

# Paul and Judaism now, Quo vadimus?<sup>1</sup>

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The two important books before this panel offer morally passionate, historically grounded, memorably presented, and insistent arguments that Paul must and can only be understood “within Judaism,” and as having lived a “Jewish life,” a “life entirely within his native Judaism” (Fredriksen, p. xii), “an authentically Jewish Paul” (Gager, 51). The corollary to this is that those who do not understand Paul that way have wrenched him out of his historical context (Fredriksen, xii), are guilty of “anachronism,” or even willful blindness to a Paul that does not correspond to later, Christian assumptions, that have rendered him not a Jew but a Christian, not Torah-observant but Torah-repudiator, not declaring a universally binding “Law-free” gospel that pronounces Torah defunct, but one that is directed solely at the special case of Gentile Christ believers and their surprising status in the twilight of God’s plan.

I join these scholars and these arguments in many respects. In terms of the moral argument, I unambiguously join them in the task of repudiating Christian anti-Judaism, both in the past and in the present. It is real and pervasive and hardly a passing or past phenomenon. And it has indelibly been inked into the history of reception and scholarship on Paul, down to the present

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<sup>1</sup> A review of John G. Gager, *Who Made Early Christianity? The Jewish Lives of the Apostle Paul* (American Lectures on the History of Religions; New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), and Paula Fredriksen, *Paul, the Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), for the Pauline Epistles Section, Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, Boston, 2017. I thank Professor Emma Wasserman for the invitation to participate in this panel, along with the authors and co-respondents Professors Matthew Novenson and James Crossley. I am publishing the response substantially as delivered, with only minor modifications (especially in changing the largely second-person address to my friends and colleagues into third person for the written medium, to bring others into the conversation).

(as E.P. Sanders's epochal work, on both Paul and Jesus,<sup>2</sup> has shown — theological supersessionism masking as historical reconstruction). If anything, the urgency is all the more in the present national and global climate, and especially under a Trump presidency in the United States. The words we study when we study the New Testament and early Christian literature have and continue to have real-world and concrete enactments. I dearly hope that the moral urgency to confront the reality of religious and racist bigotry will find in the scholarly guild a united front of support. To the case at hand, I would hope many, if not most, of my colleagues in the field of Pauline studies who seek to place Paul meaningfully in his historical contexts would say that we would never want to be in a camp that is other than “Paul within Judaism.” Paul was a Jew; he was proud of his Judaism; he was not a “Christian.” Both books shout out to Krister Stendahl, the dedicatee of Paula Fredriksen's book and one listed in the acknowledgements of John Gager's (and credited in many of his publications). Professor/Bishop Stendahl was formative for me, as well, through his writings: Paul did not think the Law was impossible to fulfil; Paul was called, not converted; Paul was concerned in his writings not just about individuals seeking a merciful God (*à la* Luther) but the peoples of the Jews and τὰ ἔθνη in God's plan.<sup>3</sup> These are fundamental to my readings of Paul, as well. And Krister Stendahl's example, and that of E.P. Sanders, as well as earlier books by our two authors, show us in emphatic and not to be minimized ways that scholarship matters. It can change things. It has changed things.

These two most recent books by Professors Gager and Fredriksen ably and powerfully continue this trajectory, and seek to push Pauline scholarship to keep its ear attuned to Christian anti-Judaism, to anachronism, and to the perpetuation of stereotypes that shape arguments, impressions, attitudes, conclusions, and actions. Professor Gager's book, originally the AAR's American Lectures in the History of Religions (2013), combines attention to the archaeological record for co-existence of Jews and Gentiles around the Mediterranean (as a context for the historical Paul and his mission), from Acts, Aphrodisias, Antioch, Sardis, and Dura Europos, with respectful and even

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<sup>2</sup> Among many important publications by Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) and *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), stand out as landmark demonstrations of this point.

<sup>3</sup> A central statement of many of these theses may be found in his *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976).

soulful engagement with important Jewish readings of Paul, both past (including the enigmatic “Eliahu” in chapter 4 of the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions) and more recent (Jacob Taubes, Michael Wyschogrod). He regards these readings as remarkably preserving more positive Jewish views of Paul through the centuries. Professor Fredriksen’s book offers a vibrant, historically informed portrait of Paul as apocalyptic prophetic agent of the end times, inaugurated, in Paul’s view, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and calling upon eschatological restoration theology that has the Gentiles, as Gentiles, coming to Jerusalem and acclaiming its God (Isa 2:2-4; 66:18, etc. [Fredriksen, 25]). It is only from a later anachronistic and theologically inflected point of view that one can think Paul brought a “Law-free” gospel. Instead, Paul had his own brand of “Judaizing”: he did expect these Gentile Jesus believers to adhere only to the God of Israel (but *not* to convert) and exhibit *εὐσέβεια καὶ δικαιοσύνη* in the power of the *πνεῦμα* as they await their special role alongside (but not within) Israel in the Kingdom of God. Both Fredriksen and Gager straightforwardly argue what we, and they, might characterize as a maximalist position, one cast in very strong terms—“Paul” was utterly “innocent” (a term both use, if with slightly different senses<sup>4</sup>) of the history that was to come, and the later anti-Judaism and supersessionist theology that claimed him as its founder.

Each author has a different explanation for from where the anti-Jewish Pauls come. Gager, in the earlier part of the book and the Epilogue (chap. 6), places the responsibility on present (and past) interpreters, especially Gentile (Christian) readers in antiquity and the present, who bring anachronistic assumptions about Paul that Jewish readers (including some modern voices which Gager sees echoing his own view of Paul) do not. As in his earlier work, Gager contests those he terms “contradictionists,” who try to account for the tensions in Paul’s statements on the Law and Israel through one of four “basic techniques”: “psychology, resignation, elimination, and subordination” (Gager,

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<sup>4</sup> Gager, 22: “... I insist that Paul need not, indeed cannot, be read according to the contradictionists and that he is entirely *innocent* of all charges lodged against him by his anti-Jewish interpreters.” Fredriksen, xii: “But Paul lived his life — as we all must live our lives — *innocent* of the future. As historians, we conjure that *innocence* as a disciplined act of imagination, through appeals to our ancient evidence. Only in so doing can we begin to see Paul as he saw himself ...” (italics added in each case). Though both use the term “innocent/innocent,” Gager and Fredriksen are not using it quite in the same way, I think. Gager’s is a bit more forensic, and Fredriksen’s historiographic. In either case, it also has high rhetorical valence about what is at stake in these arguments.

10<sup>5</sup>). At one point his own disagreement with these strategies comes forcefully through: “But Paul himself is as clear as anyone can be” (Gager, 17)! However, in chapter 4 of the book, Gager also seems to regard the later work, the Acts of the Apostles, as playing a critical role in the fashioning of the “anti-Israel” Paul (Gager, 89-91, with which I agree, and to which I shall return below). He also alludes to the force of the canon, which places Acts and Paul right in the center (Gager, 89<sup>6</sup>).

To explain the misreadings, Fredriksen, in turn, alludes more to the historical transitions of Paul into the post-Pauline Paulinism(s), especially the effects of the waning of eschatological fervor and the increasing success of the Gentile missions,<sup>7</sup> as well as the neo-Platonizing influence on what will become Christian philosophical theology, stripping the God of Jesus and Paul, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of ethnic particularity. She wishes to counter the arguments of some New Perspective on Paul (NPP) scholars to the effect that Paul objected to halakhic observance for Gentiles because it maintained forms of ethnic separatism (Fredriksen, 122), when Paul held a more “universalistic” vision; and she further argues, even against or beyond such Sonderweg scholars as Gaston, Gager, and Stowers, that Paul himself remained Torah-observant (see especially PF, 227 n. 29). In Fredriksen’s words, although Paul employed “agonistic rhetoric, with its contrasting binaries of Law and gospel, works and grace ... once time slipped away and the later gentile churches settled into history, these features of his letters took on the pattern of polarized opposites: Law or gospel; works or grace; and, as Paul’s later theological champions would characterize his position, Judaism or Christianity. Paul would not have recognized his message in these rigid polarities ...” (Fredriksen, 173).

