# The Last Years of Paul

Edited by
ARMAND PUIG i TÀRRECH,
JOHN M.G. BARCLAY and JÖRG FREY

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen*
*zum Neuen Testament*
*352*

**Mohr Siebeck**

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament



352

# The Last Years of Paul

Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013

Edited by

Armand Puig i Tàrrech, John M. G. Barclay
and Jörg Frey

with the assistance of

Orrey McFarland

Mohr Siebeck

Armand Puig i Tàrrech, born 1953; 1984 PhD; Professor of New Testament and, since 2006, President-Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Catalonia (Barcelona); 2011-12 President of the "Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas" (SNTS).

John M.G. Barclay, born 1958; undergraduate in Cambridge (Classics and Theology); 1986 PhD in Cambridge; since 2003 Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University.

Jörg Frey, born 1962; studied Theology in Tübingen, 1996 Dr. theol. (Tübingen); 1998 Habilitation; since 2010 Professor for New Testament at the University of Zurich.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-153583-3
ISBN 978-3-16-153346-4
ISSN 0512-1604 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at *http://dnb.dnb.de*.



The book was printed by Gulde Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

# Preface

The Congress on "The Last Years of Paul's Life," held in Tarragona on 25–29 June 2013, was an excellent opportunity to deal with one of the most difficult subjects in Pauline studies. The capital of the Tarraconensis Province was conceived by the Roman authorities as a place to display Roman power in Hispania/Spain, the western edge of the Empire. Tarraco was the friendly Roman town in which Augustus spent the winter of 27–26 BCE and it showed itself again a city of international hospitality, a wonderful meeting-point for thirty scholars from three main cultural areas, German, Anglo-Saxon, and Latin-Mediterranean (including Greece). At the same time, the "Tarragona Congress" chose to open the floor not only to New Testament and Apocrypha scholars but also to historians of the Roman Empire and experts in Roman Law. The result was highly successful, and this volume shows how rich and insightful was the academic exchange among the Congress participants. The authors have reworked their material in the light of that stimulating discussion, and some additional pieces have been commissioned to make the coverage more complete.

We are deeply grateful to H.E. Jaume Pujol, Archbishop of Tarragona, who generously hosted the participants of the Congress in the "Centre el Seminari," where all the sessions took place. Likewise, Miss Joana Ortega, Vice-President of the Catalan Government, attended the opening session and provided the Congress with the necessary financial support. Mr. Josep Poblet, President of the Tarragona Regional Assembly ("Diputació de Tarragona"), gave a fine reception to the participants. The head of the local committee was Dr Josep M. Gavaldà, director of the Institute for Religious Sciences "Sant Fructuós," who ensured the success of the Congress, with the collaboration of Fr. Antoni Pérez de Mendiguren and Miss Roser Fornell. The Congress was promoted by the Theological Faculty of Catalonia (Barcelona).

The range of topics, the variety of contributors and the quality of the contributions give this volume a special role in addressing the historical and theological problems of the last years of Paul. The answers are varied and not always in agreement – a sign of serious and respectful scholarly endeavour. The contributors are united in their sensitivity to the historical problems, their desire to raise good questions (often more useful than a hundred hypotheses), and their commitment to accuracy and prudence. Despite the gaps in our

knowledge, and the silences or ambiguities of the sources, this volume shows that a number of important conclusions can be drawn and that scholarship can make progress even when the evidence offers less than full certainty on the matters discussed.

The extensive editorial role for this volume was carried out by Dr Orrey McFarland, who also undertook its copy-editing and type-setting. We are indebted to his skilful and precise work. We extend our thanks to Dr Henning Ziebritzki, editorial director of Mohr Siebeck, and to all his team. We are grateful that this volume has been included in the prestigious WUNT I series.

Durham – Zürich – Barcelona January 2015
John Barclay – Jörg Frey – Armand Puig i Tàrrech

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

## The Last Years of Paul's Life: What are the Issues?

*John M.G. Barclay*

"Call no man happy before he dies." So runs the Greek maxim, variously expressed by Aeschylus (*Ag*. 928–29) and Sophocles (*Oed. tyr*. 1528–50), and echoed in the Jewish tradition by Ben Sira (11.28). The importance of the end of life for the evaluation of the whole is the topic of a memorable discussion between Solon and Croesus, as recounted by Herodotus (*Hist*. 1.32). When Croesus congratulates himself on his happy and prosperous condition, Solon warns that such a verdict is secure only after the end of one's life; to Croesus' shock, Solon cites as examples of fortunate people relatively obscure Athenians who had died noble deaths as the crown of a virtuous life. Wait until the end – the very end – to judge the happiness or success of a person's life, advises Solon: the final stage of life may confirm or negate the value of the whole.

Like the Greeks, we want to know how Paul's life ended. Paul, who perpetually plans and replans his future, sets out his goals at the end of his letter to the Romans (15.22–33). He is taking the collection to Jerusalem to create or cement a reciprocal relation of unity between the Jewish believers in Jerusalem and the Gentile believers in Achaea and Macedonia. After that he will come to Rome and then, from there, be "sent on" to Spain, "once I have enjoyed your company for a little while" (15.24). He is clearly nervous about the visit to Jerusalem, about his reception there by the "saints" and by the "unbelievers" (15.31); but he expresses no fears about coming to Rome. Naturally we want to know what happened next. What transpired in Jerusalem? How did he get to Rome, and what happened there? Did he get to Spain? And where, how, and why did he die? Were his plans fulfilled or frustrated? Was his end also his goal (his τέλος)? Do the last years of Paul give perspective on the whole of his life, as the Greek maxim would suggest?

