similar. At the same time, he notes, against Eusebius, that it also differs from Hebrews "not only in many of its ideas, but also in respect of the order of words, and its likeness in either respect is not very great,"[353] a comment that is probably made in an attempt to distance Hebrews from Clement in order to defend Hebrews' Pauline authorship.

Although the majority view among scholars today is that First Clement is literarily dependent on Hebrews,[354] this supposition has not gone unchallenged (as was noted in the introduction). Gerd Theissen made a suggestion that 1 Clem. 33–36 is dependent on a liturgical source and not on Hebrews.[355] To my knowledge, this theory has not gained any followers, but the more general notion that Hebrews and First Clement are both dependent on the same source or sources reoccurs in Horacio Lona's commentary on First Clement.

Lona insists that discussions concerning the literary relationship between the two letters must move beyond detailed considerations of the parallels found in 1 Clem. 36—a passage that often becomes the sole focus of these debates—and instead investigate the letter in its entirety. According to Lona,

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[352] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.38.1–3. Translation by A. C. McGiffert.

[353] Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 15.

[354] For a recent survey, see D. J. Bingham, "Irenaeus and Hebrews," in *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation*, ed. J. C. Laansma and D. J. Trier (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 48–73, esp. 48–51.

[355] G. Theissen, *Untersuchungen zum Hebräerbrief* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1969), 33–52. A refutation of Theissen's proposal was offered in P. Ellingworth, "Hebrews and *1 Clement*: Literary Dependence or Common Tradition?" *Biblische Zeitschrift* 23 (1979): 262–69.

both First Clement and Hebrews display a thoroughgoing indebtedness to an Alexandrian form of Hellenistic Judaism. It is this shared intellectual environment, argues Lona, which is the most probable cause behind the parallels between the letters.[356]

Andreas Lindemann similarly asserts that "neither agreement by citation nor other references to the text allow for the assumption of a direct literary relationship," affirming Lona's conclusions. However, Lindemann then goes on to state that "the similarity of 1Clem 36.2–5 to Hebrews 1:3–5, 7, 13 is so great that the use of Hebrews by 1Clem must still be considered possible."[357] When it comes to the concept of Jesus' high priesthood—one of the aspects that the letters have in common—Lindemann claims that First Clement is "clearly independent of Hebrews" (see discussion of this concept below). His conclusion is therefore that First Clement "owes the use of this title to a milieu similar to that of Hebrews, but the intellectual form is independent of Hebrews."[358] The end result is a compromise solution in which Lindemann suggests that the author of First Clement "did not directly know and make use of all of Hebrews, but only Hebrews 1."[359]

A final possibility that, as of yet, has no strong proponents has been cautiously expressed by Clayton Jefford. He notes that the great amount of points of contact between the letters can be accounted for in several different ways, one of them being that Hebrews was dependent on First Clement. This scenario is possible, claims Jefford, "particularly if one places First Clement during the period of the 60s–70s and gives due consideration to the highly developed Christology of Hebrews."[360] Although Jefford remains inconclusive on this issue,[361] we will have reason to keep the possibility of such a "reversed relationship" open as we delve into this matter.

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[356] H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 52–55.

[357] A. Lindemann, "The First Epistle of Clement," in *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*, ed. W. Pratscher (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 47–69, here 59.

[358] Lindemann, "Clement," 59. Käsemann similarly held that 1 Clement's concept of the high priest was dependent on a liturgical source (*Wandering People*, 170).

[359] Lindemann, "Clement," 59.

[360] C. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 132

[361] In one place, Jefford writes that he is "prone to argue for the hypothesis" that the author of Hebrews had knowledge of 1 Clement (*Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament*, 129).

7.2. Availability

Is it probable that the author of First Clement had access to Hebrews? In order to determine this, the relative dating of the two letters must be determined. Also, it must be assessed how likely it is that Hebrews—an anonymous letter written by someone in a Paulinist circle—reached the author of First Clement in Rome by the time this letter was written.

7.2.1. Dating First Clement

I have not yet made any attempt to give a specific date for Hebrews. Dating is a difficult matter and any suggestion must be taken in a very preliminary fashion. The important thing here is to establish the likelihood that First Clement was written later than Hebrews. The suggestion mentioned above that it was written in the 60s–70s would, for instance, create a problem in relation to the wider issue of "availability"[362] as it is unlikely that Hebrews was written at such an early point. The traditional view that the letter should be dated to 95–96 CE has by now been sufficiently refuted.[363] Further, any connection of the letter with a church dignitary by the name of Clement is a dead end in relation to this matter as nothing reliable can really be said of such a historical person.[364] The earliest known use of First Clement is in Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* (mid-second century).[365]

There are two aspects of the content of First Clement that I believe can help us get further with the question: (1) the subject of church order and offices,

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[362] An entire monograph has been devoted to defending such an early date for 1 Clement: T. J. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome: On the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 1988, 2008).

[363] See discussion and references in O. M. Bakke, *"Concord and Peace": A Rhetorical Analysis of the First Letter of Clement with an Emphasis on the Language of Unity and Sedition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 8–11. Bakke settles for a date in the first decade of the second century.

[364] Cf. Lindemann, "Clement," 64–65.

[365] See the list of parallels in Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 90–92. Lona also provides lists for the letter's use by Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria (92–104). See also K. Berding, "Polycarp's Use of 1 Clement: An Assumption Reconsidered," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (2011): 127–39.

and (2) dependence on early Christian documents and traditions. Concerning the first point, Lindemann writes:

> [A] dating of 1Clem is at best made possible through the analysis of the presumed church structure; evidence for a not-too-late origin (in any case still before 100) is the fact that 1Clem, like the Pastoral Epistles, does indeed recognize ἐπίσκοποι but still no monepiscopate; evidence against a significantly earlier date is the apparently long-accepted existence of the office of presbyter.[366]

While I agree that a date earlier than 100 CE is unlikely, I would suggest that a later date is certainly possible since evidence for monarchical episcopacy or "monepiscopacy" in Rome was not in place until "the second half of the second century."[367] The question of how the church should be structured and governed is one that eventually becomes a great concern for Christian writers.[368] In writings such as the Pastoral Epistles, the Didache, the letters of Ignatius, and Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*—documents that in any case are not among the first generation of Christian documents—this issue is central. First Clement can be grouped among these letters, and this alone should rule out the early dating that Jefford suggested. Hebrews, on the other hand, makes no mention of either ἐπίσκοποι or πρεσβύτεροι and shows no particular interest in this issue even though its author refers to the leadership on several occasions (13:7, 17, 24),[369] something which may indicate that Hebrews was written at an earlier stage.

Regarding the second point, there are a number of possible dependence relationships between First Clement and other early Christian writings and traditions, besides Hebrews, that scholars have discussed and debated.

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[366] Lindemann, "Clement," 65.

[367] P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. M. Steinhauser (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 403. According to Lampe, Eleutherus (ca. 175–89 CE) and Victor (ca. 189–99 CE) are the earliest ones who act as monarchical bishops in Rome.

[368] Cf. B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Lund: Gleerup, 1978); M. Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[369] The term that is used on each of these occasions is ἡγούμενοι.

Evidence that an author has had access to and used other writings is one of the best ways for securing a relative chronology, but it is certainly not without problems. I will now briefly discuss some of these possible relationships and their significance for providing a date for First Clement.

Twice the author of First Clement makes appeals to sayings made by Jesus (13:1–2; 46:7–8). Although they have parallels in the Synoptic Gospels it seems likely that they stem from some other early *logia* source, oral or written.[370] The significance of this for the dating issue is that these types of appeals or references are generally missing in earlier epistolary and non-gospel literature,[371] but occur frequently in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (cf. Did. 8:2; 9:5; 2 Clem. passim; Pol. *Phil.* 2:3; 7:2; Ign. *Smyrn.* 3:2). In my opinion, this is a strong argument for a relatively late date for the composition of First Clement.

Then we have the matter of First Clement's relationship to the writings of Paul. First Clement explicitly mentions 1 Corinthians and it is also generally acknowledged that the letter is literarily dependent on Paul's letter to the Romans.[372] While First Clement may contain references to a number of Pauline letters,[373] it has specifically been noted to have a particular connection to the Pastoral Epistles.[374] Next to the shared interest in questions concerning church structure and government, Horacio Lona has shown that there are important terminological similarities between First Clement and the Pastoral Epistles, as well as a significant number of literary parallels that cannot be coincidental.[375]

Together with Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*, First Clement and the Pastoral Epistles form a group of writings that share the same theological interests and accents, as well as having literary connections between them.[376]

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[370] Cf. S. E. Young, *Jesus Tradition in the Apostolic Fathers: Their Explicit Appeals to the Words of Jesus in Light of Orality Studies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 107–49, 176–99; A. Gregory, "*1 Clement* and the Writings that later formed the New Testament," in *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 129–57, esp. 131–40.

[371] The exception is 1 Cor 11:23–26.

[372] E.g. Lindemann, "Clement," 58.

[373] Cf. Gregory, "*1 Clement*," 151.

[374] Jefford, *Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament*, 129.

[375] Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 51.

[376] The dependence of Polycarp's letter on 1 and 2 Timothy is well established. Cf. M. W. Holmes, "Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* and the Writings that later formed the New

Common to these writers is also that Paul is their great hero (cf. 1 Clem. 5:5–7; 47; Pol. *Phil.* 9:1; 11:2–3),[377] and thus it seems correct to describe them as belonging to the same "Pauline" circle. The activity of this circle should probably be dated to around the first half of the second century, and thus it is within this timespan that First Clement should be placed.[378]

7.2.2. A "Common Environment"

The same type of relationship that can be noted among the mentioned writings can be found in an earlier set of writings which includes Hebrews, namely 1 Peter, Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews.[379] Perhaps we can speak of two distinct waves of "Paulinism"—in which Eph-Col-Heb-1 Pet comprises the first wave, and PE-1 Clem.-Pol. *Phil.* make up the second wave—or maybe it is even correct to describe them as two different generations of the same circle. Such a hypothesis could offer explanations for 1) the linguistic evidence that Lona presents in favor of the view that Hebrews and First Clement stem from a common environment,[380] and 2) the fact that First Clement provides the earliest known instance of dependence on Hebrews.

If Lona is correct in his conclusion that the authors of the two letters were active in the same circles, this would increase the likelihood of one being literarily dependent on the other, rather than this not being the case. First Clement's author is a learned scribe who had access to a book collection that contained a wide range of Jewish scriptures, as well as a number of early Christian documents including Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and a source containing Jesus traditions.

Testament," in *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 187–227, esp. 215–18, 226.