As a student of biblical interpretation, and often of Pauline interpretation, I recognize that each Pauline portrait is a fresh composition made

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<sup>5</sup> Compare John Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9-10, which seems a bit softer on these scholars: not “dismiss[ing] contradictionist readers out of hand. They have not invented the ‘difficulties and inconsistencies,’ the *dusnoëta* (2 Pet 3:15-16) in the Pauline letters” (p. 9). In the present book, Gager offers his own, fifth approach: “the apparent inconsistencies of Paul’s letters might be located not in him but in his later readers, in us” (p. 22).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gager, 17: “One of these questions is how this hugely controversial figure wound up in the very center of the New Testament, where, of the twenty-seven writings, more than one half are either by him or attributed to him or about him.”

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Fredriksen, 169.

of selected and rearranged mosaic pieces. It is absolutely fascinating to see these virtuoso interpreters at work as they try to argue for this maximalist position: what evidence seems most to support their case and which least; how each offers an implied or articulated canon within the canon for these questions; where they allow for confusion or ambiguity in Paul or his letters, and where they insist on clarity; where contradiction is deemed only “apparent” (but resolvable) and where some paradox or tension is allowed; how they appeal to “context” as a key to meaning, either scriptural (by which Fredriksen means Paul’s own Bible, the LXX) or social (predominantly, a reconstruction of Hellenistic diaspora synagogues as places of free engagement between Jews and “god-fearing” and other Gentiles), and, less so (for both), literary-rhetorical context; where Acts is taken as reliable and where suspicious, even to the point of being the “master counter-narrative” to the proper rendering of a Jewish life of Paul (so Gager); where ancient interpreters (Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, others) are invoked as allies, and where they are repudiated as the source or carrier of the deep problem of anti-Jewish readings of the apostle and of the Christianity he later came to represent metonymically. Both Professors Gager and Fredriksen realize the degree to which they are arguing against a long and vigorous tradition of interpretation, and each in various bold ways acknowledges the steepness of the climb,<sup>8</sup> but they reach for the summit — of a maximalist reading of Paul as a thoroughly Jewish apostle who would have been horrified at the way he has been represented.<sup>9</sup>

Although I would myself argue for a less maximalist or absolutist position about “Paul” and “Judaism,” “the Law,” and supersessionism, I do agree that the historical Paul (to the degree that he is recoverable given our evidence) *is indeed much closer to the side advocated by Professors Gager and Fredriksen* than has often been perceived or acknowledged in traditional readings, and still in much contemporary scholarship. This is, I think, considerable alignment.

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<sup>8</sup> So, with commendable forthrightness, Gager, 33: “By now it should be obvious that ‘new readers’ are advocating a reading of Paul not simply as one possible alternative, as one contender alongside others, but as the only historically defensible reading. This is a bold stance. To some it will seem foolish. It is certainly out of step with modern theories that regard all views as possible. It is also highly presumptuous, even arrogant, in its insistence that twenty centuries and most readers of Paul have been mistaken and in demanding that they confront the sources of that mistake. ... In fact, anyone making such a claim must shoulder an enormous burden of proof.”

<sup>9</sup> Gager, 18: “[No figure in Western history] has suffered more misunderstanding at the hands of both friends and enemies.”

And yet, I have doubts about whether one can place Paul resolutely and only on the clean slate, or “innocence,” side of these monumental issues, for reasons historiographical, rhetorical, hermeneutical, canonical, and *wirkungs-geschichtlich*. In particular, as Paula Fredriksen knows, I have been spending my time lately researching and teaching the Christian *adversus Judaeos* texts, and especially working with the newly discovered (in 2012) homilies in Greek on the Psalms now convincingly demonstrated to be by Origen,<sup>10</sup> from his period in Caesarea (ca. 250), and I am continually struck by how readily the apostle to the Gentiles provided the logical DNA, substance, vocabulary, and adornment for Origen’s anti-Judaizing rhetoric (which is less different from Chrysostom’s more infamous invective from 140 years later than one might wish). Paul is simply everywhere in these arguments,<sup>11</sup> variously combined but resolutely arguing for a new people of Christians, who have been given a new Law by their Lawgiver, Christ, and to whom God’s spirit, grace, and true festivals have been transferred from “the Jews.”<sup>12</sup> In what follows I shall try to explain some of my methodological concerns or reservations about the maximalist position. I am open to dissuasion of my doubts, and above all I hope to highlight what I think are significant areas for further research along these lines.<sup>13</sup> At the end I shall

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<sup>10</sup> *Origenes Werke XIII*, ed. Lorenzo Perrone, in collaboration with Marina Molin Pradel, Emanuela Prinziavalli, and Antonio Cacciari, *Origenes XIII* (GCS N.F. 19; Berlin, de Gruyter, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Gager says that Origen “is a supersessionist, but of a very special, that is, Pauline, sort” (p. 8). This conclusion will also need to be tested against the new homilies, of which I shall include a few passages at the end of this review, but see the following note for a more in-depth study.

<sup>12</sup> The full argument, with translation and analysis of the key texts (especially *H73Ps* I.8-9; *HPs73* II.2-3; *HPs77* I.3-4) in Margaret M. Mitchell, “Origen, Christ, the Law, and the Jewish People: Some Important Arguments in the New Greek Homilies on the Psalms” (conference paper for Catholic University of America conference on Origen’s new Psalms homilies, May, 2017, in revision for publication).

<sup>13</sup> Hence the *Quo vadimus* (“Where are we going?”) of the title. In addition to the methodological issues I treat in the first half of my response, and the particular issues of interpretation of the evidence I ask of each author at the end, in terms of progress in research, it is important to highlight that we are at a time where several key new sources have come to light or been newly edited about Christian anti-Judaism that will require further analysis and assessment as evidence for the range of questions this field of study encompasses. In addition to the new Origen homilies just mentioned, see Wendy Pradels, Rudolf Brändle, and Martin Heimgartner, “Das bisher vermisste Textstück in Johannes Chrysostomus, *Adversus Judaeos*, Oratio 2,” *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 5.1 (2001)

raise a few more specific issues for each author that are in many ways questions for all of us.

Let me begin with issues historiographical, rhetorical, and hermeneutical and reception-historical. To the first, historical claims, these arguments appear to rest upon an assumption that there was a single or seamless or essential “Paul.” Simply put, I do not think there was. I fear that the historical Paul may be too wobbly a base for such an important project (the refutation of Christian anti-Judaism), such that if a maximalist reading of Paul<sup>14</sup> — as in no way holding or expressing views that become building blocks of Christian anti-Judaism — is too readily vulnerable to this critique, it may have set for itself a bar that cannot be cleared. How can a variable Paul still be a “Paul within Judaism” (as I think he must)?