In this introductory chapter, I wish to raise a number of questions, which the following essays will variously address. I will begin by noting the key historical problems, which usually reflect the paucity, ambiguity, or unreliability of our sources (A). We will then enquire why the early Christians were

interested in the last years of Paul's life, and whether their questions and interests overlap with ours (B). Finally, I will offer a provocative reading of Paul's last years as a saga of failure and disappointment (C). That will lead us to wonder whether Paul's end was the climax or the anti-climax of his life.

## A. The Historical Problems

For every element of the last years of Paul's life (from 55 CE onwards) we are dependent on sources which are to some degree debatable and suspect.[1] Hearing Paul's anxiety in Romans 15 over whether his gift would be acceptable to the "saints" in Jerusalem, and his request for the Romans to struggle in prayer that he be "rescued" from the "unbelievers," we are eager to know how it all turned out. That Paul should be heading east from Ephesus to Jerusalem, just when he really wants to be heading west, is a sign of how much he is personally invested in the success of the collection project (cf. 2 Corinthians 8–9).[2] For what happened in Jerusalem we are entirely dependent on Acts, which appears to make an oblique allusion to the collection (the "alms" that Paul was bringing to his nation, Acts 24.17) but says nothing about how this was received by the "saints." We are entitled to be suspicious. Luke is anxious throughout Acts to display the harmony of the Christian movement: all the intra-church discussions end in unity, and he had given no hint of the Antioch dispute or of Paul's probable split with the Antioch church. Luke knows that Jewish believers in Jerusalem were extremely wary of Paul, even opposed to him, hearing that he undermined Jewish practice of the Torah (Acts 21.20–21). Paul's agreement to pay for the Nazirite purification is intended to allay these fears (Acts 21.23–26), but before we hear how effective that is in endearing Paul to Torah-observant Jews, he becomes the centre of a riot, and the focus of the narrative is deflected to his hostile reception among non-believing Jews (Acts 21.27ff.).

[1] For previous analysis of this cluster of historical issues, see F.W. Horn (ed.), *Das Ende des Paulus. Historische, theologische und literargeschichtliche Aspekte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001).

[2] Among recent treatments, see B.-M. Kim, *Die paulinische Kollekte* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002); D.J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). The relation of this project to Paul's mission is the subject of the following two essays in this volume.

What happened to the collection money, so painstakingly organized and so painfully extracted from Paul's congregations? Did this gesture go some way towards unifying churches across ethnic, cultural, and geographical divides, or was it rebuffed, as Paul feared it might be, since it was too closely associated with himself and with the terms of his mission?[3]

Acts is, of course, our only source for Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, his various trials before the Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa and Berenice, and his appeal, as a Roman citizen, to the emperor. What historical truth lies behind this narrative with its set-piece rhetorical events? That is notoriously difficult to determine, but when Luke has Paul three times acquitted by Roman and Jewish authorities as having done nothing deserving death or imprisonment (23.29; 25.25; 26.31; cf. 28.18) – just as Jesus was three times acquitted in Luke's gospel by Pilate and Herod (Luke 23.4, 14–15, 22) – we wonder whether there is some embellishment of the facts.[4] The innocence of the Christians in Roman eyes is so constant a theme in Luke-Acts, and the long detention of Paul in limbo between acquittal and conviction so remarkable, that one might wonder if Luke has covered up a criminal conviction by a provincial governor, against which Paul in desperation lodged an appeal. What Luke does not mask is that Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner – though he does his best to mitigate this in his description of Paul's freedom to preach (Acts 28.30–31). If we accept his narrative outline we should probably date Paul's arrival in Rome in 59 or 60 CE.[5]

What happened next in Rome? Our sources are multiple, but their relevance and value hard to assess. Luke is notoriously sparse on detail and, after recounting an initial welcome by Roman believers (28.14–15), says nothing about Paul's interaction with the Roman churches. When we recall how many people Paul greeted in Rome in Romans 16 (if that chapter is original to the letter),[6] and how eager he was to "impart some spiritual gift" to them (Rom 1.11–12) and to be "refreshed in their company" (Rom 15.32), it is remarkable that Luke has nothing further to say about Paul's engagement with the communities of Roman believers, over what he records as a two-year period (Acts 28.30). Were there no local Roman traditions available to him, in the way that he apparently utilized local narratives from other cities? Or was Paul

[3] See the following essays by Bieringer and Quesnel; cf. F. Horn, "Die letzte Jerusalemreise des Paulus," in Horn (ed.), *Ende des Paulus*, 15–35.

[4] See the essays below by Omerzu and Horn, and H. Omerzu, *Der Prozeß des Paulus. Eine exegetische und rechtshistorische Untersuchung der Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002).

[5] For discussion, see A. Scriba, "Von Korinth nach Rom. Die Chronologie der letzten Jahre des Paulus," in Horn (ed.), *Ende des Paulus*, 157–73. For a different opinion, see the essay by Penna below.

[6] The debate has been tipped in this direction by H.Y. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

after all unwelcome to the churches in Rome? The fact that *1 Clement* says nothing clear on this matter, and that the pseudonymous 2 Timothy knows nothing of local support for Paul in Rome (in fact, quite the opposite, 2 Tim 4.16), surely compounds the mystery.