[377] On 1 Clement and Polycarp's relationships to Paul and Paulinism, see Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 127–34, 139–43.

[378] Cf. Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 242.

[379] Hebrews' relationship to 1 Peter and Colossians has already been noted, and the relationship of both of these letters to Ephesians is well documented. Further, Barnett has pointed to a great amount of parallels between Hebrews and Ephesians (cf. *Literary Influence*, 69–88).

[380] Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 52–55.

7.3. Similarity

The many parallels between Hebrews and First Clement have been thoroughly examined and argued for several times.[381] In presenting the background of this issue, Lona mentions the most important parallels.

> Die Stelle, die am meisten die Aufmerksamkeit der Forschung auf sich gelenkt hat, ist I Clem 36,2–5 (vgl. Hebr 1,3–5.7.8.13), aber auch Begriffe wie ἀρχιερεύς als christologische Bezeichnung (I Clem 36,1; 61,3; 64; Hebr 2,17; 3,1; 4,14 f. u. ö.), ἡγούμενοι der Gemeindevorsteher (I Clem 1,3; vgl. 21,6; Hebr 13,7.17.24) und Wendungen wie „in Ziegenfellen und Schafspelzen" (I Clem 17,1; Hebr 11,37), werfen die Frage nach dem Verhältnis der zwei Schriften zueinander auf.[382]

In addition to these, several others can be mentioned. 1 Clem. 17:5: "Moses was declared faithful in his entire house" (cf. Heb 3:2; cf. Num 12:7); 1 Clem. 19:2: "And so, since we have shared in such numerous, great, and glorious deeds, we should forge ahead to the goal of peace that has been delivered to us from the beginning" (cf. Heb 12:1–2); 1 Clem. 21:9: "For he is the one who explores our understandings and desires" (cf. Heb 4:12); 1 Clem. 27:1: "Let our souls, therefore, be bound by this hope to the one who is faithful in his promises and upright in his judgments" (cf. Heb 10:23, 11:1); 1 Clem. 27:2: "The one who commanded us not to lie, how much more will he not lie? For nothing is impossible for God, except lying" (cf. Heb 6:18); 1 Clem. 43:1: "the most fortunate Moses, a faithful servant in all the house" (cf. Heb 3:5; Num 12:7); 1 Clem. 56:4: "For the Lord disciplined me harshly but did not hand me over to death" (cf. Heb 12:6; Prov 3:12).[383]

Gregory is certainly correct when he writes concerning these parallels that "None is convincing in itself, but they may have a certain cumulative value,

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[381] There is the maximalist assessment made by D. A Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 179–94, and more minimalist examinations by Gregory, "*1 Clement*," 152–53 and Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 52–55.

[382] Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 52.

[383] Cf. Gregory, "*1 Clement*," 153. Translations are taken from B. Ehrman's translation (2003).

and the very strong likelihood that *1 Clem.* 36.2–5 depends on Hebrews strengthens the possibility that other parallels also reflect literary dependence."[384] In my opinion, the positions of Lona, Theissen, and Lindemann, are impossible to uphold once one considers these passages together. It is rather evident that we are dealing with a case of literary dependence and the former section illustrated the direction of this dependence.

7.4. Conclusions

We can say with a high degree of certainty that the author of First Clement knew and used the letter to the Hebrews. The parallels are not limited to only one section of the letter but we find points of contact with Hebrews dispersed throughout First Clement. As in the case of Hebrews' dependence on Romans and 1 Corinthians, the parallels are of a nature that point toward a repeated reflection and internalization of Hebrews on the part of the author of First Clement.

In this chapter, I have also suggested that First Clement can be grouped together with the Pastoral Epistles and Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*, and that these letters all have some kind of common origin. Further, this hypothesis may help us to understand why First Clement's author was among the first to become familiar with Hebrews, as Hebrews may represent an earlier stage of production of this circle of Paulinists.

How does First Clement use or develop the cultic ideas found in Hebrews? It is to this question that we turn in the next chapter.

[384] Gregory, "*1 Clement*," 153.

8. Reading First Clement, Transforming Hebrews

In this chapter I will follow the same procedure as in chapter six. First, I will introduce the subject of the chapter by discussing earlier investigations into First Clement, Hebrews, and the Jewish temple cult. Then I will present a preferred reading of First Clement in which I will focus particularly on things in the letter related to cult. The final section of the chapter will be devoted to the question of how First Clement uses Hebrews.

8.1. First Clement, Hebrews, and the Cult: *Status Quaestionis*

For obvious reasons, questions regarding First Clement's relationship to cultic matters have been much less discussed in scholarship than those concerning Paul or Hebrews. Apart from the special connection to the letter to the Hebrews, First Clement and its cultic conceptions are significant because of how important they are to the letter's main argument. These two issues, First Clement's relationship to cult and the letter's relationship to Hebrews, come together in several scholarly proposals.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, Gerd Theissen has suggested that a liturgical tradition lies behind 1 Clem. 36 and *not* the letter to the Hebrews. This liturgical tradition depicts a heavenly worship service that believers partake in, in which Christ ministers as a mediating high priest, who allows believers to look into the heavens. The assertion that 1 Clem. 33–36 stands out in the letter as a section which assumes a more "enthusiastic" form of piety compared to the "moralism" of the rest of the letter constitutes the basis of this form critical proposal. According to Theissen, the author of First Clement

appropriated this tradition for his argumentative purposes, while Hebrews used the same tradition but developed it in a different direction.[385]

A different theory that concerns Hebrews, First Clement, and cult, has been proposed by Raymond Brown. According to his theory, Hebrews is a letter originally sent to the Christians in Rome with the specific purpose of arguing against certain Judaizing tendencies. More specifically, Brown hypothesizes that some Christians in Rome wanted to create a sort of new tabernacle with a Christian "sacrificial service" after the model of the Israelites in the desert, as a way of dealing with the tragic events in Jerusalem in the year 70 CE.[386] Against such ideas and practices Hebrews offers a fundamentally different vision of God's salvation plan and worship.

The position set forth by Hebrews did not win the day, however. Brown writes, "Rather the Roman church 'domesticated' its [Hebrews'] challenge… and the end product was a greater attachment at Rome to the Levitical cult than Hebrews advocated."[387] The evidence for this is found in First Clement, argues Brown. In this letter, which is literarily dependent on Hebrews, "there has been a revival of cultic terminology in a less spiritualized form… [constituting a movement] in a direction quite opposite to the one urged by Hebrews."[388] Brown describes this conflict of directions thus:

> [W]hile Clement does not identify the presbyters as those who presided at the eucharist (which is never mentioned) or call them priests, his work reflects a tendency at the turn of the first century that will coalesce and develop through the second century until the bishop, presbyters, and deacons are pictured as the Christian high priest, priests, and levites, centered around their role in the eucharist as the Christian sacrifice. The author of Hebrews may not have been *polemicizing* against the beginnings of such a development when he

[385] Theissen, *Untersuchungen*. The author of Hebrews developed the tradition by accentuating Christ's high priestly role of mediating the word of God and also added the notion of the priestly self-sacrifice, something altogether missing from the original tradition.

[386] R. E. Brown, "Rome," in *Antioch & Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*, ed. R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier (New York: Paulist, 1983), 87–216, here 153–54. He does not, however, envision this to have been a literal tabernacle but rather "an intermediate theology in regard to a visible, purified Christian continuity of the levitical cult not localized in the Jerusalem Temple" (154).

[387] Brown, "Rome," 157.

[388] Brown, "Rome," 169.

> urged Roman Christians against slipping back to Levitical priesthood and sacrifices; but one has reason to doubt that he would have been enthusiastic about such a development.[389]

Thus, according to Brown's hypothesis, a substantial tension is involved as First Clement uses Hebrews but at the same time radically departs from its cultic theology. The reason for this, in Brown's opinion, was that Hebrews was not considered to be an authoritative writing: "The author was a second-generation Christian authority (Heb 2:3) and respected as such by the Roman recipients, but he did not have the influence of an apostle."[390] The author of First Clement would therefore not have felt himself bound by the teachings of Hebrews, but used it freely in a way that suited his own theology and purposes.

Another possibility is that the differences regarding the cultic ideas have been exaggerated by Brown, and, to an extent, Theissen. A more harmonizing approach to the development of sacrificial and cultic ideas is again offered by Robert Daly. In characteristic fashion, Daly summarizes First Clement's sacrificial theology under three main headings: "(1) the necessity that sacrifice be according to the will of God; (2) the spiritualization of sacrifice; (3) the institutionalization of sacrifice."[391] Although Daly does not discuss First Clement's use of Hebrews, he notes a potential problem in that First Clement "both spiritualizes and institutionalizes sacrifice."[392] He writes:

> The apparent paradox causes no difficulty as long as we realize that Christian spiritualization is neither anti-material nor anti-institutional in its basic principles. It is, to the extent that it is indeed Christian, incarnational. In other words, spiritualization for the Christian means, precisely, Christianization, or, if you will, religious observance in accordance with the will of God as definitively revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.[393]

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[389] Brown, "Rome," 171.
[390] Brown, "Rome," 148.
[391] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 313.
[392] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 317.
[393] Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 317.

Daly has here redefined the word "spiritualization" so that it is without its original anti-material connotations. If Daly is correct, it might be possible to understand First Clement as sharing in Hebrews' critique of the Jerusalem temple and its sacrificial service, while at the same time remaining positive to other material expressions of Christian worship.

8.2. A "Preferred" Reading of First Clement

One of the main characteristics of First Clement is its length. Consisting of sixty-five chapters, it is approximately the same length as the Gospel of Mark, something that will naturally affect the preferred reading of the writing in this chapter. Again, I want to highlight the methodological importance of having an understanding of the letter in its entirety for the interpretation of cultic notions and terminology in this study. Even though this prohibits extensive discussions of individual verses and passages, the purpose of this is to see how a message is transformed as it is placed within different structures of meaning. As has already been mentioned, there are a number of loaded cultic terms and concepts in First Clement. Among the more important ones that will be discussed below are: Christ's high priestly title (36:1; 61:3; 64), the parallels made between the Jerusalem temple worship and the Christian community (chs. 40–44), and the sacrifices of praise (18:16–17; 35:12–36:1; 52:3–4).

8.2.1. The situation in Corinth (chs. 1–3)

The letter, which is addressed from the "congregation" (ἐκκλησία) of God in Rome to the congregation of God in Corinth, describes the occasion for writing in the first chapter; news of "a faction stoked by a few reckless and headstrong persons" (1:1) in the congregation in Corinth has reached the capital.