“Paul” can be the actual flesh-and-blood human person in his finite and complicated life,<sup>15</sup> as best as we can reconstruct him (whom I term “the

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pp. 23-49, which restores a large lacuna in Chrysostom’s oration 2, from a manuscript on Mytilene/Lesbos, and, most recently, Brent Nongbri and Stuart G. Hall, “Melito’s *Peri Pascha* 1-5 as Recovered from a ‘Lost’ Leaf of *Papyrus Bodmer XIII*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* (October 2017) 576-592. The same is true of both Jewish and Islamic “anti-Christian” literature. John Gager’s book gains much from the new research by Michael Meerson, Peter Schäfer, et al., *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus* (TSAJ 159; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) on manuscripts, versions, reconstructed text, translations, and analyses of the Toledot Yeshu traditions. And one might add the study of ‘Abd Al-Jabbar by Gabriel Said Reynolds (*A Muslim Theologian in a Sectarian Milieu: ‘Abd Al-Jabbār, The Critique of Christian Origins* [Leiden: Brill, 2004], and the same author’s edition and translation of the treatise (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2010), who takes a different line than that argued by Shlomo Pines and Patricia Crone (discussed by Gager) about whether or not that Islamic treatise contains sources that go back to a “Jewish Christian” community still flourishing in late antiquity (7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Gager, 23: “Now I come to the hard part, where I try to show that this picture of the anti-Jewish, anti-Torah Paul is totally wrong and unjustified, from top to bottom.”

<sup>15</sup> There are also philosophical (and other) issues here about human identity. To the degree that a person is not just a “core” of essential selfhood but is also in some sense constituted in relationships, and temporally variable, the “HP” is a complicated bird. But one of the real strengths of both books is that they show that this complicated bird lived in a world filled with persons whose identity, cultures, and social spaces were complexly configured. That of course does lead to some inherent tension within both their projects, since they wish to emphasize *both* that what it meant to be a “Jew” was not monolithic but manifold, and that Paul was and remained a Jew (which can at times seem somewhat

historical Paul” [HP]) and “Paul” the mini-corpus of the seven scholarly *homologoumena* (what I term the “historical-epistolary Paul” [HEP], which has itself had many lives since). One must differentiate the two, for no person is equivalent to or reducible to a selective body of his or her rhetorically forceful and occasional writings. And it is important to note that the principles of selection of the extant writing are not fully known to us, even as one can say that they have been enshrined in a publication that deliberately makes a claim that their irreducible particularity and occasionality *is* universalizable.<sup>16</sup> And their wily and unstable use of the pronouns *ἡμεῖς* and *ὁμοῖς* invites just this. In reading Gager and Fredriksen I am not always sure a) which of these “Pauls” (HP or HEP) is in view, and b) by what justification the methodology seems at times to require or at least presume that the first (the HP) has veto power over the HEP, even in his more intemperate or antithetical or convoluted or hyperbolic moments.

If the HP was not a unified entity, what about the HEP? I think the difficulty is indeed exemplified in the real or apparent contradictions that, as Gager outlines, can be easily shown if one excerpts individual passages from their contexts (his “pro-Israel set” and “anti-Israel set,” almost all<sup>17</sup> of which come from Galatians and Romans [pp. 19-20]). But the problem goes even deeper than these passages to the hermeneutical fact that, as I have argued in various places,<sup>18</sup> *Paul’s letters never did and still do not have* a single, unequivocal meaning. I say this as an empirical (not normative) statement.<sup>19</sup> We know this

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fixed, or at least boundary-defined). All of us who study the ancient Mediterranean world share the burden on that!

<sup>16</sup> See the classic treatment by Nils A. Dahl, “The Particularity of the Pauline Epistles as a Problem in the Ancient Church,” in W. C. van Unnik, ed., *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht* (NovTSup 6; Leiden: Brill, 1962), 261-271.

<sup>17</sup> With one exception, 2 Cor 3:14-15.

<sup>18</sup> *Paul, the Corinthians, and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and earlier articles cited there.

<sup>19</sup> Gager acknowledges that “this misreading began already in [Paul’s] own lifetime ... Once again, I cannot deny that virtually every subsequent interpreter has read him in just this way, but I must emphasize that Paul vehemently repudiates this misreading and seeks to correct it in his letter to the Romans: ‘I ask, then, has God rejected his people [Israel]? By no means!’ (Rom 11:1).” But surely Paul (HP) did not have the power to completely cancel out such a “misreading,” just by denying it? And, furthermore, this argument I think assumes that the issue came up only because of outsiders. While that is possible, it is



from the Corinthian epistolary archive, and we can see it within the other letters, such as in Romans 6:15. Within the HP's own lifetime, and in the inaugural voyages of the occasional letters that will become the HEP, his meaning, intention, and purpose on such issues as the Law, as well as the integrity and honesty of his own *λόγος καὶ ἔργα* were questioned and debated (e.g., 2 Cor 10:10). On hermeneutical grounds, therefore, it is not the case that the "variable" Paul, or the unclear Paul, belongs only to the deutero-Paulines, to Acts, to Paulinism, to Gentile Christianity, or to the biblical canon or canons, or canons within canons. Indeed, in my view, the latter are all attempts to shape the multi-form "Pauls" to their own advantage. And if HEP was variable, and HP was variable, how can one isolate a singular Paul?

So, I would ask both our authors to say more about how they think it is possible to recover a Pauline "core," an integral self and literary legacy, which can serve as ballast against all other readings as misreadings or corruptions. I ask this as a methodologically searching and burning question of my own, both as an exegete and a historian of biblical interpretation. I should emphasize here that I do not hold the contrary assumption, viz., that there is not *a there there* at all, or that Paul was hopelessly and chaotically inconsistent.<sup>20</sup> My own reading of HEP (and, through it, as possible, to HP) is that he was strategic and canny, often deliberate and acting afthought, but also inclined to antithetical reasoning, combativeness, and hyperbole, often followed by or associated with, forms of conciliation, whether tonal pauses, shifts from categorical to temporal arguments, and types of diction. It is hard to nail down someone who sometimes speaks as a prophet, sometimes a philosopher, sometimes a politician, sometimes a poet, sometimes a provocateur, sometimes a peacekeeper, sometimes a protagonist. In sum, the HP, as known to us almost entirely through the HEP, has such a variable voice that the maximalist position seems to require some anthropological presuppositions that at the least deserve further unpacking and substantiation.

Turning to rhetoric and the HEP, I wholeheartedly agree with Gager and Fredriksen that "All of the assemblies to which Paul writes are comprised primarily if not exclusively of Christ-following ex-pagan pagans" (Fredriksen,

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equally possible that Paul is addressing a possible inference of *what he has himself just written*. That means that Paul is himself implicated in—and hence a party to—any misunderstanding.

<sup>20</sup> So, though with nuance, Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (WUNT 29; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987).

122). And I concur with their foundational point — that the HEP, in these genuine arguments that have been preserved and published, is *not* seeking to persuade either Jews with Jesus or Jews without Jesus not to keep the Law. But I am wary of homogenizing the historical-rhetorical context of each of the seven letters into a single audience construct, or of saying outright that the intended addressees of the letter are or can be the only subject matter in them.<sup>21</sup> I do think that in this regard Romans is very different from Galatians, and that difference should be reflected in the analysis of Paul’s rhetorical σκοπός (goal). To cite a single example, Fredriksen’s reading of Romans on pages 155-164, “The Choral Symphony: Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” which is the powerful crescendo of the entire book,<sup>22</sup> and the longest continuous exegetical treatment of any letter in its *akolouthia*, does not refer to Romans 1:16-17, which is the πρόθεσις, or thesis to the letter (the analysis proper begins in Romans chapter 2). Thus, Romans is not necessarily (or just is not) written to address the same issue of Gentile Christ-believing circumcision as Galatians,<sup>23</sup> just because Romans is (if it is) like Galatians addressed to Gentile Christ-believers. In this regard, I think it will be important to join *literary-rhetorical exegetical context* with *scriptural and social contexts* (as Fredriksen formulates her argumentative procedure<sup>24</sup>). That also

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<sup>21</sup> Fredriksen, 130: “As a point of orientation for any interpretation, though, the audience of Paul’s remarks must always be kept in mind. All of his extant letters are addressed to gentiles. This means that, whatever Paul says about the Law, he says it first of all with reference to gentiles” (p. 130). But this is not logically airtight, for I could write a letter to person B that concerns person Q; or I could argue a point for person B by reference to person R. See also Gager, 27: “Thus, [Paul’s] arguments against the validity of circumcision and the Mosaic covenant (Set A [passages]) apply only to the status of the Law for Gentiles within the Jesus movement.” This, again, would I think require further argument. Of course, the difficulty with this argument for the long view — even if I would largely agree with the direction taken here, and think the exegetical work *can* support it in the case of Galatians and Romans — is that the “canonical Paul” (or Pauls) beginning with the first collection of his letters in the last quarter of the first century, is precisely a construct to move the Pauline letters *out* of their particularity and into universalities (more on this below).