If we place the letter to the Philippians in Rome, an hypothesis supported by a long English-language scholarly tradition, and now by some significant German voices, we can add here some precious first-hand evidence.[7] Here Paul indicates that his imprisonment is a matter of controversy, eliciting differing reactions among local believers in Rome. He calculates that his imprisonment has made known to the whole praetorian guard (ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ) and "to the rest" that "my chains are in Christ" (ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι, 1.13). This little notice may be more revealing than it seems, especially if we combine it with Paul's clear distinction, later in the letter, between his Jewish identity (which he now counts as rubbish) and the value of his identity in Christ (3.2–11). Does this indicate that what is becoming clear to the praetorian guard, and thus to the Roman authorities, is precisely this distinction between being "Jewish" and being "in Christ" – or *Christianus*, as the Romans might say? Is Paul's Roman imprisonment making clear to the Roman authorities that there is a class of people called *Christiani*, who may be distinguished from Jews (cf. Acts 26.28)? In the same context in Philippians, Paul notes that some (in his eyes, "most") of the believers in the locality are emboldened to "speak the word without fear" (1.14), but that other fellow-Christians are hostile to him (filled with envy and rivalry, φθόνος καὶ ἔρις, 1.15) and preach Christ in a way intended to "heighten the suffering in my imprisonment" (1.17). Something they are saying or doing is making Paul's position in Rome increasingly precarious, and he is not at all sure that he will get out of this alive (1.19–26). Ever the optimist, he thinks he probably will, because the Philippians need him (1.24–26; 2.24). Nothing is said now about Spain, a mission project that was always dependent on Roman support (Rom 15.24, 28). Instead, Paul dreams of returning to the churches that have long supported him, and is enormously grateful that they, at least, have remembered his acute financial needs.

[7] For recent English-language commentaries supporting this position (as opposed to a venue in Ephesus or Caesarea), see, e.g., M. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: A&C Black, 1997), 25–32; G. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 34–37. Among German voices, see P. Wick, *Der Philipperbrief: der formale Aufbau des Briefs als Schlüssel zum Verständnis seines Inhalts* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), 182–85; U. Schnelle, *Paulus: Leben und Denken* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 406–11 (ET: *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* [trans. E. Boring; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 366–69); H.D. Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus in Rom* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013). The evidence that Philemon comes from this same location is a good deal weaker.

What happened next? Something happened after two years but Luke has famously shrouded this in silence (Acts 28.30–31).[8] Since Luke had earlier indicated that Paul was on his way to Rome not just to be imprisoned, but to appear before the emperor (27.24) and to die (20.25, 28–29, 38), we may well regard this silence as a literary and political convenience. Given how much he has invested in Paul's innocence, including the insistence that he had committed no offence against the emperor (Acts 25.8), it would have been awkward for Luke to record an imperial judgment authorizing Paul's execution. That would require a plain choice: either Paul's Christian movement was a criminal affair in the eyes of the highest Roman court, or the emperor was mistaken and Roman justice was unreliable to the core. Neither option would be welcome to Luke, and it would be hard to represent Paul's death-sentence and execution without reaching one or other of these unpalatable conclusions.[9] Better to represent Paul as a heroic figure, bravely walking into danger but successfully spreading the gospel in Rome for two whole years "without hindrance" (28.31). Luke prefers to say no more.

Whether Paul enjoyed a temporary release, during which he travelled as hoped to Spain, was of course a pressing matter for our conference in Tarragona (Tarraco) – a short sea-crossing from Ostia and Paul's most likely point of arrival in Spain, if he did make that journey.[10] Much depends on the notice in 1 Clement 5, and its reference to τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως (5.7).[11] Whether this refers to Spain is one question; whether, if it does, it is based on a historical tradition, or is merely supposition from Paul's plan in Romans 15, is another. Luke's silence was certainly a lacuna which other early Christians were eager to fill. Second Timothy conjures up a tired Paul in Rome, ready and willing to die; it knows nothing of a mission to Spain (either hoped for or achieved) but its place-names recall a host of earlier successes in Greece and Asia (2 Tim 1.15, 18; 3.11; 4.10, 13, 20). The *Acts of Paul* proudly portrays exactly what Luke was unwilling to imagine. It uses motifs from Philippians ("the household of Caesar," Phil 4.22; *Martyrdom of Paul* 1) and Acts (the fall and death of Eutychos = Patroclus, Acts 20.9–12; *Martyrdom of Paul* 1) to create

[8] See the essay by Marguerat below, and H. Omerzu, "Das Schweigen des Lukas. Überlegungen zum offenen Ende der Apostelgeschichte," in Horn (ed.), *Ende des Paulus*, 127–56.

[9] For a nuanced reading of Luke's relationship to Roman power, see C.K. Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[10] See especially the essays by Puig ì Tarrech and Karakolis, below. See the debates on this matter in J.M. Gavaldá et al. (eds.), *Pau, Fructuós i el cristianisme primitiu a Tarragona (segles I–VIII). Actes del Congrés de Tarragona (19–21 de juny de 2008)* (Tarragona: FPL/INSAF, 2010).

[11] See H. Löhr, "Zur Paulus-Notiz in 1 Clem 5,5–7," in Horn (ed.), *Ende des Paulus*, 197–213, and the essays by Riesner and Herzer below.

a scenario of outright conflict between Paul and the Emperor Nero, the one at the head of "the soldiers of Christ," the other threatened by this alternative "king" and incited by Satan to put Paul to death (*Martyrdom of Paul* 1–4). Here for the first time (180–190 CE?) the actual execution of Paul is vividly imagined, together with a miraculous spurt of milk from his severed neck, and resurrection appearances of Paul reminiscent of those of Jesus.[12] This account associates Paul's death with that of Roman Christians, but makes no link with the fire of Rome or with the death of Peter. If Paul was executed as a Roman citizen, it is likely that he was indeed beheaded. Beyond that, the *Martyrdom of Paul* provides nothing an historian could trust, but plenty of evidence for the developing image of Paul, whose martyrdom in Rome was becoming a matter of local pride and vivid imagination.[13]