In a highly rhetorical fashion, the author portrays the moral downfall of the congregation from its former heights to its present lows. They were formerly admired because of their piety (1:3), but have now become puffed up and

prideful: "the dishonorable rose up against the honorable, the disreputable against the reputable, the senseless against the sensible, the young against the old… [R]ighteousness and peace are far removed, since each has abandoned the reverential awe of God" (3:3–4). According to the author, chaos has erupted in the congregation as each one has forgotten the God-given place and order of things.

8.2.2. Exhortations and Examples of Proper Obedience (4:1–19:1)

Chapters 4–6 are devoted to the theme of jealousy (ζῆλος). Biblical sibling rivalries (4:1–9) and challenges to divinely bestowed authority (4:10–13) are first presented as examples of ζῆλος. Clement[394] then turns to "consider the noble examples of our own generation" (5:1) in "the most upright pillars" of Peter and Paul, who "were persecuted, and they struggled in the contest even to death" (5:2). A more universal perspective on the issue of jealousy is finally taken as Clement notes that "Jealousy and strife overturned great cities and uprooted great nations" (6:4).

In chapter 7, the author turns directly to his audience and calls them to repentance (μετάνοια). He writes: "We should gaze intently on the blood of Christ and realize how precious it is to his Father; for when it was poured out for our salvation, it brought the gracious gift of repentance to the entire world" (7:4). Clement's mention of the "blood of Christ", a recurring expression in this writing (cf. 12:7; 21:6; 49:6), may have sacrificial connotations[395] although the context here is not cultic. Visual metaphors occur several times in the letter and an important parallel to this verse is found in 2:1, where Clement commends the Corinthians for having kept the "sufferings" (τὰ παθήματα) of Christ "before their eyes" (πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν)

[394] I will call the unknown author writing on behalf of the congregation in Rome "Clement" for convenience's sake.

[395] Cf. C. Jefford et al., *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 109.

in the past. The main function of Christ's death here appears to be to inspire a will to repent in those who consider its implications.[396]

Further, the offer of repentance through Christ is only the last instance, and also the culmination, of God's universal call to repentance.[397] Clement continues: "Let us review all the generations and learn that from one generation to the next the Master has provided an opportunity for repentance to those wanting to return to him" (7:5). Noah and Jonah have already proclaimed repentance to non-Israelite peoples (7:6–7), and chapter 8 sees Clement give several scriptural quotations which prove that God wants every human person to repent.

In 9:2, the Corinthians are again told to "gaze" (ἀτενίζω, the same term that was used in 7:4), but this time "on those who have perfectly served his [the Master's] magnificent glory." Faith, obedience, and hospitality are emphasized in the following chapters as Clement offers several examples from the Scriptures to consider and imitate (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, and Rahab; chs. 9–12).

In telling the story of how Rahab hid the Israelite spies, Clement remarks that the spies gave her a sign "that she should hang a piece of scarlet from her house—making it clear that it is through the blood of the Lord that redemption will come to all who believe and hope in God" (12:7). It is thus far clear that Christ's suffering is central to Clement's understanding of the faith, having mentioned it three times already. It is, however, less clear how he understands the effects of that suffering and death.

The section 13:1–19:1 form a unit centered on the theme of humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη, cf. 13:1; 19:1). In 14:1 Clement connects his discourse to the Corinthian situation mentioned in the beginning by stating: "And so it is right and holy for us to obey God, brothers, rather than follow those who instigate foul jealousy with arrogance and disorderliness." This statement brings together a number of the themes that he has introduced earlier in the letter and ties them together in relation to the Corinthian situation which was stated as his cause for writing.

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[396] Cf. B. Bumpus, *The Christological Awareness of Clement of Rome and its Sources* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1972), 92; T. F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1948, 1996), 47.

[397] Christ is portrayed as a "second Noah" according to O. Knoch, *Eigenart und Bedeutung der Eschatologie im theologischen Aufriss des ersten Clemensbriefes* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1964), 264–71. Cf. Torrance, *Doctrine of Grace*, 51–52.

In the middle of the section on humility, Christ is brought in as the supreme example of this virtue:

> For Christ belongs to those who are humble-minded, not to those who vaunt themselves over his flock. The scepter of God's majesty, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with an ostentatious show of arrogance or haughtiness—even though he could have done so—but with a humble mind, just as the Holy Spirit spoke concerning him. (16:1–2)

Isaiah 53 is then quoted in its entirety. The passage explicitly describes Jesus' death in a sacrificial manner and as a redeeming act: "I will exchange those who are evil for his burial and those who are wealthy for his death" (16:10); "He bore the sins of many and was handed over because of their sins" (16:14). When Clement comments on this quotation his emphasis is, however, elsewhere. He writes: "You see, beloved men, the *example* that he has given us. For if the Lord was *humble-minded* in this way, what shall we ourselves do, who through him have assumed the yoke of his gracious favor?" Again, it is by contemplating the moral example of Jesus' suffering and death that believers are moved to imitation of it.[398]

8.2.3. Unity, Peace, and Harmony (19:2–39:9)

From the theme of humility, Clement moves to the subject of harmony and unity.[399] The audience's "gaze" should now be directed to "the Father and Creator of the entire world and cling to his magnificent and superior gifts of peace and acts of kindness" (19:2). In chapter 20, the created order is explained to be a model of peace and harmony (20:1–3). Everything has its assigned place and everything follows the divine order so that nothing interrupts the cosmic peace.

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[398] Cf. Bumpus, *Christological Awareness*, 103.

[399] For a discussion of how these central themes function in the letter, see Bakke, *"Concord and Peace."*

In chapter 21, Clement applies the idea of a created order to the congregation:

> We should revere the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us; we should respect our leaders; we should honor the elderly; we should discipline the youth in the reverential fear of God; we should set our wives along the straight path that leads to the good. (21:6)

Everyone must humbly accept their calling and learn to revere and respect those that God has placed over them. The two following chapters develop this theme and chapter 23 in particular turns in an eschatological direction.

In 23:5, Clement warns that God's plan "will come to completion quickly and suddenly," adding a scriptural quotation: "He will come quickly and not delay. And suddenly the Lord will come to his temple—he who is holy, the one you await" (cf. Isa 13:22 LXX; Mal 3:1). What is meant by "his temple" (τὸν ναὸν αὐτοῦ) here? Clement has thus far not made any references to a temple or sanctuary and the only temple that he will refer to later in the letter is the Jerusalem temple (cf. 41:2). There is nothing really that suggests that he has some other meaning in mind here, although it is difficult to be certain. The reference is too vague, occurring in a quotation that is focused on judgment, to build a solid theological understanding around.

Chapters 24–28 continue to speak on eschatological themes before Clement returns to the issue of humility. Now he comes at it from a new angle, namely that of election. Israel became God's chosen people in the past and the church "came forth" from the nation of Israel (29:2–3). The fact that they have been chosen by God should cause them to be humble. To Clement this means that one should not boast about one's works but instead be ready to listen to others (ch. 30).

As Clement continues this discussion in chapter 32, Rom 9 (vv. 4–5) is "echoed" as the gifts that Israel received are numbered:

> For from Jacob came the priests and all the Levites who minister at the altar of God. From him came the Lord Jesus according to the flesh. From him came the kings, rulers, and leaders in the line of Judah. And his other scepters enjoyed no small glory either, since God had promised, "Your offspring will be like the stars of heaven." (32:2)

Among the magnificent gifts given by God (cf. 32:1) are the "priests and all the Levites who minister at the altar of God." There is no hint in this passage that the priesthood and the cultic service points forward to something else. All the heroes of the past, including the priests and Levites, were "glorified and exalted not through themselves or their deeds or the upright actions they did, but through his own [God's] will" (32:3).

This discussion continues as Clement insists that election must lead to righteous deeds. And righteous deeds according to the will of God, in turn, are characterized by harmony and unity. God, the righteous worker, created everything in harmony and thus gave mankind a model to follow (ch. 33). The angels too are an example for men and women to follow as they minister before God (34:5–8). "So too," writes Clement, "we should gather together in harmony, conscientiously, as we fervently cry out to him with one voice, that we may have a share in his great and glorious promises" (34:7).

Chapter 35 contains a number of exhortations and warnings, after which a longer section from Psalm 50 is quoted (vv. 26–23). The passage from the Psalm is mainly an accusation against "the sinner" but the quotation ends with the declaration: "A sacrifice of praise will glorify me; there is the path I will show him as the salvation of God" (35:12). The mention of the "path" (ὁδός) which leads to salvation and the "sacrifice of praise" (θυσία αἰνέσεως), causes Clement to meditate on Christ, the high priest, probably under the influence of Heb 10:19–23 which also speaks of Christ as ὁδός and ἀρχιερεύς ("high priest").

36:1 describes Jesus as "the high priest of our offerings, the benefactor who helps us in our weaknesses." Verse 2 makes clear that Christ in his high priestly role should mainly be understood as a mediator between heaven and earth. He brings the offerings of praise from earth to God, and in turn communicates divine knowledge and glory to believers on earth (36:2). Through Christ, says Clement, "we gaze into the heights of the heavens," again using the verb ἀτενίζω. Moral influence through divine enlightenment is the way that Christ helps believers according to this passage.

In contrast to Hebrews, however, which is quoted and alluded to several times in this chapter, there is no mention here of a sacrifice for sins in relation to Jesus' priesthood. Neither is there any mention of a heavenly sanctuary,

but it is rather the "heights of the heavens" (τὰ ὕψη τῶν οὐρανῶν) that Christ allows believers to "gaze into."

In 36:5, Ps 110:1 is quoted—the same verse which is quoted in Heb 1:13—saying: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." This warfare imagery leads to new metaphors concerned with order in chapter 37: "let us do battle as soldiers under his [Christ's] blameless commands" (v. 1). In an army, everyone has to know their place and rank, and the Corinthians should follow such examples of order (vv. 2–3). The argument strongly echoes that of 1 Cor 12, with its emphasis on mutual dependence (cf. 1 Clem. 37:4; 1 Cor 12:14–20), and in 37:2 it moves into the familiar body metaphor from that same Pauline chapter.