<sup>22</sup> And is surely in some ways a beautiful, soaring, and unforgettable duet between Fredriksen and Krister Stendahl.

<sup>23</sup> The thesis of which, on my analysis, is Gal 1:11, with sub-propositions at 1:12; 2:16, and 5:13.

<sup>24</sup> “...we need to situate Paul’s letters within their two generative contexts, the scriptural and the social” (p. 7). See also Gager, 24: “My argument will be that a clear understanding of the concrete settings in which Paul wrote his letters becomes decisive in determining

means following the dense and sometimes hardly penetrable logic of Paul's arguments in their rhetorical unfolding and situation-specificity.<sup>25</sup>

The arguments of Galatians and Romans, to say nothing of 1 Corinthians, have different aims, even as they all address a primarily Gentile readership. For instance, in his argument for reconciliation in 1 Corinthians, Paul says some astonishing things to try to address what he perceives as partisanship. Indeed, within that argument, in 1 Cor 9:19-23 he says that his Law-observance was *not* consistent, but deliberately strategic and variable. The HEP is here testifying against the halakhic normativity of the HP, or is even proclaiming a dissonance within the HP that his authorial voice is dictating and determining. What to do? Professor Fredriksen deals with this tricky passage on p. 165,<sup>26</sup> and insists that it refers to Paul's modes of argument (with Jews, with

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what they meant in their time. What were those settings? The first setting concerns Jews and Judaism in the Roman world of the first century CE...The second setting concerns the early Jesus movement itself."

<sup>25</sup> For example, while in terms of *emphasis* I agree with Gager that the "pro-Israel set" of passages is hard to square with an "anti-Israel" apostle (see pp. 96-97: "I will only repeat what I said previously: it is simply impossible to reconcile these passages with the view of Paul as the father of Christian anti-Judaism. They cannot be made to fit" [cf. 19-20]), the argument isn't airtight, because the passages have all been taken out of context. And, Paul could still be the father of Christian anti-Judaism by leaving a "dual legacy," since the paternity of those views does not depend upon having gotten him right, represented him fairly, or completely. In any case, the test is to try to read Romans continuously in a way that accounts for both sets, and for the more positive reading of the Law, Jews, and Judaism. I shall not even try to cite the copious bibliography on this point!

<sup>26</sup> Professor Gager refers to it only inside of a quotation from Augustine (Gager, 11). Both he and Fredriksen refer to Augustine's epistolary exchange with Jerome about Gal 2:11-14 as evidence that Augustine thought that Paul was "fully justified in observing the Jewish Law" (Gager, 11; cf. Fredriksen, 226 n. 26 and 250 n. 83, on Augustine [and Origen] as holding the view "that Paul the apostle continued to be Law-observant during his missions to pagans"). I think Augustine's views in this epistolary exchange are a bit more negative about the *real* necessity of keeping the Law (and higher on the role of Paul's willingness to do what he had to do for those who *did not really understand* that the Law was now obsolete) than acknowledged. Further, Augustine states that Origen represents the position that his opponent Jerome holds about Gal 2:11-14 (as an apostolic accommodating scheme), and so it is puzzling that Fredriksen represents Origen and Augustine as though of one mind here on Paul's Law-observance. I would add here that the issues at stake in this debate among early interpreters are not solely or separably Paul's own halakhic observance, but apostolic character, the consistency and accuracy of the scriptures, and whether lying is ever acceptable (on the debates, see Margaret M.

“god-fearing non-Jews”). Fair enough, but not quite enough, I fear, to slip the knotty difficulty, for one has to deal with the phrase *μη̄ ὡν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμου* (“although not being myself under the Law”) in 9:20. The phrase is, by our best textual witnesses (⊠ A B C D\* etc), authentic to the HEP, but later scribes omit it, such that the reading without the phrase is that of D<sup>2</sup>, K Ψ, etc. and the Majority Text, either by accidental haplography (a phrase inadvertently dropped because both clauses end with τὸν νόμον) or deliberately, probably, I would venture, in order to harmonize the behavior of the HP behind the HEP with the Paul of Acts (PACTS).<sup>27</sup> Indeed, in this case the more “difficult” reading was the original one, in which Paul appeared *to deny* that he was under the power of the Law, and the Majority text aligns more with the “Paul within Judaism” case!<sup>28</sup> Here I think one can see a Pauline problem text, both for us modern interpreters and for ancient ones. And surely it was the HP who left that problem lurking in the HEP for all to see. John Chrysostom in the late fourth century would say, and often did say, Paul “engraved these things in his letters as though on a bronze stele”<sup>29</sup> for all people throughout all time to see — a neat metaphor for how the ephemeral occasional letters became fixed (or purportedly fixed), though problematic, dicta.

Turning to the canonical Paul(s), I want to begin by echoing a point I alluded to above — that the hermeneutical intent and effect of collecting Paul’s letters in antiquity was to give them a new literary context that was meant to stretch beyond their original addressees, hence reversing the particularity that is essential to the modern historical-critical approach of Gager and Fredriksen (and myself, when trying to answer historical questions). Given that, in seeking to explain from where the “anti-Jewish Paul” comes through the long history of biblical interpretation down to the present, I think the role of the canon needs to be addressed and analyzed in close detail (as both authors recognize, but do not make the center of their arguments here). Then there is the question for us modern scholars of our own canon within the canon even of the HEP *homologoumena* (sometimes with decisions made about interpolated passages), vis à vis the pseudepigrapha, and Acts, and also the gospels, because the

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Mitchell, “Peter’s ‘Hypocrisy’ and Paul’s: Two ‘Hypocrites’ at the Foundation of Earliest Christianity?” *New Testament Studies* 58 [2012]: 312-334).

<sup>27</sup> Acts 16:3 (Paul circumcising Timothy); 21:23-26 (Paul observes purification rites and temple offerings to show that he is not against the Law of Moses).

<sup>28</sup> Perhaps in line with Acts 21 (on which, see below, note 40).