In fact, it is remarkable how little the *earliest* Christian sources say about Paul's death. *1 Clement*, though written in Rome, is vague: beyond a general reference to "jealousy and strife" (5.5), and to Paul witnessing before "rulers" (5.7), it does not indicate where, when, or why Paul died. The authentic letters of Ignatius seem to know nothing at all about Paul's death, while Tertullian and Origen say little other than to locate the deaths of Peter and Paul in Rome, one crucified, the other beheaded.[14] Eusebius, who records at length the death of *James*, was reduced to scraps of information about the end of Paul: all he knows is that Nero was responsible, and that "they relate" (ἱστοροῦνται) that Paul was beheaded in Rome, while Peter was crucified (*Hist. eccl.* 2.25.5). He can cite the late second (or early third) century Roman presbyter, Gaius, speaking of the "trophies of the Apostles" in Rome (one on the Vatican, the other on the Ostia Road), which he associates loosely with the cemeteries of Peter and Paul (*Hist. eccl.* 2.25.5–7). Otherwise he has only Dionysios of Corinth (second century) saying that Peter and Paul jointly founded churches both in Corinth and in Rome, where they were martyred "at the same time" (2.25.8). No-one seemed to know the exact date of these deaths or anything reliable about the circumstances.[15] It makes you wonder. Was the memory wiped out by the decimation of the Roman churches after the fire of Rome, or did it take a while for anyone in the Roman churches to pay attention to Paul and to his death?

---

[12] For discussion, see the essay by Snyder below.

[13] See D.L. Eastman, *Paul, the Martyr: The Cult of the Apostle in the Latin West* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

[14] Tertullian, *Praescr*. 36; Origen *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 3.1.3.

[15] For a suggestion on the date, the fourteenth year of Nero (68 CE), see Jerome, *Vir. ill*. 5. Eusebius guesses that it must be "later" in Nero's reign, when he became more reckless (*Hist. eccl.* 2.25.8).

## B. Early Christian Interests and Ours

The early Christian sources are interested in the last years of Paul for reasons partly the same but partly very different from ours. The difference is clear already from the amount of attention Luke gives to Paul's demeanour while on trial in Jerusalem and Caesarea, and to his adventures on the way to Rome, while remaining silent on the circumstances of Paul's death – the very matter about which we most want to know. In fact, Luke's emphasis on Paul's *character and success* reflects a common feature of early Christian notices on this phase of Paul's life: they consistently present Paul as a heroic model and a triumphant success. In the extended final narratives of Acts, Luke is careful to underline both Paul's innocence and his virtue. Paul's integrity under trial, his control of the shipwrecked boat, his ability to survive a snake-bite and to cure the sick – all these present Paul as a man full of divinely endowed gifts.[16] Given Luke's primary interest in the spread of the gospel, Paul's arrival in Rome functions as the climax of the narrative, and no-one could miss the sense of triumph in the final scene, with Paul preaching for two whole years ἀκωλύτως (Acts 28.31). In 2 Timothy Paul is a more lonely hero, but a heroic figure nonetheless: he has successfully passed on the truth, and can point to his teaching, his conduct, and his suffering as an example for others who follow (2 Tim 3.10–11). In this last will and testament he announces the fulfilment of his tasks: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4.7). In *1 Clement* Paul is again an exemplar: as a suffering preacher who has "taught righteousness to the whole world," in east and west, he was finally "set free from this world…having become the greatest example of endurance" (5.7). Clement answers few if any of our historical questions because his Paul (and Peter) are first and foremost moral paradigms.

The *Martyrdom of Paul*, the last part of the *Acts of Paul*, also presents Paul as an exemplary figure, but in a rather different mode. Here he is the paradigmatic *martyr*, whose death is described in detail as the climax of a fearless confrontation with the emperor. The success of Paul's preaching is demonstrated by its penetration into the imperial household. By according Paul final speeches of testimony, the text articulates its understanding of a cosmic war between the kingdoms of this world and "the King of all ages." This is a narrative forged in and for the experience of martyrdom at the hands of Roman agents, and it launches Paul on a long career as a martyr-saint, whose tomb and death-anniversary (June 29th) became widely celebrated and

[16] For analysis, see, e.g., J.C. Lentz Jr., *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); M. Labahn, "Paulus – ein *homo honestus et iustus*. Das lukanische Paulusportrait von Act 27–28 im Lichte ausgewählter antiker Parallelen," in Horn (ed.), *Ende des Paulus*, 75–106.

commemorated to this day.[17] As we have noted, the Roman location of these events soon became a significant factor in legitimizing the authority of the Roman church (Gaius *apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.6).

Although these representations of Paul's end have a common interest in heroizing their subject, they produce strikingly varied images. The Paul of the *Acts of Paul* would fit very badly at the end of Acts, since his direct challenge to imperial power would destroy Luke's portrait of the church's general compatibility with Roman rule. In fact, the picture becomes impossibly confused when the sources are harmonized and one portrait is superimposed on another. One can watch Eusebius getting tangled in confusion at exactly this point (*Hist. eccl.* 2.22). He knows the ending of Acts, but he has also a tradition (λόγος) which has Paul continuing his ministry of preaching (he does not say where) after defending himself, and then returning to Rome to face martyrdom under Nero (2.22.2). As he makes clear, this narrative is dependent on a reading of 2 Timothy: there Eusebius found reference to "my first defence" followed by reference to the message being fully proclaimed in the hearing of all the nations, facts which are somehow correlated with Paul being "rescued from the lion's mouth" (2 Tim 4.16–17). From these remarks a narrative is born of a first successful defence, then release, followed by more preaching, then a second imprisonment in Rome, during which Paul wrote 2 Timothy while awaiting his death. Since 2 Timothy refers to Luke's presence (2 Tim 4.11), Eusebius has to connect this letter somehow with the end of Acts, concluding that Luke probably (εἰκότως) wrote Acts at just this time (2.22.6) – despite the fact that Luke says nothing of a first defence, of a release, of further preaching, or of a return to Rome! Eusebius has a historian's instincts, trying to make coherent sense out of multiple sources, but the contradictions created by combining his sources illustrate perfectly how different and incompatible they actually are. The kaleidoscope of early Christian images of the last years of Paul cannot be harmonized into a single narrative.