8.2.4. Order among the Corinthians (chs. 40–48)

The imagery and examples of order and harmony earlier in the letter receive further expression in chapter 40.[400] "We should do everything that the Master has commanded us to perform," says Clement, "in an orderly way and at appointed times" (40:1). The Jerusalem temple service becomes the model and example of this divine principle (40:2). First of all, there are prescribed times and hours for the performance of the "sacrificial offerings and liturgical rites" (40:2). And further, it is prescribed "both *where* and *through whom* he [God] wished them to be performed" (40:3). In keeping with the army metaphor (cf. 37:3), there is a strict hierarchy of individuals in the divine decree according to this passage. All of this gives a pattern of obedience to be followed for anyone who serves God which must be done at the right *time*, in the right *place*, by the right *individual* (in the hierarchy):

> Thus, those who make their sacrificial offerings at *the arranged time*s are acceptable and blessed… For special liturgical rites have been assigned to the high priest, and *a special place* has been designated for the regular priests, and special ministries are established for the

[400] So far, Clement has discussed the order and harmony of the creation (ch. 20), of the angelic worship (34:5–8), of worldly armies (37:1–4), and of the human body (37:5–38:1).

> Levites. The lay person is assigned to matters enjoined on the laity. (40:4–5)

As Clement continues in chapter 41 we find particular emphases on place and person:

> The sacrifices made daily, or for vows, or for sin and transgression are not offered everywhere, brothers, but in Jerusalem alone; and even there a sacrifice is not made in just any place, but before the sanctuary on the altar, after the animal has been inspected for blemishes by both the high priest and the ministers mentioned earlier. (41:2)

The seriousness of these ordinances is underlined as Clement reminds his audience that the prescribed punishment for anyone who would go against these commandments was death (41:3). As Raymond Brown was careful to point out, Clement does not in this passage, or in any other, equate the priesthood with the Christian leadership.[401] What he has instead found in the Jewish temple cult is a model of the principles of divinely ordained times, places, and hierarchical offices.

In chapters 42–44 Clement gets to the heart of the letter's concern as he discusses the ministry of the "bishop" (ἐπίσκοπος). He explains that in a similar way to how God sent out Jesus and Jesus sent out the apostles, so the apostles "appointed the first fruits of their ministries as bishops and deacons" (42:4).[402] That they were acting on God's behalf in doing this is evidenced by the fact that they were anticipated by a scriptural prophecy (42:5; cf. Isa 60:17 LXX). It is noteworthy that Clement does not argue for the office of the bishop from the Jewish priesthood but rather presents bishops and deacons as being of a separate and *different* order.

That there is an analogy between the ministries cannot, on the other hand, be denied. In chapter 43 Clement tells his audience what happened in Moses' time "when jealousy fell upon the tribes and created internal factions over the

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[401] Brown, "Rome," 171.

[402] "First fruits" refers here to those who were the first individuals in a particular place to come to faith in Christ.

priesthood" (43:2). The story of Aaron's blossoming rod (cf. Num 17) is recounted and Clement explains that this incident happened "so that there might be no disorderliness in Israel" (43:6).

Moses had known in advance that quarrels over the priesthood would arise and, asserts Clement, "So too our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that strife would arise over the office of the bishop" (44:1). The apostles therefore decided that the bishops appointed by them should be succeeded in their ministry by "other approved men" (44:2).

> Thus we do not think it right to remove from the ministry [τῆς λειτουργίας] those who were appointed by them or, afterwards, by other reputable men, with the entire church giving its approval. For they have ministered [λειτουργήσαντας] over the flock of Christ blamelessly and with humility, gently and unselfishly, receiving a good witness by all, many times over. Indeed we commit no little sin if we remove from the bishop's office those who offer the gifts [προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα] in a blameless and holy way… But we see that you have deposed some from the ministry [τῆς… λειτουργίας] held blamelessly in honor among them, even though they had been conducting themselves well. (44:3–4, 6)

The language that is used of the bishop and his ministry in this passage is unmistakably cultic. Their service is called λειτουργία[403] and the expression "having offered the gifts" (προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα) is sacrificial.[404]

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[403] It is correct that λειτουργία can be used for non-cultic ministries but since the term and its cognates have been used in the previous chapters in relation to the cultic service of the Jerusalem priests (41:1, 2; 43:3), it is likely that it has cultic connotations in this passage as well, contra B. E. Bowe, *A Church in Crisis: Ecclesiology and Paraenesis in Clement of Rome* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 150–51.

[404] However, there is a debate concerning what the expression refers to (see discussion and references in Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 468). First of all, is this a reference to the eucharist? And secondly, if it is, in what sense is the eucharist thought of as sacrificial? Convincing cases have been made by Barbara E. Bowe and Alistair Stewart-Sykes for the view that this expression refers here to strictly non-cultic duties performed by the bishops, see Bowe, *Crisis*, 151; A. Stewart-Sykes, "Prophecy and Patronage: The Relationship between Charismatic Functionaries and Household Officers in Early Christianity," in *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (Oxford:

In chapters 45–46 it is emphasized that the main problem in Corinth, as Clement sees it, is not that they have committed an offense against an inviolable *office* but rather that the individuals who have been deposed were upright, holy, and innocent. They are urged to "take up the epistle of that blessed apostle Paul" (47:1), a reference to 1 Corinthians, to learn what was said there concerning schism and dividing into groups (ch. 47).

8.2.5. More Exhortations and Examples (chs. 49–65)

Inspired by Paul's poetic discourse on love in 1 Cor 13 (which Clement alludes to in 49:5), the topic of love is in focus in chapters 49 and 50. Clement writes: "Because of the love he had for us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his blood for us, by God's will—his flesh for our flesh, his soul for our soul." The background of this expression may well be sacrificial but it would be wrong to assert, as Bertram Bumpus does, that in this verse "a clear atonement theology appears for the first time in a definitive manner in 1 Clement."[405] The point of mentioning Christ's violent death in this passage is rather to portray this as a supreme example of loving action that the audience of the letter should imitate.[406]

Instead of demanding an atoning sacrifice in order to be able to forgive, these chapters (49–50) stress that *love* alone "hides a multitude of sins" (49:5):

> We are blessed, loved ones, when we keep God's commandments in the harmony of love, that our sins may be forgiven us through

Oxford University Press, 2005), 165–89, esp. 172. In their opinion, the expression here is a case of "spiritualized" sacrifice which finds parallels in other places in the letter (18:16–17; 35:12–36:1; 52:3–4). On the other hand, there is evidence that the celebration of the eucharist had the form of a cultic meal from early on and it is probable that the bishops would have officiated at these meals (cf. 1 Cor 11). In "offering the gifts" they are much more like a Roman *paterfamilias* taking cultic responsibility over the household than they are like the priests of the centralized Jewish sanctuary in Jerusalem. There is, however, a link there between the bishop and the Jerusalem priest which is strong enough for Clement to regard them as parallel in some sense in these chapters.

[405] Bumpus, *Christological Awareness*, 121.

[406] Something that Bumpus also affirms, when he writes that the passage's "aim is to inculcate loving obedience and not to teach any specific soteriology" (*Christological Awareness*, 96).

> love. For it is written: "Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins have been covered over. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not take into account and in whose mouth is found no deceit." (50:5–6; cf. Ps 32:1–2)

The ground for forgiveness is not found in Christ's saving death but in God's loving character and ability to forgive those who ask him for forgiveness.[407]

The only condition is that a person does not harden her or his heart but is humble and confesses, asking God to forgive (ch. 51). "The Master is in need of nothing, brothers," writes Clement, "and craves nothing from anyone, but to be praised" (52:1). Clement supports this assertion with a number of scriptural passages that all stress the fact that God does not need sacrifices:

> For the chosen one, David, says: "I will praise the Lord and it will please him more than a young calf bearing horns and hooves. Let those who are poor see this and rejoice." And again he says: "Give to God a sacrifice of your praise and render to the Most High your prayers. And call upon me in the day of your affliction, and I will rescue you; and you will give glory to me." "For a crushed spirit is a sacrifice to God." (52:2–4)[408]

Whatever Clement's views are concerning the eucharist or the Jerusalem temple cult, this series of quotations shows that he does not regard God's dealings with humanity as bound to material formalities.

A specific course of action is urged on those who have caused the schism in chapters 53–55. It is declared in 51:2 that "those who conduct themselves with reverential awe and love prefer to undergo torture themselves than to have their neighbors do so," and this principle is then concretely applied to the specific situation. If, says Clement, someone is guilty and wants to repent:

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[407] Cf. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. J. E. Steely (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013[1913]), 374–75.

[408] Pss 69:30–32; 50:14–15; 51:17.

> Let that one say: "If I am the cause of faction, strife, and schisms, I will depart; I will go wherever you wish and do what is commanded by the congregation. Only allow the flock of Christ to be at peace with the presbyters who have been appointed." The one who does this will have made himself eminent in Christ and will be welcomed everywhere. (53:2–3)

Examples of such self-sacrificial action can be found both in the history of Israel (ch. 53), and among the Gentiles (55:1). Heroic women in particular performed "manly" deeds of self-sacrifice (55:3–6). Those who have caused the schism should regard their voluntary exile as a form of divine discipline (ch. 56).

Now that Clement has given his "advice," he warns the audience of what will happen if it is disregarded (57:1–59:1). A prayer is then offered (59:3–61:3), which is directed to God "through the high priest and benefactor of our souls, Jesus Christ" (61:3). The expression διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως καὶ προστάτου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ occurs again in chapter 64, in a closing benediction. The repetition of the phrase has convinced scholars that it originates in some ancient liturgy (cf. 36:1).[409] As in chapter 36, the high priesthood of Christ is exclusively focused on mediation between God and humanity.

8.2.6. Conclusions

Social order, harmony, and submission, are the main concepts in this letter and several of the cultic notions stand in close relationship to these emphases. The role that the Jerusalem temple cult and the Israelite priesthood play in this writing is certainly determined by this focus. In the scriptural ordinances and decrees concerning cult and priesthood, Clement finds a revealed expression of God's will concerning the hierarchy of offices, as well as set times and places for worship. The commandments concerning the cult and the priesthood have an abiding validity and Clement nowhere suggests that this

[409] Käsemannm, *Wandering People*, 170; A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 110; Lona, *Clemensbrief,* 390.

aspect of the revelation was only intended for Israel. Neither does he allegorize or "spiritualize" the meaning of scriptural concepts such as temple or priesthood.

Sacrifices are spiritualized, however, as Clement emphasizes that God, the supreme ruler, has no need of anything, and neither does he ask anything of humans but that they live in repentance, obedience, and praise of him. Whatever the "offering of gifts" in 44:4 signifies, it is doubtless related to the needs of man rather than the needs of God.

Christ's death is mentioned in sacrificial terms but its significance and its effects are not discussed in the same way as in Paul's letter to the Romans and in Hebrews. Instead, Christ's death is primarily held forth as a model to be inspired by and an example to be imitated. It is meant to be meditated over and thus produce repentance, humility, and self-sacrificial behavior in believers. "Justification" and "forgiveness" are important concepts to Clement's thought but they are apparently not causally linked to Christ's accomplishment on the cross in the way that they are in Romans and Hebrews.