<sup>29</sup> E.g., *hom. in 2 Cor 11:1* §6 [PG 51.305]; *hom. in Gal. 2:11-14* §3 [PG 51.374].

interpretation of Paul in the early church and throughout history down to today has been canonically shaped in key ways. To cite one agonizingly difficult example, while contemporary scholars may be convinced by Birger Pearson<sup>30</sup> (cited with approval by Fredriksen, 207-28 n. 1) and others that 1 Thess 2:13-16 was not written by Paul, the published corpus that was interpreted by figures like Origen or Augustine or Chrysostom of course included it. To translate into my terms above, 1 Thess 2:13-16 is undoubtedly HEP, even if not HP (though not indisputably not). And it may be one of the most dangerous of “Pauline texts” on Jews and Judaism, because it played a pivotal role, possibly in generating, and certainly in confirming, the vicious arguments made by Christian authors that “Jews” (or “Judaean” who soon become “Jews”) were killers of the prophets, culminating in Jesus Messiah. It is possible that Matthew 23:29-39, directed at *οἱ Φαρισαῖοι* and *Ἱερουσαλήμ* as prophet-slayers,<sup>31</sup> already was influenced by 1 Thess 2:13-16, or at least by a source common to both.<sup>32</sup> This point of intersection between Paul and the Gospel (reinforced later by Hebrews and Acts) made for a toxic molecule supporting the ideology of trans-generational Jewish opposition to God, the prophets, the Christ, and to the gospel. The fact that the claim that Israel continually killed the prophets sent to her actually has very little biblical support — Paul names no prophets; Matthew cites the primordial Abel and the misnamed Zechariah son of Barachios<sup>33</sup> — did not stop this molecule from metastasizing and taking on a rampant life of its own, set within an echo chamber of multiple attestation from Paul, Matthew, Luke, Acts, and Hebrews. Origen actually chooses to address this in his *Epistula ad Africanum*, where he

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<sup>30</sup> Birger A. Pearson, “1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation,” *HTR* 64/1 (1971): 79-94.

<sup>31</sup> Gager, 94 deems Matthew’s woes “thoroughly Jewish” and directed at Pharisees, which can make sense of most of Matthew 23, but when one turns to these accusations about killing the prophets (23:29f.) we seem to shift into more ferocious territory than with the earlier accusations about hypocritical behaviors. For a nuanced discussion of the complexities of the Gospel according to Matthew on these and other questions, see Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2016); on this particular point of the killing of the prophets, see esp. 105, n. 164.

<sup>32</sup> See W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Matthew 19-28* (ICC; London/New York: T & T Clark, 1997), 313-314, on the “intriguing parallels” that are “unlikely to be coincidental” (they argue for a common tradition, rather than Matthew’s knowledge of Pauline letters, as, for instance, does Michael Goulder).

<sup>33</sup> Should this be Zechariah ben Jehoiada from 2 Chr 24:20-22?

has to claim that the Jews must have removed the damaging passages telling of these murders of prophets from their scriptures because they wanted to protect the reputation of their readers.<sup>34</sup> At any rate, the HEP read from the late first or early second century forward not only has some problematic things said about the Law, but it has the HEP join what will be taken as a claim by the HJ (historical Jesus) about Jews/Judeans/Israel as the killer of prophets.<sup>35</sup> A toxic brew, indeed.

This leads me to one of my central questions for both Gager and Fredriksen: their reliance on Acts. While I understand why aspects of the Lukan vision of the Pauline mission — most especially the presence of “God fearers” in the synagogue — are useful for the historical contextualization, I fear that picture cannot be so easily identified with the HP, on the one hand, and that it is not so easily extracted from Luke’s own anti-Judaistic program, on the other. Unless I missed it, neither Gager nor Fredriksen acknowledges that, for Luke, Paul (PACTS) is in fact *not* the apostle to the Gentiles (as he says of himself in his letters in Rom 11:13; cf. Gal 1:15-16, and as is central to the portraits of both<sup>36</sup>), but, quite to the contrary, Luke insists: *σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς ἐστίν μοι οὗτος τοῦ βασιτάσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν τε καὶ βασιλέων υἰῶν τε Ἰσραήλ* (Acts 9:15<sup>37</sup>). Hence, when the Paul of Acts goes into the synagogue it isn’t quite because he, as apostle to the Gentiles, knows to find Gentiles in the synagogues, but that, as the “vessel of election” he goes to Jews first and finds unbelief, and turns to the Gentiles. In this I think Luke is both repeating (in Acts 13:46: *ὁμῖν ἦν ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον λαληθῆναι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ*) and narrativizing the *πρῶτον* of the HEP’s

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<sup>34</sup> *Ep. ad Afr.* §9 [PG 11.65-72]; he mounts this argument to explain the absence of the story of Susanna and the elders in Hebrew manuscripts and traditions.

<sup>35</sup> This is but one example where one can see the importance of Pauline statements that aren’t about the Law for this cluster of issues. I shall return below to the issue of which Pauline passages are taken as central to the question of Paul’s “anti-Judaism.”

<sup>36</sup> The title of Fredriksen’s book, *Paul, the Pagans’ Apostle*; Gager, 58-59, seems to represent this as Luke’s view (as well as Paul’s, as acknowledged later on that page): “So where do we look to find evidence for Jews and Gentiles in synagogues? We can begin with the New Testament Book of Acts. The second half of Acts (chapters 13-28) is an account of the apostle Paul’s travel to cities in Asia Minor, Greece, Cyprus, and Rome. The purpose of these journeys was missionary. As the apostle to the Gentiles, he traveled around the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, preaching the gospel that Gentile believers had been saved by the faith of Jesus Christ.”

<sup>37</sup> Fredriksen cites the verse on p. 29, but only in reference to the “nations” (Gentiles).

Rom1:16,<sup>38</sup> which allows him to heap more accountability and blame onto οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι for their unbelief and murderous persecution. In the bitter words of Acts 13:46: they have rejected the gospel (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. Hence, the Lukan Paul and Barnabas say ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη (who, in turn, right on cue, rejoice and glorify the word of the Lord and convert in huge numbers [13:46-48]). It is only after this point in Acts, at 14:14, that Paul and Barnabas are called (just once) ἀπόστολοι. Now, it is indeed the case that Paul continues to go both to synagogues<sup>39</sup> and to archetypal über-Gentile places like the Athenian agora; but this narratively showcases all the more the juxtaposition of Jewish unbelief and Gentile belief, until it reaches its climax in chapter 28, which repeats 13:46-48 in 28:26-28. And this is all set within a narrative that has Paul parallel the acts of Christ in the Gospel of Luke, including preaching in the synagogue and meeting opposition from those there (Luke 4:16-30), arrest on false charges, affirmations of his innocence three times by Roman authorities (Luke 23:4, 14, 22//Acts 23:9; 25:25; 26:31), and calls for his execution (αἶρε) by the crowd of the people (Luke 23:18//Acts 21:36). Now, some will disagree with this reading of Acts as enacting a virulent and implacable supersessionism,<sup>40</sup> but by bringing it up I want to ask if Fredriksen

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<sup>38</sup> Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνι κ.τ.λ. On the influence of Paul on Luke here, see Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2006), 105: “[Luke] ‘historicized’ the claims of Romans 1:16, etc. (especially Romans 9-11) by making Paul the executor of this principle... What is left is a theological axiom that has become a narrative cliché. The self-described ‘Apostle to the gentiles’ (Romans 11:13! cf. Galatians 1:16) has become a missionary to Jews who converts gentiles as a second choice. If one asks where Luke got his idea, Romans becomes the one extant source. This does not establish certainty, but it is more probable than the speculative alternatives....”

<sup>39</sup> Without Acts 17:1-9, and having only 1 Thessalonians, we would, because of 1:9-10, presume an entirely Gentile set of addressees, and do not have to postulate a synagogal context for Paul’s work in that city on the Thermaic gulf.

<sup>40</sup> As, most recently, Carl R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2016), 50: “Seen as the continuation of the biblical story, Luke’s portrayal of Jesus and the church is neither anti-Jewish nor supersessionist” (with more bibliography on this much debated question cited in the commentary). In an important, thoughtful argument, Matthew Thiessen regards Acts as an early and canonically influential argument for “Paul *within* Judaism, and not *against* it” (*Paul and the Gentile Problem* [Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2016], 169). While this is an accurate reading of Acts 21, in particular, I worry that it does not take fully enough into

and Gager are concerned with the overall contours of the “Jewish Paul of Acts” — within which these pebbles of historical data they wish to collect for reconstructing the HP are found. Secondly, in terms of method, would they agree that theirs is also in some way a “canonical” reading of Paul (HEP) in relation to PACTS?