One further text illustrates another Christian interest in the final years of Paul. In the early chapters of the *Acts of Peter* (dating perhaps from the 3rd century CE), Paul is persuaded by his prison warder to leave Rome, and, after praying for guidance, sets off for Spain.[18] Paul's preaching is here significantly located as inhabiting a space between, and critical of, both Jews and Gentiles. Paul lambasts the Jews, on the grounds that "Christ…abrogated their Sabbath and their fasting and festivals and circumcision, and abolished the

[17] See H.W. Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); H.G. Thümmel, *Die Memorien für Petrus und Paulus in Rom: Die archäologischen Denkmäler und die literarische Tradition* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); Eastman, *Paul, the Martyr*.

[18] See W. Rordorf, "The Relation between the *Acts of Peter* and the *Acts of Paul*: State of the Question," in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Peter: Magic, Miracles and Gnosticism* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 178–91.

teaching of men and other traditions" (1). But he also urges Gentiles to "abstain from your former works committed according to the tradition of your fathers" (2). Here the Christian message is triangulated with Judaism and paganism, and distinguished from them both (cf. *The Epistle to Diognetus*). Paul is here depicted not as the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles but as the preacher who confounds both Jews and Gentiles, proclaiming a new and universal message about the Son of God who "brought the light of grace to all the world" (2).

How do *our* interests in the last years of Paul compare to the interests of these early Christian sources? As historians, we are interested in tracing and explaining precisely this production of early images of Paul, in all their diversity. As we pay increasing attention to reception history, we are learning to look not only *through* such sources, to see what they might tell us about "the historical Paul," but *at* them as texts in their own right, as evidence for the emergence of "the Paul of faith," the Paul imagined and heroized in legend. These cultural artefacts demonstrate the ways in which Paul lived on in history not only through his letters but also through a growing tradition of literature and popular imagination. In this sense, the death of Paul marked the *beginning* of a new productive phase in the construction of "Pauls," starting with the deutero-Pauline letters and embroiled from the outset in controversy over the meaning of his legacy. Charting the variety of "Pauls" that emerged from this maelstrom is itself a fascinating and valuable form of enquiry.[19] One might say that this volume is just the latest example in that long history of the construction of the image of Paul.

The peculiar characteristic of modern Western scholarship is our fascination with *history*, as defined by Enlightenment canons of truth. This is why we keep pressing the sources with questions that they were not designed to answer, why we lose interest in Paul surviving a snake-bite on Malta but want to know exactly what happened to him after two years in Rome. To what extent we can substantiate, correlate, and supplement our sources is, of course, the critical question. This historical interest can serve present, local needs: the strong attraction to "St. Paul outside the Walls" in the recent year of Paul, and the location in Tarragona of the conference that underlies this volume, are obvious cases in point. But beyond the historians' desire to fill in the gaps and verify the details, there are two major concerns that drive modern scholarship on our topic and for the sake of becoming more self-aware it is worth noting what these are.

[19] For samples, see M. de Boer, "Images of Paul in the Post-Apostolic Period," *CBQ* 42 (1980), 359–80; R. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

(i) Our first point of interest is the relationship between Paul and his fellow Jews, and the role he played in holding together, or pulling apart, the nascent Christian movement and the larger body of Second Temple Judaism. The last years of Paul's life brought these issues to a head. If the collection was designed to create unity between the Jewish church in Jerusalem and the Gentile churches in Asia and Greece, did it succeed or did it backfire? How was he received by "unbelieving" Jews in Jerusalem and Rome? How did his long-running contest with the competing Jewish-Christian mission to Gentiles end up? After declaring to the Romans his commitment to Israel (Rom 9–11), and after delicately designing a policy to protect the Jewish commitments of the "weak" in Rome (Rom 14–15), how was Paul received by Jewish Christians in Rome and did his presence there serve to unify or to split the Roman churches?[20] Our interests in Paul's relation with Jews overlap with those of Luke, whose depiction of Paul's exasperation with Jews in Rome (Acts 28.23–28) continues to be hotly debated.[21] Did Paul succeed in provoking Jews here or elsewhere into "jealousy" of the Gentile riches in Christ (Rom 11.11, 14), or did he antagonize them further and make yet harder the fulfilment of his vision of the salvation of all Israel (Rom 11.25–32)? How did it come about that Nero, according to Tacitus, was able to pick out "Christians" after the fire of Rome, treating them as a category quite different from Jews (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44)?[22] Did Paul's trial in Rome and the circumstances of his death have anything to do with this?