The high priesthood of Christ is an important concept in the letter. As high priest, Christ mediates between God and humans; divine knowledge and grace are given to humans through him, and the prayers and praise of humans are brought to God through him. There is no mention of a priestly self-sacrifice on the part of Christ. A divine liturgy is performed in heaven by angels but there is no mention of a heavenly temple or sanctuary. The only temple that is mentioned in First Clement is the temple in Jerusalem and it is possible that Clement believed that that temple would have a role to play in the final judgment.

8.3. Intelligibility: Clement Reading Hebrews

What characterizes Clement's reading of Hebrews? I now turn to the question of how First Clement's author transforms the message of Hebrews by looking, first, at the differences between the two letters in their cultic conceptions, and secondly, by explaining these differences. The procedure is thus the same as the one followed in chapter six.

8.3.1. Differences

The discussion of differences in this section will concern the following four topics: *priesthood, high priesthood, sacrifice,* and *the Jerusalem temple*.

Priesthood – In Hebrews the interest in the Jewish priesthood is grounded in the fact that it serves as a contrast to the better and supreme priesthood of Christ. The priests in the Jerusalem temple offered sacrifices that ultimately served no higher purpose since they could not accomplish anything in the spiritual realm. These priests served a cult that was destined to pass away and that had already become useless. If they persisted in this service (whatever 13:10 refers to) they were not welcome to be a part of the community of believers who had Christ as their high priest. In contrast to this negative view, First Clement emphasizes the honorable calling and ministry of the priesthood in 32:2 and holds the pattern of their cultic service (ch. 42) and their special calling and privileges (ch. 43) to have enduring applicability. Jamie Walters has suggested that this positive understanding of Jewish institutions is surprising as Clement "seems completely unconcerned that his approach might blur the boundary between Christianity and Judaism and result in defections to the synagogues or open the door to Judaizers."[410] Other Christian writers at the time were often highly critical and even polemical against Jews and things connected to Jewish practices (e.g. Did. 8:1; Barn. 14:5; Diogn. 3:5; 4:1; Ign. *Magn*. 10:3; Ign. *Phld*. 6:1), and in comparison,

[410] J. Walters, "Romans, Jews, and Christians: The Impact of the Romans on Jewish/Christian Relations in First-Century Rome," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. K. Donfried and P. Richardson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 175–95, here 193.

First Clement clearly stands out in its positive attitude towards the Jewish priesthood. Hebrews and First Clement thus fall on two opposite sides of the divide in relation to this matter, the point made by Brown that we saw earlier in this chapter.

High Priesthood – Closely related to the matter just discussed is the fact that in Hebrews, Christ's heavenly high priesthood is contrasted with the human and earthly priesthood of the Jewish cult. But while Clement introduces Christ's high priesthood in a chapter filled with quotations and references to Hebrews (ch. 36), there are a number of important differences between the two letters' concepts of this high priesthood. First, there is no priestly self-sacrifice for sin in First Clement. This central aspect of Hebrews' high priestly concept is apparently of no concern to Clement, something which is probably related to Clement's general lack of interest in sacrifice in relation to atonement (discussed below). In Clement's concept, the task of the heavenly high priest is strictly to act as a mediating party between God and humanity.

Secondly, there is no reference to Melchizedech in First Clement. While Hebrews constructs a rather delicate argument from the Scriptures for the validity and superiority of Christ's priesthood by referring to the figure of Melchizedech, First Clement has no such category for understanding Jesus' high priesthood.[411] Exactly what the relationship is between the high priesthood of Christ and the Jewish high priesthood is a question that Clement leaves unanswered.

Thirdly, there is no reference to the humanity of Christ in relation to his high priesthood. In Hebrews, it was important for the author to emphasize that Christ became human in order that he would be able to sympathize with his human brothers and sisters (2:17; 4:15–5:5). Just as in Hebrews, it is emphasized in First Clement that Christ as high priest helps believers in their weakness (36:1; cf. Heb 4:15). But while Hebrews links this ability to Christ's humanity, the statement in First Clement seems more closely connected to

[411] An interesting reference of comparison in this matter is Justin Martyr, who makes the point that Melchizedek is a type of Christ as the "priest of the uncircumcised" (*Dial.* 33:2). Justin thus uses this concept to shame the Jews by making a point of the fact that the "circumcised Abraham" offered tithes to the "uncircumcised" Melchizedek (33:2). Through this example, Justin asserts that "God has announced that his eternal priest, called Lord by the Holy Spirit, should be the priest of the uncircumcised" (33:2).

his supremacy and exaltedness; it is because of the might and power of Christ that he is able to help.

The fourth and final point is that there is no mention of a heavenly sanctuary in which Christ ministers in First Clement. In Hebrews, it was stressed that Christ had entered the heavenly sanctuary and was bringing believers there with him into the immediate presence of God. It was also into the heavenly sanctuary that Christ brought his blood in order to atone for sins, according to Hebrews. First Clement has no concept of believers being brought into the divine realm. Instead, Christ mediates divine knowledge to believers (ch. 36) and they are invited to join the angels in praise (ch. 34), but they do this without ever leaving the surface of the earth, literally and figuratively.

In conclusion, it may be said that First Clement's high priestly concept in relation to that of Hebrews is *de-narrativized* and *de-scripturized*. What I mean by de-narrativized is that while Hebrews' high priest-mythology is expressed in terms of a series of events and actions—Christ's coming to earth by becoming man, achieving perfection through suffering, and presenting the flawless sacrifice in the heavenly temple—Christ's high priesthood in First Clement is imagined in more static categories. Jesus is the eternal high priest, ever fulfilling his mediating role. This de-narrativization in turn leads to a form of de-scripturization in First Clement. Since the narrative constructed by the author of Hebrews is built around components taken from the Jewish Bible, the high priesthood of Christ loses its specifically Jewish side when this narrative is discarded.

Sacrifice – Explaining how Christ's death functions as a sacrifice which inaugurates the new covenant and cleanses the consciences of believers once and for all is central to Hebrews' argument. In First Clement, Jesus' death figures prominently and has the function of inspiration and devotion for believers. The audience is especially encouraged to gaze at the blood and suffering of Christ, an idea which finds a clear parallel in Heb 12:2. However, attempts at systematically explicating how Jesus' death saves are missing in First Clement. Forgiveness, atonement, and justification are dependent on human virtue and divine mercy rather than on any sacrificial accomplishment. As in the case of the high priesthood, First Clement generally appears to assume a shared understanding with his audience of Christ's vicarious

suffering, but one that does not seem to be strongly tied to cultic categories. References to the "blood" of Christ do not necessarily imply sacrificial connotations. Similar to Paul's letters, sacrifices in First Clement are not mainly focused on dealing with sin and atonement but are rather primarily understood as gifts of praise and obedience that believers present to God.

The Jerusalem Temple – The earthly temple in Jerusalem was, according to Hebrews, only a "mere copy of the true one" (9:24), which is the heavenly temple. The temple on earth had a pedagogical purpose to teach people about the heavenly realities, but now that Christ had come and fulfilled the hopes by offering his perfect sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary, the lesson of the Jerusalem temple had been completed. According to Hebrews, there was now no more purpose in placing devotion in any earthly place or building. Instead, the focus of believers should be wholly centered on the celestial realm to which Christ had ascended. Significantly, First Clement retains the heavenly focus by emphasizing that Christ is a heavenly mediator of the divine and that through him it is possible to gaze into the heavens (36:2). On the other hand, in contrast to Hebrews, First Clement speaks of the Jerusalem temple as if it were still a valid divine institution. It even appears that Clement believed that the Jerusalem temple would be a place of focus at the last judgment (cf. 23:5). I can find no plausible alternative interpretation to that verse or come up with any strong reason why Clement could not have thought that this was the case. The fact that the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE does not settle the matter, as this was not the first time that the temple had been destroyed only to be rebuilt. This is not to suggest that Clement himself would have been active in propagating for the rebuilding of the temple or even have attached great religious significance to the city of Jerusalem. Clement learned about these institutions in the Jewish Scriptures and through them he learned to revere what they stood for.

8.3.2. Explanations

I argued in chapter six that Hebrews' relationship to Paul's letters can be described as a systematization of the Pauline teaching especially by a scripturizing and platonizing of Paul's message. The author of Hebrews

appears to have tried to capture what he understood to be the essence of Paul's theology and to expound it for a new audience through this strategy. There is thus something strongly intentional about the connection between Hebrews and Paul's letters. Several parallel concepts can be pointed to which seem to have been consciously developed and reapplied in a new framework.

The relationship between Hebrews and First Clement, on the other hand, seems to be very different in nature. The overall subjects, concerns, and main arguments of the letters have little in common. While First Clement clearly uses Hebrews, has internalized its content, and reproduces its terminology and expressions, it appears to belong to a very different social and intellectual context, and this certainly has consequences for Clement's reading and use of Hebrews.[412]

Fragmentation – If the author of Hebrews was said to have systematized the teaching of Paul by ordering the message of his letters with the help of new principles, the opposite may almost be said about what Clement did with Hebrews. Clement has, for the most part, taken concepts, terms, and motifs out of their original contexts and put them into new ones, without paying much (if any) attention to their significance in Hebrews.

In Hebrews the high priesthood of Christ, the "blood" and sacrifice of Christ, the heavenly worship service involving both humans and angels, and the spiritual sacrifices of praise and obedience offered by believers, all form a coherent theological understanding of the world and are different aspects of one and the same argument. The platonic, dualistic thought which regards the earthly and material things as "shadows" and "copies" of the heavenly realities provides the framework for the author of Hebrews' configuration of these theological concepts. We still hear of these notions in First Clement, but the coherent structure that they form has been broken down.

The high priesthood of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ are closely connected concepts in Hebrews. See, for instance, Heb 9:11–12:

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[412] For a study of the social location of the author/s of First Clement, see J. S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome: Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). For the social setting of Hebrews, see D. A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

> [W]hen Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Offering his own blood in the heavenly sanctuary is the primary function of Christ's priesthood according to Hebrews. In First Clement, however, these two concepts have been separated so that the "blood of Christ" is not discussed in specifically sacrificial terms, and the high priesthood of Christ is not said to involve the offering of any bloody sacrifice.