As a final methodological consideration, I’d like to turn briefly to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the *corpus Paulinum*. It is understandable that Fredriksen and Gager deal mostly with Galatians and Romans, because they focus their attention on Paul and the Law as the central issue for Paul and Judaism. While they are certainly right that these two letters have played and continue to play a crucial role in the construct of an “anti-Jewish” Paul, in the history of interpretation in early Christ-believing assemblies, passages from other Pauline letters play an equally important and surprisingly outsized role. One of these is 1 Cor 5:7-8, which becomes activated to show that Paul knew that the “Jewish” feasts (like ἄζυμα) are obsolete, are festivals of κακία and πορνεία, and have been replaced by a new (Christian) ἄζυμα of εἰλικρινεία and ἀλήθεια. The use of “truth” (ἀλήθεια) here, in turn, will be contrasted with the key hermeneutical term Paul lofted into the stream of what will become “Christian” tradition: τύπος, τυπικῶς in 1 Cor 10:6, 11, to refer to the events of the wilderness generation and, by extension, the entire Torah (or even Tanak).<sup>41</sup> In this passage in the HEP (1 Cor

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account the larger arc of the narrative, which involves the gospel moving away from Jews and onto Gentiles.

<sup>41</sup>Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔχων πονηρίαν ἐορτάζει τὴν ἐορτὴν τῶν ἀζύμων, τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀζύμων. Οἱ δὲ θέλοντες μετὰ Χριστιανισμόν και τὰ θεῖα μαθήματα, δεόν ἐορτάζειν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας και ἀληθείας, ἐορτάζουσιν ἀζύμοις τοῖς ἀπὸ σίτου και ἀζύμοις τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν πραγμάτων, ἃ καθήργησε Χριστὸς πληρῶν τὸν νόμον ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς, δηλονότι ἐκπεσόντες τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ οὔτε ταύτην ἐορτάζουσι τὴν ἐορτὴν οὔτε ἐκείνην. Οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ ἐκείνη ἐορτή· Χριστοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἐν αὐτῇ, ἁγίου πνεύματος οὐκ ὄντος, οὐδύναται εἶναι ἐορτή. Παρακαλῶ, εἴ τινὰ ἐστὶ γυναικάρια σεσωρε υμένα ἁμαρτίας, ἀγόμενα ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις, ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρα βαιίνειν τοὺς πόδας, και Ἰουδαῖζειν και Χριστιανίζειν, μετανοήσατε, μεταβάλεσθε· ἢ Ἰουδαία ἢ Χριστιανὴ γένεσθε. Ἐρῶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμᾶς λόγον Ἠλίου τοῦ προφήτου, ὃν ἐλάλησέ ποτε πρὸς τοὺς διψύχους· ἕως ποτε ὑμεῖς χλωαίνετε ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέραις ταῖς ἰγνύαις ὑμῶν; (H73Ps II.3 [f. 132<sup>r</sup>—132<sup>v</sup>], text Perrone, et al., 241, 21-242, 12).

“No one who is wicked feasts the feast of the unleavened bread, that is, the Christian feast of the unleavened bread. Those who wish, after Christianity and the divine teachings (i.e., that one should celebrate the feast with the “*unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*” [1 Cor 5:8]), to celebrate with an unleavening from grain and an unleavening from physical realities which Christ has abolished by fulfilling the law with spiritual realities, clearly have fallen out of grace (cf. Gal 5:4). They celebrate neither the latter feast nor the former. But the former isn’t actually a feast, since Christ isn’t in it, the Holy Spirit isn’t in it, so it cannot be a feast. I beg you, if some are “*silly women heaped up with sins, led by*



5), in my view, the HP is by no means mounting an argument of supersessionism, nor is he talking about halakhic observance. He is using the analogy of the feast of unleavened bread which is approaching as he writes (cf. 1 Cor 16:8: ἐπιμενώ δὲ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς) and by which Jewish feasts he, as a Jew, naturally and comfortably organizes time, to make a “one bad apple spoils the whole bunch” argument, about the man who “has his father’s wife.” That such should become the basis for arguments that Christian and Jewish feasts are entirely separate, and only one of them is “true,” is a counter-reading of extraordinary proportions. And it’s not even based in one of the main arguments about “Paul and the Law.” But also, once again, the death of Christ is involved (1 Cor 5:7: καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός), and so too readily the date marker of the feast of unleavened bread and τὸ πάσχα will form another toxic molecule with the gospel passion narrative (Mark 14:1//Matt 26:2) to place “Jews” on one side and “Jesus/Christians” on the other.

As a second issue of *Wirkungsgeschichte*, both Gager and Fredriksen refer to Origen and Augustine, with Fredriksen in particular citing these two Christian intellectuals as providing corroborative testimony that “Paul as well as the original disciples continued to live according to Jewish ancestral custom.”<sup>42</sup>

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*manifold desires*” (2 Tim 3:6) desiring to set their feet on both paths — both to live as Jews and live as Christians (cf. Gal 2:15) — repent, turn back! Be either a Jew or a Christian, women! I will direct at you the statement of Elijah the prophet, which he said to the divided souls of his own day: “*How long with you walk lamely on both your legs?*” (3 Kgdms 18:21) (my translation).

<sup>42</sup> Fredriksen, 226, n. 26; 250 n. 83, referring in general to Origen’s *comm. in Rom* for support. Gager refers to Origen early in the book (7-9), and also to the *comm. in Rom.*, not about Paul’s own Law-observance, but his theological views about the salvation of Israel, especially as interpreted by Jeremy Cohen: “I believe that Origen follows Paul assiduously throughout and that he reaches the same conclusions: Israel’s exclusion is temporary, not permanent; Israel’s stumbling opened the way for Gentiles to reach salvation; and, in the end, all Israel will be saved” (JG, 8-9, citing Cohen, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: Romans 11:25-26 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis,” *HTR* 98/3 [2005]: 247-281). While it is hard to find in the new homilies on the Psalms, there may be a hint of the salvation of Israel in the end-time in the following argument: “Ἐτι δὲ λέγουσι μετὰ τὸ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν προφήτης καὶ τὸ ἡμᾶς οὐ γινώσεται ἔτι, ὅσον προφητεύουσι περὶ αὐτῶν οἱ ἐγκαταλελειμμένοι Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες ὅτι οὐ μόνον οὐκ οἶδεν ἡμᾶς ἄρτι, ἀλλ’ οὐκέτι ἡμᾶς γινώσεται. Μέχρι γὰρ τῆς συντελείας οὐκέτι γινώσεται ἐκεῖνον τὸν λαόν, μεταβεβηκυίας τῆς γνώσεως ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξ ἔθνῶν λαόν (H73Ps II.2 [f. 131<sup>r</sup> — 131<sup>v</sup>] text Perrone, et al., 240, 1-6). “And after ‘there is no prophet for us’ any longer, they say ‘he will no longer know us’ (Ps 73:9b). This is the kind of thing the forsaken Jews prophecy about them, saying, ‘not only does he not know us

Now, I would disagree with my esteemed colleague when it comes to Augustine only with extreme trepidation, but I do think that when it comes to Origen this claim cannot quite hold consistently across his extant oeuvre. Space allows for a single example, in relation to Paul's Torah-observance. A key treatment is in Origen's *comm. in 1 Cor.*, on 9:19-23.

Ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος· οὐκ εἶπεν ἐνθάδε, Μὴ ὦν Ἰουδαῖος. Ἰουδαῖος γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, οὐκέτι ἐν τῷ φανερῷ. Καὶ πάλιν τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὦν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον· ἀναγκαίως ἐνθάδε ἔθηκεν τὸ Μὴ ὦν ὑπὸ νόμον· Χριστὸς γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς καταράς τοῦ νόμου, γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατὰρα (Gal 3:13)· ὡσανεὶ ἔλεγεν, Μὴ ὦν Σαμαρεὺς.

“And I was to Jews as a Jew.” He did not say here, “although I am not a Jew,” for he was a Jew “in secret,” not “in openness” (Rom 2:28-29). And again, “to those under the Law as though under the Law, although not being myself under the Law” (1 Cor 9:20). It was necessary for him to add here the statement, “although not being myself under the Law” (1 Cor 9:20), for “Christ bought us out from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse on our behalf” (Gal 3:13). It is as if he were saying, “Although I am not a Samaritan.”<sup>43</sup>

For Origen here, Paul was a “Jew in secret,” not openly (according to Rom 2:28-29), and he was not under the Law because, Origen assumes, Paul is a part of the “us” (ἡμᾶς) of Galatians 3:13, whom Christ bought out from under the curse of the Law. The ending here, about not being a Samaritan, is curious. The explanation for it is that, earlier, Origen wanted to know what the distinction was between Paul's phrases τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις and τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον. On the assumption that Paul wouldn't say anything redundantly, Origen responds: Τινὲς ἐζήτησαν τίς ἡ διαφορὰ τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν νόμον παρὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· φαμὲν οὖν ὅτι ὑπὸ τὸν νόμον ἕτεροι Ἰουδαίων εἰσίν, ὡς Σαμαρεῖς (“Some have inquired about what the difference is between those ‘under the Law’ as compared with ‘the Jews.’ We say that there are others who are ‘under the Law’ who are other than Jews, such as Samaritans”). But in terms of whether Paul was a Ἰουδαῖος, Origen had said just before this:

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now, but no longer “will he know us.” For until the completion of this age (Matt 13:39; 24:3; 28:20; cf. Rom 11:26?) no longer will he know that people, since the knowledge has been transferred to ‘the people from the Gentiles’ (Acts 15:14)” (my trans.).

<sup>43</sup> Text Claude Jenkins, *JTS* 9 [1907-1908]: 500-514, 513, my translation (I have added italics to some quotations not so marked in Jenkins).

Ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω. ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἀπὸ Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ, ἐδούλωσα ἑμαυτὸν Ἰουδαίοις, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω. ἐλεύθερος ὢν ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι ὑπὸ νόμον ἑμαυτὸν ἐποίησα ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω. συγκατέβηεν γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος εἰς συναγωγὰς Ἰουδαίων, εἰσῆρχετο πρὸς αὐτούς, ἐποίει κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη αὐτῶν χωρὶς βλάβης, οὐ συνυποκρινόμενος ἀλλὰ θηρεύων τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν (ibid., ll. 712)

“To the Jews I was as a Jew, so that I might save Jews” (1 Cor 9:20). For “being free” from Judaism, “I enslaved myself” (1 Cor 9:19) to Jews, “so that I might gain Jews” (1 Cor 9:20). “Being free” (1 Cor 9:19) from being “under the Law” (1 Cor 9:20), I made myself “as though under the Law, so that I might gain those under the Law.’ For Paul was accommodating<sup>44</sup> to the synagogues of the Jews. He used to go in to them, and used to act according to their customs, without harm, since he wasn’t joining in some hypocritical act,<sup>45</sup> but he was in active pursuit of some of them.

Here Origen sees Paul not as consistently or whole-heartedly Law-observant, but as having been strategically variable, which included Torah observance as necessary and expedient. Indeed, it is his appeal to *συγκατάβασις* (accommodating the weakness and even ignorance of others) that allows for what Origen assumes was Paul’s variability in Torah observance. All this is to say that Origen is not, I think, unambiguously seeing Paul as halakhically observant, even though it is not necessary to deny — and important to affirm — that he may, on a positive note shown elsewhere, have in view the eschatological salvation of Jews within *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* (Rom 9:26).

Before I close this already too long response, which has focused mostly on larger methodological issues, I would like to include a shorter list of specific points about the evidence and its interpretation for our ongoing discussion, since all our work on Paul within Judaism must continually toggle between and seek to integrate, and complicate, the two. I shall address a few to each of our

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<sup>44</sup> This key term in patristic interpretation means to “condescend,” “come down to the level of,” “accommodate” (often in reference to “the weak” or “the younger” who are not yet fully mature). For fuller discussion, particularly with reference to 1 Cor 9:19-22, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “Pauline Accommodation and ‘Condescension’ (*συγκατάβασις*): 1 Cor 9:19-23 and the History of Influence,” in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism-Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001): 197-214.

<sup>45</sup> *Συνυποκρίνεσθαι*, from Gal 2:13.

authors, in terms of where in my reading of their books they were triggered for me, but they are meant for all of us to ponder.

For Gager:

1. (Why) Does being a modern Jew make Taubes or Wyschogrod somehow a typical Jewish reader who sees what Christian readers do not or cannot? Does being a modern member of *any* religious tradition make one a more natural or congenial or better reader of ancient materials?<sup>46</sup> And isn't that the problem with many "Christian" readings of Paul — that they assume this?

2. On the synagogue and archaeological evidence (chapter 3: "Let's Meet Downtown in the Synagogue: Four Case Studies"): Gager gives a portrait of easy and congenial relations between Jews, "god-fearers," Gentiles who wander in, pilgrims and others (similarly Fredriksen, 54-60). I fully agree that much of the archaeological evidence requires us to see Jews, Gentiles, Christians, and others amidst the bustling urban environments, and Gager's important argument (which is also echoed by Fredriksen) definitively refutes — as he intends — any image of Jews in separate ghettos such as many European New Testament scholars inherited from their social reality in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Focusing on Dura Europos, I would love to talk further about the fact that in multiple paintings in the synagogue, the "idols" of "Baal" that are being destroyed by Elijah and others are depicted in the guise of the local Syrian god "Bel." My colleague, Jaś Elsner, with whom I taught a course a few years back on "Pagans, Jews and Christians at Dura Europos," has written about the bold and forward polemical intent of such images.<sup>47</sup> As we imagine these spaces, would

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<sup>46</sup> E.g., Gager, 30: "Why would Jewish readers, of all people, set out to reclaim Paul, of all people? ... Here I need to make a confession. At first it made no sense to me. But slowly I came to a different view. Why not Jews? If Paul really was a Jew, if the framework for understanding him lies in first-century Judaism, who better than those who best understood that Judaism, *sine ira et studio*, without bitterness or partiality." But if 20<sup>th</sup> century Christians may import anachronisms in their readings of Paul, might not also 20<sup>th</sup> century Jews?