(ii) The second relevant concern in recent scholarship is Paul's relationship to the Roman authorities. Here our interests overlap with those of both Luke and the author of the *Martyrdom of Paul*, although, as we have noted, their perspectives are very diverse. The current wave of interest in the "political" Paul (liberationist, postcolonial, or anti-empire) is apt to press hard on a set of questions swirling around Paul's last years.[23] How did the Roman authorities view Paul and the Christian movement he represented? If they viewed him as a threat, on what grounds did they do so, and did their perceptions correspond at all to the essence of the Christian movement? How did Paul view himself and his churches in relation to Rome? Was Roman power

[20] On Paul's policy in Romans 14–15, see J.M.G. Barclay, "'Do we Undermine the Law?' A Study of Romans 14.1–15.6," in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 287–308.

[21] On the Jews in Rome at this point, see the essays by Niebuhr and Gruen below.

[22] On Roman perceptions of "Christians," see J.G. Cook, *Roman Attitudes Toward the Christians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

[23] There are many kinds of current "political" Paul. For a sample, see B. Kahl, *Galatians Re-imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); C. Stanley (ed.), *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London: SPCK, 2013).

and the imperial cult of especial significance to him or were they simply a symptom of the powers of "this age"?[24] Would he have been surprised or delighted if he was beheaded by a Roman authority, when it wielded that sword which he had assured the Romans was carried by God-given authorities for the punishment of evil (Rom 13.4)? What exactly was Paul accused of doing, and why was some Roman judge convinced that he was guilty? What were the implications of his execution for other Christians in Rome, both Jewish and Gentile?

Our interest in such questions is driven by contemporary concerns, by current Jewish-Christian relations, and by a large set of political questions facing the contemporary Christian church. There may well be other deep reasons why we are now, in our generation, putting such resources into discussing the last years of Paul. But it is best to remain conscious of what questions we are asking and why we are asking them – as also of the questions we are *not* asking, and why.

## C. The Last Years of Paul: What Kind of End?

As I have noted, the early Christian sources tend to portray the last years of Paul, including his death, as a narrative of triumph and success – the "crowning" of a heroic life of witness (2 Tim 4.6–8). As historical critics, we are entitled to challenge that image and to ask whether, in fact, Paul's life ended in disappointment and failure. The following reconstruction explores how that might have looked.

As we have noted, it is reasonable to take Luke's silence about the fate of Paul's collection project as suspicious: in all likelihood, the money was rejected by the Jerusalem believers, as Paul had feared (Rom 15.30–31). The money he brought to Jerusalem came tainted not only by his presence but by its association with Gentile churches which had not been properly inducted into the observance of God's Law, unlike, perhaps, the congregations in Galatia who may have broken with Paul under the influence of his rivals (cf. Rom 15.25; 1 Cor 16.1). The collection thus represented a development in the Christian movement which powerful figures in the Jerusalem church (like the "people from James" who came to Antioch, Gal 2.11–14) did not recognize as legitimate, and considered highly dangerous. In antiquity, as today, the receipt of a gift was a sign of friendship, its rejection a mark of distance or outright hostility. Luke suggests the sort of things being said about Paul among believers in Jerusalem (Acts 21.21), and it seems that Paul was regarded by

[24] See J.M.G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–87.

many as not only an illegitimate apostle to the Gentiles but an apostate Jew.[25] The implications are enormous. The collection that Paul had taken so many years, and so such trouble, to muster ended in failure. His vision of reciprocity between Gentile and Jewish believers (Rom 15.25–27) ended in nothing, while his hopes that the Jerusalem saints, on receiving the collection, would "long for you and pray for you" (2 Cor 9.14) were dashed. The church in Jerusalem did not recognize Paul's work. Against his intentions he had set up a second church parallel to, and independent of, Jerusalem-based Jewish Christianity. In social terms the Gentile believers in Paul's churches were not grafted onto a common tree (Rom 11.17–24). They constituted a separate plant, enjoying no fellowship with Jerusalem-focused Judaeo-Christians. Paul's social intentions and theological vision had failed.[26]

At the same time, Paul received an extremely hostile reaction from the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, who took him to be a turncoat who had mischievously blurred the boundary between Jews and non-Jews. Of course, Paul had received a hostile reaction from non-believing Jews elsewhere, but this time it was more serious and more decisive: now not just local Diaspora authorities, but the central institutional authorities of the Jewish nation repudiated him and the message that he preached. This brought not only himself but also the Jerusalem Christians into serious danger – another reason for the latter to disown him. As far as Paul was concerned, the authorities' repudiation of his Christ-preaching can have only deepened and strengthened the sadness he expressed in Romans 9–11. "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart," he writes when on the point of going to Jerusalem (Rom 9.2): it can only have got worse once there. Far from provoking Jews to "jealousy" (Rom 11.11, 14), he precipitates a wholesale rejection of his gospel from authorities high enough to initiate or condone his removal from the scene. That the cut-off branches would be "grafted in again," that the Redeemer would "come from Zion," that "all Israel would be saved" (Rom 11.24, 26) – all of that must have looked even more remote after the debacle in Jerusalem, which seriously damaged the progress of the mission among Jews. What is more, Paul came to the attention of the Roman governor, in a highly sensitive location, as a trouble-maker liable to cause a public disturbance (Acts 24–26). This time the authorities which he assumed were appointed by God to promote the good (Rom 13.1–7) were not going to live up to his expectations.

"And so we came to Rome" (Acts 28.14), not on a mission trajectory headed for Spain, but as a prisoner with very little freedom of movement. On this reading of the evidence, Paul never fulfilled his dream of getting to

[25] See J.M.G. Barclay, "Paul among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?," *JSNT* 60 (1995), 89–120.

[26] See Schnelle, *Apostle Paul*, 362 (ET: *Paulus*, 402): "The founding epoch of early Christianity comes to its end not with unity but division."