Again, in Hebrews, the cleansing sacrifice of Christ is the precondition of believers' participation in heavenly worship with the angels. Heb 10:19–22 makes this especially clear:

> Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Somewhat later, the author explains that "you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering" (10:22), and therefore they are encouraged to "give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship" (10:28). In First Clement there is no concept of believers' ascension to heaven but the idea of participation in angelic worship is present in 34:5–8. There is no trace in First Clement of the conditional link between Christ's sacrifice, believers' access to God, and believers' offering of spiritual sacrifices, which was so carefully crafted by the author of Hebrews.

The proposal that the use of Hebrews by Clement is generally characterized by fragmentation is confirmed when one investigates some of the non-cultic parallels between the letters. If one takes a closer look at the parallels

mentioned above (under the heading "similarities"), one will recognize this pattern of fragmentation, as Clement has taken over short expressions and motifs from Hebrews without taking notice of their original context.[413] This fragmentation can be contrasted with how Clement uses Paul's letters on several occasions. In 1 Clem. 49, for instance, both sense and wording from 1 Cor 13:4–7 is present—a clear allusion to the Pauline passage. Likewise, in 1 Clem. 24 there are several allusions to 1 Cor 15 and both passages share the same theme of the resurrection of the dead. Again, in 1 Clem. 32:4–33:1 there are several allusions to Rom 5:21–6:2. In both passages, issues concerning faith and justification are discussed.[414] In all of these passages it appears that Clement has the context and original meaning of the Pauline texts relatively clear to him as he uses the texts.

1 Clem. 36 seems on first glance to be an exception to the fragmentation principle in relation to Hebrews. The concepts of Jesus' high priesthood and his mediation of believers' sacrifices of prayer and praise occur both here and in Hebrews. In the second part of the chapter, in verses 3–5, where several psalm quotations which also occur in Heb 1 appear, the use of Hebrews by Clement is again fragmented. While these psalm quotations have a clear argumentative purpose and direction in Hebrews, the thing that seems to merit their juxtaposition in 1 Clem. 36 is their earlier occurrence in Hebrews. Thus, while there is a cluster of references to Hebrews in this chapter, they do not capture anything essential of the original argumentative line in Heb 1.

Selective use – In the fragmentary use made of Hebrews by Clement, important ideas in Hebrews are left out. While it obviously cannot be expected that *every* notion and concept should be reproduced in some way, it is significant that Clement seems more or less to even contradict assertions in Hebrews that are closely connected to themes that they both discuss. It is this that causes Brown to write that "Both *I Clement* and *Hermas*, although using the wording of Hebrews, move in an almost opposite thought-direction. That is best explained if Hebrews was a work received by the Roman church but

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[413] E.g. 1 Clem. 17:5 (Heb 3:2; cf. Num 12:7); 1 Clem. 19:2 (Heb 12:1–2); 1 Clem. 21:9 (Heb 4:12); 1 Clem. 27:1 (Heb 10:23, 11:1); 1 Clem. 27:2 (Heb 6:18); 1 Clem. 43:1 (Heb 3:5; Num 12:7); 1 Clem. 56:4 (Heb 12:6; Prov 3:12).

[414] For more on the parallels between 1 Clement and the Pauline writings, see Gregory, "1 Clement," 144–50.

never enthusiastically appropriated."[415] Among the things that have been discussed already, and which fall in this category of concepts that were "left out," are the high priestly self-sacrifice of Christ and the failure to mention a heavenly sanctuary.

Can it be that Clement purposefully "silenced" the idea of Christ's high priestly sacrifice because he, first of all, thought that such a notion went against the idea that God does not need sacrifices (1 Clem. 52), and secondly, that love was, in his opinion, sufficient means to atone for sins (1 Clem. 49)? It is possible, but by no means certain. It may just be that he had no use for, or interest in, such an idea and therefore left it out without any specific intention. When it comes to the heavenly sanctuary it is likewise possible that he neglected this concept intentionally because he felt that this idea would relativize the importance of the physical temple on the earth and the commands that God had given concerning it (cf. 1 Clem. 40–41). Again, however, such a connection is not necessary to make.

The most striking opposing tendencies when Hebrews and First Clement are compared are those that have to do with the legitimacy of the Jewish temple cult, something which in turn is related to the wider question of material expressions of worship. One of the main points in Hebrews is that the new covenantal faith which Christ has introduced through his ministry and sacrificial death has caused a sharp division to occur in salvation history, between the old dispensation and the new. The Jerusalem sacrificial service has been abrogated and believers now instead relate directly to God in the heavenly sanctuary through Christ, the high priest. In contrast, there is no mention of a new covenant in First Clement, and although Christ's death is significant to Clement, it is nowhere described or understood as an epoch-making event, at least not in any way approximating the descriptions in Paul's letters and in Hebrews.[416] Rather, as 1 Clem. 7 suggests, Christ's call to universal repentance through his death is only the last one in a long row of prophetic calls to obedience throughout history. Instead of sharing Hebrews' dualistic understanding of the Jewish Scriptures, to Clement "the Holy

[415] Brown, "Rome," 148. The Shepherd of Hermas is also understood by Brown to be a Roman writing which is literarily dependent on Hebrews.

[416] A point frequently made by scholars. See the discussion on Clement's Christology in Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 398–401.

Scripture has become the great picture book of morality which he opens up before his readers in almost all ethical exhortations."[417] Thus, when Clement reads the passages in the Pentateuch that speak of the cultic service with its sacrifices and priestly rituals, he finds moral principles in these commands that have something significant to say to all God's reasonable creatures (see especially 1 Clem. 40–41). Consequently, it is Clement's rejection of one of the more ingenious aspects of Hebrews' argument—the dualistic Scripture hermeneutics—which causes him to evaluate the Jewish temple cult in a completely different way. Whether or not there was any chance that the actual temple cult in Jerusalem would ever be operational again, the commandments concerning the cult were part of the Scriptures and these could not be abrogated. It appears that Clement would not have agreed with the author of Hebrews that scriptural commands could ever be deemed "weak" (Heb 7:18). Thus, an essential aspect of Hebrews' original argument is lost and forgotten and all that is left are scattered fragments as Clement reproduces only certain parts of the letter.

How, then, are we to understand this case of selective use? What caused Clement to deal in this way with the Letter to the Hebrews? Brown has made the following proposal concerning the issue of why the wording of Hebrews was used while its message was not "enthusiastically appropriated" in Rome:

> Rome, which received the letter in the first place, knew that it did not come from Paul, and such a memory left its mark. The author was a second-generation Christian authority (Heb 2:3) and respected as such by the Roman recipients, but he did not have the influence of an apostle. Rome's attitude toward canonicity and hence toward the authority of Christian writings was determined by accepted apostolic origin (an attitude understandable in a church priding itself in having two apostolic "pillars," Peter and Paul); and so Hebrews was not Scripture by the Roman criterion.[418]

The question of whether it was known in Rome that Hebrews was not written by Paul is more or less impossible to answer in my opinion. But aside from

[417] Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 371.
[418] Brown, "Rome," 148.

that difficulty, I find several problems with Brown's reasoning in this paragraph which I will spend some time discussing here since it really concerns the core of the relationship between the letters.

First of all, the notion that Clement is a more "faithful" reader of Paul's letters than he is of Hebrews is not without problems. In fact, just as Clement's reading of Hebrews is characterized by fragmentation and a selective use which sometimes does not extend far beyond the wording, so there are a number of studies that have pointed out that Clement has dealt with Paul's letters in the same way. Clement's use of the concept of "justification" in particular has been recognized to be considerably discontinuous with Paul's model.[419] Pervo puts it succinctly: "The author [of First Clement] reveres Paul as a missionary hero of the faith and esteems his letters, but the core of Paul's theology does not appeal to him."[420] Even though Clement's use of Paul's letters were generally less fragmented than his use of Hebrews, as suggested above, it is wrong to claim that the evidence suggests that Clement regarded them as being on different levels of authority.[421]

Secondly, the notion of "canonicity" and suggestions about which Christian writings were regarded as "Scripture" or otherwise, appears to me to be highly anachronistic in relation to this discussion. Around the time that Clement wrote his letter, Marcion published his version of the New Testament and exercised considerable liberty in editing Paul's letters, something which a recent study has taken as an indication of these letters' fluid state and non-authoritative status at this point.[422] To Clement, "Canonicity" has to do, not with authoritative writings, but with the "famous and venerable rule of tradition [τῆς παραδόσεως ἡμῶν κανόνα]" (1 Clem. 7:2), that is, proper faith and praxis.[423] Further, to suggest that Clement regarded Hebrews as *only* having been authored by a "second-generation Christian authority" and not

[419] E.g. Torrance, *Doctrine of Grace*, 48–50.

[420] Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 128.

[421] The reason that the use is less fragmentary is probably that he found sections and trains of thought in Paul's letters that suited his own theme better than those that exist in Hebrews.

[422] Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul*, 113–15.

[423] There is presently much debate concerning the dating of the so-called "Muratorian Canon," believed by some to be the earliest Christian canon list, see references in Pervo, *Making of Paul*, 291 n30. The traditional dating is ca. 200 which is half a century later than the writing of First Clement.

by a true apostle would mean that Clement would have rejected the gospels of Mark and Luke, as well as Acts, on the grounds of their traditional attributions to apostolic successors and companions. My point is that the narrow definition of "apostolicity" in relation to canonicity which Brown suggests the congregation in Rome operated with is not the one that was generally followed when these discussions were later held.

Thirdly, despite the fact that Clement's use of Hebrews was fragmentary and selective, he must have been closely familiar with the letter, even to the extent that he had internalized its content, as his letter is filled with connections to Hebrews. According to B. W. Bacon, "Clement has upwards of forty-seven echoes of Hebrews,"[424] and Lona has pointed to a significant overlap in vocabulary between the two.[425] A literary dependence which results in this form of extensive correspondence and parallels of this particular nature is the result of having attained a great familiarity with a text through repetitious experiences of it. It is unlikely that Clement would have spent time and effort on becoming familiarized with the writing unless he found it to be important in content and in some way authoritative. I am thus left with the conclusion that the selective use of Hebrews by Clement was not because he found it to be lacking in authority or treated it in any way as less important than Paul's letters.[426] Some other explanation must be sought after. Brown is thus probably wrong in his suggestion that Hebrews was read but not "enthusiastically appropriated." The fact that Hebrews has left such a mark on First Clement strongly implies that there was quite a lot of enthusiasm over Hebrews with Clement. He appropriated the content of the letter in many ways; he did not do it in the fashion, or according to the rules and standards, that a modern scholar may expect, however.

First Clement has been termed a "storehouse of Jewish-Christian traditions"[427] and it is well-documented that Clement was familiar with much contemporary non-Christian Jewish literature in addition to those Christian

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[424] B. W. Bacon, "The Doctrine of Faith in Hebrews, James and Clement of Rome," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 19 (1900): 12–21, 19.