<sup>47</sup> Jaś Elsner, "Cultural Resistance and the Visual Image: The Case of Dura Europos," *Classical Philology* 96/3 (2001): 269-304, a conclusion summarized on p. 299: "There is no doubt that the Synagogue frescoes actively promulgate Judaism by denigrating other religions. These are specifically the religions of the local Syrian environment — the worship of Baal and Dagon, as represented in Scripture, and their contemporary Durene successors such as Bel and Adonis. In particular, the Jewish frescoes strike at the two key items in pagan religious practice (at least as emphasized by the frescoes and sculptures we have looked at) — namely, the idolatrous worship of polytheistic deities in the form of

that visual rhetoric compromise — on both Gentile and Jewish sides — the free interchange in that space of contested religious imagery and cults and claims? Would or need it qualify claims about the normativity and ubiquity of Gentiles in the synagogue?<sup>48</sup>

3. In the final chapter, it was a bit hard for me to see how the portrait of Elishah/Elijah in the *Toledot Yeshu* (Gager, 133-134) is unambiguously a heroic figure for Jews, on the one hand, and, on the other, how he does not all the more reinforce the image of Paul as the one most responsible for dividing Jews and Christians, which Gager is seeking to contest. In line with Gager's interpretation, might one see this as a kind of ironic reading (or jujitsu move) that both allows the view of "Christians" that Paul was the one who severed "Christians" from "Jews," but that wants to say the effect was salutary because it kept Israel pure from such errors that Paul (mendaciously, or fervently?) taught?

For Fredriksen:

1. Fredriksen's argument for Paul's rootedness (both HEP and, by inference from historical and exegetical data, HP) in eschatological restoration theology as the guiding sensibility of his mission to Gentiles makes much sense to me. It is grounded especially in the resurrection of Messiah Jesus,<sup>49</sup> seen as the ἀπαρχή, which is completely well grounded in HEP (1 Cor 15:20f.; 1 Thess 4:14f.). I agree with this. But I find two things almost missing from this vision of Paul's religion and religious claims: the death of Christ, and eschatological judgment which awaits, both of which are shot through the Pauline letters. To the first, I

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statues and the specific act of sacrifice. Of course, all this can easily be explained away — if that is what one wants to do — as simply the illustrations of a text set in the distant ancestral myth-history of the Hebrews. In other words, one may reject the implication that the Synagogue frescoes are a commentary on the contemporary Durene environment. I think this view is certainly possible, but an insistence on its exclusive correctness would be naive."

<sup>48</sup> For important research on the ancient synagogue, within which to contextualize this issue, see Anders Runesson, Birger Olsson, and Donald D. Binder, *The Ancient Synagogue from its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book* (AJEC 72; Leiden: Brill, 2010); Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> This is I think an inheritance from Acts, but my worry is that Luke has emphasized the resurrection as the way God rights the wrong that "the Jews" or "the leaders of the Jews" did in crucifying Jesus (so, shockingly, even devastatingly, Acts 2:23-24; 3:15; 4:10; 7:52). This is not the view of HP, unless one regards HEP's οἱ ἄρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οἱ καταργούμενοι as human leaders among Jews/Judaeans, which I do not, or accepts the authenticity of 1 Thess 2:13-16. In any case, it is hardly an emphasis in HEP.

would say death and resurrection are the heart of Paul's *εὐαγγέλιον*, and they go together, but the death is not just the requirement for the resurrection; it is a plot configuration and prophetic fulfillment (*κατὰ τὰς γραφάς*) of its own and with its own significance. To put a point on it (!), I note that the one place where Fredriksen deals with the death of Christ is p. 245 n. 53 (granted, a long footnote!). But here, on the question of whether Paul viewed Messiah Jesus' death as a sacrifice, is where Fredriksen finds his writings "hard to track," "confusing" and "confused" (which contrasts with more certainly about other issues, such as the Law, the plan for Jews, etc.). Why is this part of HEP so confusing, and why does it play almost no role in Fredriksen's HP — whereas I, for one, would point to such passages as Gal 2:19; 6:17 and 2 Cor 4:10 to say that Paul (HP) was "possessed" by the death of Christ?

2. Fredriksen's argument that Paul does "Judaize" is to me fully convincing, and a huge advancement for Pauline scholarship. Take note, all! But does not the first element—maintain strict adherence to the God of Israel — constitute not just a "turning," but a "conversion"? I'm not sure that the lexical claim that *ἐπιστροφή/ἐπιστρέφειν* does not or cannot mean "conversion/convert" can hold. Can they not only be "ex pagan pagans" but "ex pagans called in Christ" to that *καὶνὴ κτίσις* Paul likes to talk about, as a third category (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17; cf. 1 Cor 1:22-24)?

3. A key point in Fredriksen's concluding Postscript, on p. 173, is that there is a distinction between "contrasting binaries" (what Paul does with Law and gospel, works and grace) and "rigid polarities" (what the "veils of later ecclesiastical tradition" will do with these). How exactly can one characterize and defend that difference?

For both, or perhaps for myself (a final, depressing point!):

Both Gager and Fredriksen paint a picture of the diaspora synagogues as wide open, welcoming of Gentiles, with varied populations mixing freely, up through at least the end of the fourth century, with the scolds or naysayers being leaders — like John Chrysostom,<sup>50</sup> or some rabbis<sup>51</sup> — rather than everyday folk. This is a largely congenial picture, and some of this evidence does indeed show

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<sup>50</sup> On the evidence of the new Origen homilies, I think we would have to add him to the list of scolds (see Mitchell, "Origen, Christ, the Law, and the Jewish People," forthcoming).

<sup>51</sup> Gager, 85: "It is also true that not all Jewish leaders took kindly to converts and god-fearers. Some rabbis disliked proselytes, but even in Palestine they were probably in the minority." Yet this statement is about those in leadership, not everyday people.

varied association that has helpfully, and irrevocably, revised our limited imagination of complex urban environments and institutions within which diverse populations mingled. But can we conclude from it that some of the everyday people on the ground were not as eager to maintain forms of “us” against “them” as their leaders? Partly for me this is gut instinct, partly it is living in these times in America (where the culture wars are as local as they are national, as much carried out by the Joe-the-plumbers as the Breitbart or beltway elites), and partly I imagine that sociological analysis of minority groups trans-temporally would suggest there often can be forms of closing in on the group in the face of a perceived hostile majority or other culture.

At the same time, leaders and rulers are not all homogenous, even as leaders — even those who challenge their congregations or readers — need to feed off and link with some of them. I think about Pope Benedict and Pope Francis in the Catholic Church, where both have been controversial for considerable portions of the membership, and, despite Benedict’s exclusive vision of the church, there were many everyday Catholics in the US (and elsewhere) who disagreed with him and favored the more ecumenical church of Vatican II, a dynamic that has reversed itself with Francis, where now some of his most adamant opposition comes from lay Catholics in the US who regard his positions (on divorce, remarriage, forgiveness) as “heresy.”<sup>52</sup> Not everyone in the pews or the streets in the ancient contexts we study was or is necessarily less exclusive than fearful, boundary-enforcing, even hate-spewing leaders, I fear.

Let me close by saying that I would like again to express my gratitude to both authors,<sup>53</sup> for these two new excellent books that I have learned so much by thinking inside, and for pointing a way forward to new readings of Paul, corrections of distortions, powerful historical contextualizations, and examples of scholarship that changes the ways that people accept the assumptions handed down from the past. I hope that Pauline studies, New Testament studies, studies

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<sup>52</sup> Such as the extraordinary *Correctio filialis de haeresibus propagatis* document (see [correctiofilialis.org](http://correctiofilialis.org)) published by some 65 self-declared Catholic clergy and laypeople on July 16, 2017, that draws upon Paul’s example in rebuking Peter at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14) to issue a “brotherly correction” to the current occupant of the seat of Peter (Pope Francis) for being too close to Luther and too inclined to mercy (in divorce and other issues).

<sup>53</sup> One benison of our panel was the chance to meet John Gager in person for the first time. And Paula Fredriksen is a conversation partner of many years (as much epistolary as in person!) whom I cherish. Cheers to both authors for these fine books and for the conversation then, and ongoing.

of second temple Judaism, and the religions of late antiquity will be enriched by the rethinking that each has generated in these two catalytic books.