Spain: he had appealed to Caesar, and Roman justice put paid to his mission plans. What is more, his arrival in Rome only caused division and disaster for the Roman believers. Paul had hoped to be "refreshed" by fellowship with the Roman Christians (Rom 15.32), and had crafted his letter to Rome to bring about mutual recognition between Torah-observant and non-observant members of the churches in the city (Romans 14–15). It did not work. If we place the writing of Philippians in Rome we have evidence that Paul's presence caused division among Roman believers, with some desperate to distance themselves from him and to make his situation worse (Phil 1.15–17). If the reference to "jealousy and strife" in *1 Clement* 5.5 is relevant, it also may allude to this repudiation of Paul by Roman believers. We can understand why. Paul's reading of the story of Christ could be construed as undermining the identity of Jewish believers in Rome (perhaps the majority in the churches there), and a person like Paul who identifies himself as a Jew but causes controversy with every influential pagan he weans from "idolatry" is bound to upset the delicate social compact by which Jews were tolerated in Rome.[27] As we know from Tacitus, Jews caused the greatest offence when they won converts and upset the Roman *mos maiorum* (*Hist*. 5.5). Paul was notorious for doing just that, and the Jewish community had an interest in disowning him. As Paul says, it was becoming clear that his imprisonment was "in Christ" (Phil 1.13), that is, caused by a peculiar and distinct allegiance to "Christos" and not out of general observance of the Jewish way of life. He thus brought to the attention of the Roman authorities that there was a movement one could call "Christians," which had originated in Palestine but was not a brand of Judaism and was vigorously renounced by Jewish authorities both in Jerusalem and in Rome. Christianity became, in Roman eyes, a "deadly superstition" (Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.44), not an ethnic heritage: there was no need to give it the respect due to an ancestral tradition.

The result was disastrous not only for Paul but for all Christians in Rome and beyond. Paul was convicted and executed perhaps in 62 CE, either for *seditio* or for *maiestas* in relation to the emperor.[28] Second Timothy may be right that he died without local support, deserted by the Christian community in Rome which was hostile to him or afraid to associate itself with him (2 Tim 4.16–18). His Gentile mission had not been completed in its extension to Spain, his churches were not recognized by Jerusalem, and Israel was further from, not nearer to, faith in Christ. But the knock-on effect of his execution was even more profound. As a citizen's appeal, Paul's case attracted attention

[27] On the reasons for the hostility shown towards Paul by Diaspora Jews, see M. Goodman, "The Persecution of Paul by Diaspora Jews," in Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 145–52.

[28] Of course, this is *one* reading of the evidence; for a full discussion of the alternatives, see the essays below.

in Rome, where his repudiation by Jewish authorities revealed the existence of a previously unknown but antisocial "superstition." Two years later (64 CE), when Nero wanted plausible scapegoats for the fire of Rome, Christians, exposed by the trial of Paul, were obvious suspects. A new era had begun, with Romans identifying "Christians" as distinct from Jews, and labelling them a criminal element in the population. Senators in Rome, who later became provincial governors, were bound to take notice. Paul's death was thus the catalyst for a long history of Roman suspicion and occasional persecution of Christians. When Paul went down, he inadvertently took with him many generations of Christians to come.[29]

The last years of Paul's life could therefore be categorized as a saga of disappointment and failure. How did Paul take that? If Philippians was written in Rome, not long before he died, we find Paul inured to things not working out as he had hoped, ready to die or to be released, and hard pressed to choose between the two (Phil 1.19–26). Despite the disappointments of the last few years and despite his present predicament, Paul professes to be full of joy. "Call no man happy before he dies": he may not be "happy" in the sense of fortunate, but his mood is certainly cheerful. So how does one measure failure or success? Paul is content so long as Christ is being preached (1.15–18). He had no conception that this would continue indefinitely, or at least for another 2000 years (cf. Phil 4.5). But the fact that scholars, church leaders, and civic authorities gathered to open the conference which spawned these papers, in a city (Tarragona) still proud to associate itself with Paul, could be taken as a token of his unexpected, long-term success. But we should not let hindsight cloud our historical vision. The last years of Paul were peculiarly traumatic, and many projects that he had hoped would come to fruition fell dramatically apart. That at least is one, deliberately provocative, reading of the evidence. The rest of the essays in this volume will probe, elucidate, and interpret such evidence, reaching conclusions of their own.

[29] Cf. R Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London: Penguin, 1986), 430–34: "We have seen, then, how the Romans came to distinguish Christians from Jews. Riots and disturbances in the Jewish communities did not suffice to alert them. To draw the distinction, the Emperor or his judges in Rome had to hear a Christian who was accused of conduct 'contrary to Caesar.' By a chapter of accidents, the first Christian in this position was Paul: his defence and sentence brought about the new age of persecution" (433–34).

# The Jerusalem Collection and Paul's Missionary Project: Collection and Mission in Romans 15.14–32

*Reimund Bieringer*

Paul's collection[1] for the "saints" in Jerusalem belongs to the most underestimated aspects of the apostle's ministry.[2] It also belongs to the most difficult

[1] In this paper we use the term "collection" knowing full well that λογεία ("collection of money") which Paul uses in 1 Cor 16.1–2 is only one of the many terms which he uses for this activity and which mostly have much stronger theological overtones.