[425] Lona, *Clemensbrief*, 54.

[426] In fact, I think it is best to keep open the question of whether or not Clement actually regarded Hebrews as a Pauline writing.

[427] Walters, "Romans," 191.

writings that were discussed earlier in this chapter.[428] It is only natural that a process of *harmonization* must have taken place for Clement as he drew from a wide range of books and teachings in order to present his own theological viewpoint, which focused on questions of social peace, order, and hierarchy in the congregations. There is clearly a system to Clement's thought, but it is one which is, in many ways, fundamentally different from those of Paul and the author of Hebrews. The selective use was thus likely a much more subconscious and unintentional action on Clement's part than one might be misled to think when one focuses in on this particular problem.

8.4. Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the uniqueness of every individual textual relationship in which one text is literarily dependent upon another. The way that Clement used and appropriated Hebrews is very different from the way that the author of Hebrews used and developed themes and ideas from Paul's letters. Furthermore, it has briefly been noted that there are important differences between how Clement used Hebrews and how he used Paul's letters, something that should make one think twice about generalizations concerning how an individual author uses her or his sources.

Further still, Clement was able to use the same source, the Letter to the Hebrews, in different ways, in one longer passage quoting more or less verbatim while in other places taking over brief phrases and making use of similar motifs that were likely inspired by Hebrews. Imitation, which was an ideal for ancient authors, could take many different shapes and forms, and literary dependence should not, therefore, be dismissed on the grounds that it does not conform to certain preconceived standards.

While I argued in chapter six that the author of Hebrews intentionally developed Paul's teaching by systematizing it in certain clear directions, I have described the use of Hebrews by Clement in terms of fragmentation and selective use. Although this is also a form of imitation, one might hesitate to

[428] See, for instance, J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity: A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, vol. 1, trans. J. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 44.

call it a re-writing or a development of Hebrews, as the "direction" in which First Clement heads is completely different.

At the same time, I have explicitly turned against the claim that the reason behind the nature of the use is that Clement did not regard Hebrews as fully authoritative. This claim rests on the unfounded assumption that writings that are perceived as authoritative are generally treated and used in some *particular* way. It is especially assumed that an authoritative writing is not used selectively in the way that Clement used Hebrews; central arguments and concepts would be ignored or even contradicted. While this may make sense in theory, evidence has yet to be presented to demonstrate that it really is so in practice.

As Clement had access to a wide range of writings and traditions that he regarded as more or less authoritative, it is inevitable that his use of these must be selective in nature. Probing the questions of why or how these selections happen can be done from different cognitive, psychological, social, or even philosophical perspectives, and are beyond the scope of this study. The important thing I want to emphasize is that these things are more complex and seemingly irrational than is often assumed.

I concluded in chapter six that Hebrews' reading of Paul's letters could be characterized as a *negotiated* form of reading, in which the overall message was accepted but where certain aspects and elements were developed and adapted to a new situation. In First Clement's relationship to Hebrews, we find another type of negotiated reading. It is still a case of a negotiated reading rather than an oppositional one, since Clement accepts the authority and validity of Hebrews' message. The negotiation here has primarily to do with the fact that the content and concepts of Hebrews must be fitted and harmonized with a wide range of other authoritative sources, causing an adaptation to take place.

9. Transformed Readings: Summary, Conclusions, Problems, and Extensions

9.1. Summary

The main aim of this study is to present and substantiate a pattern for reflection on the transmission of concepts and terminology as they were received and re-used/re-applied in early Christian texts. The foundational principle of this pattern is a notion of instability—that no necessary forms or rules of transmission exist, but that every relationship between two texts is unique and, in a sense, contingent. Further, there is often a certain irrationality that permeates the process of transmission; communication is always distorted to an extent, something which has been difficult for many scholars to understand and fully appreciate.

In order to highlight these aspects of the transmission of concepts and terminology in texts, I have built this study on a communication model, the "Encoding/Decoding Model," which was developed by communication and media theorist Stuart Hall a number of decades ago. This model was made specifically to emphasize the transformation that messages undergo as they leave the control of their author and are received on the other end by an audience. Hall's model was particularly crafted to give comment on the conditions of mass communication, for which reason I have adopted this perspective in my reading of early Christian texts.

Connected to this are questions of method and criteria in relation to the issue of literary dependence. An important claim made in the section concerned with literary dependence is that scholars frequently operate with anachronistic suppositions in discussing relationships between ancient literary texts. Literary relationships often go undetected because scholars put too much emphasis on vocabulary and attaining absolute certainty. Also, I

especially emphasize that difference is as important as similarity when one is to determine whether, and how, two writings are literarily related; traditionally scholars tend to focus exclusively on the similarity side of potential relationships.

I also discussed the oral/aural nature of literacy during this period, something which is important for understanding how "literary dependence" usually worked at this time. Writings were regularly experienced aurally and important texts would have been internalized by members belonging to a scribal caste. An appreciation for this historical setting, in which books were rare and expensive and the rate of literacy was low, is, I argue, crucial for making proper evaluations of relationships between particular writings.

Since there is a strong emphasis on the importance of the *particular* in this study, I have focused my readings on a specific and central complex of concepts which I trace through different writings, namely those related to the temple cult. The letters that make up the material which I investigate in this study—Paul's letter to the Romans, the First letter to the Corinthians, the Letter to the Hebrews, and First Clement—were chosen, first of all, because they form a chain of literary transmission (understood in a mass communication sense) and dependence, and secondly, because they are important in discussions concerning the Jewish temple cult in early Christianity. They could all be said to take part in a negotiation concerning the Jewish temple cult in a Christian setting, containing significant statements and assertions that play into this issue.

The chapter entitled "Reading Paul" lays the empirical foundation by investigating two of the apostle's letters, through readings that are focused on questions related to the Jewish temple cult. The readings resulted in an image of Paul as someone who did not have an anti-cultic program. He was occasionally able to portray Jesus' death in sacrificial terms but did not appear to criticize the Jerusalem temple institution in doing so. More frequently than speaking of Jesus as a sacrifice, his letters described the calling, the obedience, and community of believers in cultic terminology. I took this to suggest that he regarded the communities of Christ-believers as forming a parallel cultic institution to that of the Jerusalem temple. It is not improbable that Paul understood the temple to be temporarily defiled because of the unbelief of the

priesthood, but that it would eventually be restored and functioning again as a place of true worship.

Having argued that the letter to the Hebrews was literarily dependent on Paul's letters, I suggested that three terms are suitable for describing the way that the author of Hebrews transformed content and ideas from them: "systematization," "scripturization," and "platonization." In short, the author of Hebrews appears to have systematized some of the notions found in Paul's letters by structuring them in accordance with principles taken from the Jewish Scriptures and from platonism.

Scripturization in this context meant that the author of Hebrews took concepts that were abstract and vague in Paul's letters and gave them a more concrete interpretation in Scripture categories. Thus, for instance, gaining access to the grace of God (Rom 5:2) becomes entrance into the heavenly sanctuary in Hebrews (e.g. 10:19). It is generally accepted that Paul's letters are steeped in the Jewish Scriptures in the first place, so what Hebrews' author does could perhaps best be characterized in terms of highlighting and amplifying this aspect, rather than adding something completely new.

The same could probably be said concerning platonization. Paul's letters are not foreign to platonic dualistic reasoning, something which comes out especially in 1 Cor 15, for instance, with its strong differentiation between the heavenly and the earthly, the perishable and the imperishable, and the physical and the spiritual (cf. vv. 40–44). The author of Hebrews may have been inspired by this philosophical aspect of Paul's thought when he formed his elaborate theology of Jesus' sacrificial death as prefigured in the Jewish Scriptures. The author of Hebrews has no interest in earthly cultic expressions of worship as his platonic framework leads him to think that Christians participate in a spiritual and heavenly worship.

I proposed that the author of Hebrews intentionally constructed his theology as a development of Paul's thought in these particular directions. I want to stress, however, that there is nothing necessary, as far as I am concerned, about interpreting and developing Paul's letters in the way that the author of Hebrews does. In fact, the deutero-Pauline authors chose a number of different paths of interpretation of Paul, and in my opinion, it

would be wrong to rank them according to their degree of faithfulness to the "real" Paul and his message.[429]

The next chapter continued the tracing of cultic notions and negotiations by investigating how First Clement's author in turn received, used, and transformed the cult-centered message of Hebrews. The reading of First Clement illustrates a very different shape of literary dependence from that of Hebrews on Paul. When it comes to cultic concepts and terminology, I suggested that there is a fragmentation and selectivity in Clement's use of Hebrews. It cannot be said that First Clement developed Hebrews' cultic vision to simply conserve it. Rather, Clement has used aspects of Hebrews' argumentation without showing much regard for where these arguments are placed within the discourse in which they are found and has instead given them new settings and significance. To Clement, earthly cultic expressions still have their value and he shows a great deal of respect and appreciation for the Jerusalem temple cult. Despite the fact that Clement clearly knew the letter to the Hebrews and used it frequently, in many ways he is of the opposite opinion when it comes to the matters that are dearest to Hebrews' author.

A probable reason for this is that Clement had access to a large number of diverse sources that he regarded as authoritative in different ways and thus harmonization between them was, to an extent, necessary. What this illustrates is that the use of texts that were regarded as authoritative took several different forms in early Christianity and often, it seems, these go against the expectations of modern scholars. Clement's use of Hebrews is not characterized by a deliberate program of development, in the way that I have suggested that Hebrews' author's use of Paul was, but is instead more accidental in nature. Language, expressions, motifs, and thought forms in Hebrews had become an integral part of Clement's own theological life-world through what appears to have been a deep familiarization with the letter. Thus, when Clement spoke, echoes of Hebrews could be heard but many times with a completely new significance and meaning.

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[429] Cf. J. C. Beker, *Heirs of Paul: Their Legacy in the New Testament and the Church Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Pervo, *Making of Paul*; B. White, *Remembering Paul: Ancient and Modern Contests over the Image of the Apostle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

9.2. Conclusions

The investigations into the subject of how the Jewish temple cult was perceived and re-interpreted in these early Christian writings have led to the following conclusions.

First, there was no anti-cultic program there from start, as if this would have been an inherent aspect of the Christian message.[430] In fact, the interpretation of Christ's death in sacrificial categories does not seem to have been central to Paul. Neither is Clement very interested in interpreting Jesus' death in cultic categories. Thus, among the writings that I discuss it is only Hebrews that systematically develops this theme.

Secondly, it is wrong to speak of a *development* of cultic ideas as being traced in all of these writings, as if there was a preordained direction in which Christian theology in this area flowed.[431] While it may be proper to speak of an intentional development of cultic concepts in Hebrews' author's reading of Paul, it is impossible to understand First Clement as continuing this development. Neither does First Clement "restore" the original message of Paul's letters in this respect, but rather takes these discussions in a different direction. There is no linearity here, then, and it is impossible to foresee where future steps will take the issue.

Next, to these conclusions concerning cult and early Christianity, there are two important conclusions worthy of some consideration which concern the transformation of messages in early Christian writings.

First, *the transformations happened immediately*. An important aspect of this study is that there is not a great separation in time and place between the encoders and the decoders of the texts. The author of Hebrews is one of the first readers of the letters of Paul that we know of, and the author of First Clement, in turn, is one of the earliest known readers of Hebrews. There is an entire field of studies that investigates the "reception" of biblical writings in various later works that are generally separated from these by centuries or even millennia. Such studies are characterized by a deep awareness that the meanings of texts change over time. Instead of "reception," I have, however,

[430] Contra Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 543–48; Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice*, 292–93. This point has been argued before by Ullucci in *Christian Rejection.*

[431] Contra Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 491.

chosen to speak in terms of "communication," mainly to highlight the relative nearness in time and place of encoders and decoders in my investigated material.[432] Socially and linguistically they would have inhabited similar worlds. They would have heard similar philosophical, political, and everyday messages on the streets and in their market-places and thus had similar lenses through which they perceived the world. If ever the "original" meaning of these writings were to be correctly interpreted, comprehended, and reapplied, it should have been by individuals such as these. A further aspect is that these decoders had great respect for the writings that they decoded and it is therefore unlikely that they intentionally distorted their messages. Nonetheless, it is transformed readings that I have encountered in comparing encodings with decodings. In accordance with Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, I have found that the transformation of the original messages happened more or less instantaneously as they reached a wider audience and began to be regarded as authoritative writings for believers.

This is because the messages were negotiated in different ways as the texts were set within new structures of meaning. When writings are regarded from the perspective of communication theory, their momentary and transitory character is highlighted. Even though an author may have intended for her or his message to reach a wider audience and even to be and read and heard by future generations, there are important ways in which every message is bound to the original author's own circumstances in ways that cease to be significant once it leaves its initial setting. The receiver's/decoder's circumstances and interests are never identical to those of the sender/encoder, and when it comes to mass communication there is no way for the author to correct and explain further what was meant originally. It is just as Socrates explained it to Phaedrus; when it comes to written words, "you might suppose that they [the words] understand what they [the words] are saying, but if you ask them what they mean by anything they simply return the same answer over and over

[432] Although a case could be made for the city of Rome as being a geographical connection point shared in some way by all the writing that I discuss, I have chosen not to build my study on that. The relative nearness in time and place that I refer to can be summed up in that they all emerged in the Mediterranean area within the hundred-year timespan of ca. 50–150 CE.

again."[433] Further, as Socrates explained, a writing "circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it; a writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers."[434] It is essentially these ancient insights that I repeat in making this overall conclusion.

Secondly, *the transformations do not follow any predetermined pattern.* In chapter three of this study it was emphasized that literary imitation and re-writing of earlier esteemed works were authorial ideals in the ancient world, in contrast to modern goals of artistic originality and scientific innovation. Imitation and re-writing could, however, take many different shapes and forms. One of the most important conclusions that this study gives rise to is that re-appropriations of earlier texts in the setting of earliest Christianity does not follow any distinct and determinate pattern. There is a uniqueness to every literary relationship which leads to a demand that it is investigated on its own particular terms.

Two further cautions should be made in this respect. First, the same author can use *different* writings in different ways, and thus one should be careful about being overly generalizing about the way that a particular author handles her or his sources. In this study, it was noted that Clement in part used Hebrews and the letters of Paul in different ways. To an extent, it was also observed that Hebrews made use of Romans and 1 Corinthians in different ways.

Secondly, the same author can use the *same* writing in different ways, and thus one should be careful about being overly generalizing about a particular author's way of handling a particular source. In particular, it was noted that Clement's use of Hebrews took several different forms as a result of an internalization of the letter's content.

I draw the conclusion from this study that no generalizations can be made about how the writings that later became part of the New Testament were read and used among the earliest Christians. There was certainly no "golden apostolic age" in which the ordinary rules of communication were suspended. Rather, writings were composed and written with a particular horizon in view,

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[433] *Phaedr.* 275d.
[434] *Phaedr.* 275e.

and were then picked up, read, and reproduced with new and other horizons spreading out before their audiences. Even when there exists a wish to conserve, and when writings are regarded as authoritative, their meaning and significance change when they are placed in new settings. There is no "core message" there, inscribed in the deep structure of the text, but instead all is a surface of terminology, expressions, motifs, concepts, and so on. What aspects are passed on and what aspects are lost are beyond all rules of necessity.

It is important to stress that I am not claiming that this is because of any deficiency or carelessness in the process of textual transmission on the part of the early Christians. In no way do I wish to deny that writings were held in a high regard from early on or that careful memorization of these texts was performed from the beginning. My study rather points in the opposite direction. The reason behind the fluency of meaning lies in the changed circumstances of the message's appropriation, on the one hand, and the dumbness of the written word, that is, its inability to explain itself and address a new situation and audience, on the other.

These two conclusions have important ramifications for scholarship. First of all, this study suggests that literary dependence between early Christian writings is more widespread than is often thought. Scholars have often been skeptical about literary relationships between writings because of important differences between them. This study, however, rests on, and furthers, a "paradigm of communication" which assumes that learned Christians provided and gained access to each other's writings to a high degree from early on.

Secondly, this study strongly relativizes the functional importance of original meanings. A shift is currently taking place in scholarship in which a greater interest is placed in historical realities rather than historical ideals. Today, scholars are more prone to ask questions concerning how Jesus and Paul were "remembered" than how events in their lives actually played out. There is a greater interest in the manuscripts that were actually used in the early church, than in some ideal original text that were supposedly of apostolic origin. This study embraces this scholarly development and wishes to further it. Although I do not wish to deny the importance of historical questions that concern the "originals" (original Jesus or Paul, original text, original authorial intention)—indeed, the present study is, in a way, all about originals—I

suggest that they must be dethroned and given their proper estimation. If every reading transforms the original, then the original is a fleeting thing which lacks enduring importance. The original can never be resurrected and restored to its initial meaning and purpose since everything around it has changed; it must be transformed in order to have a function. Thus, the only result that can come from investigations into originals, that regard them as ends-in-themselves, is the highlighting of how misunderstood they have been all along, as if their true essences have finally been disclosed. Related to this issue of the originals is one of the main problems concerning the internal logic of the present study. It is to this and other problems with this study that I now wish to turn.

9.3. Problems

A main assumption of this investigation is that readings are conditioned by meaning structures outside the text, surrounding and penetrating the reader, which determine the meaning outcome of the reading to a high degree. This is particularly acute when the text is re-appropriated in some way and thus reread with a specific purpose in view. In performing this investigation, I have written as if I were placed outside of this entire process and was able to speak about all things, on account of all readers, from a guarded and privileged position. This potential anomaly deserves some comment.

First, it must be made clear that this study also rests on an assumption that detached critical thinking is still of value. Even though it is claimed that the individual agent who perceives, thinks, and acts, is embedded in various structures which guide its thoughts and determines its impressions, it is nevertheless asserted that it is a fruitful exercise to try to step outside oneself and try to understand and see the world as that other individual perceives, interprets and understands. The fundamental belief that this is the case is what makes this study, with its comparison of various readings, possible.

That having been said, it is important that the readings are appreciated for what they are, namely products of informed imagination and thus pieces of historical fiction. This is significant as it points to what the focus of this study is, and what it is not. It is certainly not the final word on how cultic matters

were understood and interpreted by Paul, or by the author of Hebrews, or Clement. Hopefully I have been able to reach a few insights about how issues related to cult were discussed and perceived by these early Christian authors, but these insights could have gone deeper if I had attempted to specialize further in this field, investigated more into ritual and sacrificial theory, for instance, and broadened my knowledge of both primary and secondary sources related to the subject. It will be easy for some to dismiss this entire study as being shallow in its treatment of cult and sacrifice, on the one hand, and of the letters that I perform readings of, on the other.

In response to such criticism I will say that it was necessary to do these things in order to be able to speak of the thing which *is* the focus of this study, namely the relationship between different early Christian writings. Even though it may be shown that I have misconstrued much of the content of the letters that I have discussed, and thus also that the particular characterizations of the relationships between them are wrong, I believe that the conclusions drawn and discussed under the previous heading can nevertheless stand. In other words, what this study mainly aims to do is to suggest a pattern for understanding the relationship between early Christian writings.

9.4. Extensions

Where do we go from here? Below are a few suggestions for future investigations that in different ways could follow in the tracks of the present one.

First, I regret that I was only able to trace the encodings and decodings in two steps (Paul-Hebrews and Hebrews-1 Clement) in this study. If it had been possible to look at more steps, then hopefully the lack of a pattern of development and the overall irrationality of the process would have been made even clearer. An obvious sequel to this study would therefore be an investigation which extended the chain in some way. At an earlier stage of this investigation I had planned to do this by comparing different redactional layers in the letter to the Hebrews, a plan that I was forced to abandon due to lack of time.

Secondly, as I understand the main contribution of this study to be to suggest a pattern for understanding the relationships between early Christian writings, I would like to see this pattern, first of all, interpreted, and then, further applied, tested, and developed. I strongly believe that there are many cases of literary dependence between New Testament writings that are regularly dismissed or neglected by scholars because of deficient categories for understanding such relationships. Thomas Brodie's much criticized volume *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* which seeks to explain much of the content of the New Testament by focusing on how its books are literarily dependent on one another and on other books, is a good example of the type of studies that I hope to see more of in the future.

Thirdly, I have used Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model as a theoretical foundation in this study and I recognize that there is much room for further developing the use of communication theory in relation to New Testament and early Christian studies. To approach ancient writings from a communication perspective is a way to show full appreciation for their status both as historical artefacts, on the one hand, and as pieces of literature, on the other. In my opinion, studies that focus exclusively on historical *or* literary questions often run the risk of being overly reductionist. By studying these writings as parts of a communication process and taking insights from communication theorists into account, the complexity of messages and meanings come to the fore. I have used a relatively simple model in this study and I have not made it one of my main targets to map the ins and outs of human communication. To develop such theorizing in relation to the interpretation of early Christian texts could be a promising extension of this study.

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