[2] We consider this to be true despite the fact that a fair amount of specialized literature has been published on the collection. Without any ambition to be exhaustive, we list the following: C.H. Buck, Jr., "The Collection for the Saints," *HTR* 43 (1950): 1–29; D. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (trans. I. Racz; Nashville: Abingdon, 1992; German orig. 1965); K.F. Nickle, *The Collection. A Study in Paul's Strategy* (London: SCM, 1966); K. Berger, "Almosen für Israel. Zum historischen Kontext der paulinischen Kollekte," *NTS* 23 (1976–77): 180–204; L.W. Hurtado, "The Jerusalem Collection and the Book of Galatians," *JSNT* 5 (1979): 46–62; J. Eckert, "Die Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem," in P.-G. Müller and W. Stenger (eds.), *Kontinuität und Einheit. FS Franz Mußner* (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 65–80; W. Schmithals, "Die Kollekten des Paulus für Jerusalem," in C. Breytenbach (ed.), *Paulus, die Evangelien und das Urchristentum. FS Walter Schmithals* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 78–106; J. Gnilka, "Die Kollekte der paulinischen Gemeinden für Jerusalem als Ausdruck ekklesialer Gemeinschaft," in R. Kampling and T. Söding (eds.), *Ekklesiologie des Neuen Testaments. Für Karl Kertelge* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 301–15; B. Beckheuer, *Paulus und Jerusalem. Kollekte und Mission im theologischen Denken des Heidenapostels* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997); S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); K. O'Mahony, *Pauline Persuasion: A Sounding in 2 Corinthians 8-9* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); S.-K. Wan, "Collection for the Saints as Anticolonial Act: Implications of Paul's Ethnic Reconstruction," in R.A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 191–215; K. Byung-Mo, *Die paulinische Kollekte* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002); A.J.M. Wedderburn, "Paul's Collection: Chronology and History," *NTS* 48 (2002): 95–110; D.J. Downs, "Paul's Collection and the Book of Acts Revisited," *NTS* 52 (2006): 50–70; D.J. Downs, "'The Offering of the Gentiles' in Romans 15.16," *JSNT* 29 (2006): 173–86; D.J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); S.J. Friesen, "Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage," in M.D. Given (ed.),

aspects to understand. Both the historical reconstruction of the collection, its origin, realization and delivery, and its theological interpretation continue to puzzle researchers. In this book, Michel Quesnel focuses on the collection from the perspective of 2 Corinthians 8–9, while I shall delve into the understanding of the collection that emerges from Romans 15.14–32. As the title says, I shall focus on the place or function of the collection in the missionary project of Paul. While this seems to be an obvious question to which many scholars allude, it is a very difficult issue if one wants to go beyond some superficial remarks.[3] This study consists of two parts. In the first we shall examine the major models which were proposed in scholarship to interpret the collection for the implicit or explicit connections with Paul's missionary project. In the second part we shall investigate the link between collection and mission in light of Romans 15.14–32.

## A. Scholarly Models of Interpreting the Collection and their Implications for Mission

Recent studies of the collection usually distinguish several interpretations of the collection in previous research. In his 2008 monograph on the collection, David Downs subdivides his inventory of the various positions into four types, namely, the collection as an "eschatological event," as an "obligation," as an "ecumenical offering," and as "material relief."[4] Analyzing the scholarly positions concerning the collection in light of their connection with Paul's missionary project, we arrived at a different categorization.

We distinguish three major clusters of positions. The first cluster consists of interpretations which understand the collection independently of the Paul's mission project. The second cluster assigns to the collection a function in the aftermath of the agreements of the Jerusalem "council" concerning the way Gentile-Christians and Jewish-Christians form one faith community. Finally,

*Paul Unbound* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 24–54; J.M. Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *NTS* 58 (2012): 360–78.

[3] Cf. Eckert, "Kollekte," 65: "So eindeutig es einerseits ist, daß Paulus der Sammlung für Jerusalem in seinem Missionswerk einen besonderen Stellenwert eingeräumt hat…so schwierig ist es andererseits, die Motivation des Apostels und die Beurteilung dieses Unternehmens in der Kirche seiner Zeit im einzelnen zu erheben."

[4] Downs, *Offering* (2008), 3–26. Cf. Kim, *Die paulinische Kollekte*, 149–60 who distinguishes the following four models: temple tax, charity, pilgrimage of the nations, and almsgiving.

the third cluster of positions focuses on Paul's alleged attempts to evangelize the Jews who had not yet accepted the gospel. We shall discuss these three clusters of positions in more detail now.

### *I. The Collection as Unrelated to Paul's Missionary Project*

In this first subdivision we shall discuss positions which stress the economic or material(ist) dimension of the collection. This is the most obvious interpretation of the collection which is also the "traditional viewpoint."[5] This position is based on an understanding of οι πτωχοί in Gal 2.10 and Rom 15.26 (cf. 2 Cor 8.9) as an economic term referring to a group of people in need of help and not as a self-designation of the Jerusalem community.[6] This position simply understands the collection as material relief and, as such, as part of early Christian charity geared towards "providing financial assistance to relieve the pressing needs of the poor."[7] While this traditional position lost plausibility at some point, it has recently gained more prevalence again in the wake of materialist readings of the New Testament.[8] Moreover, in the context of the scholarly debate on the economic status of the members of the Pauline communities, Justin Meggitt understood the collection as an example of the survival strategy of "mutualism."[9]

It would lead us too far afield to enter more deeply into this discussion. In our context it is only important to note that there are longstanding positions which simply related the collection to Christian charity, but did not spontaneously link the collection with Paul's missionary project.

---

[5] S. McKnight, "Collection for the Saints," in G.F. Hawthorne and R.P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 143–47, esp. 145.

[6] For a detailed study of this problem, see B. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 157–82 and 183–206 who argues against the link between "the poor" and the Jerusalem community. The view that "the poor" was a title for the Jerusalem community was defended among others by K. Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde," in K.H. Rengstorf (ed.), *Das Paulusbild in der neueren deutschen Forschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964; orig. publ.: 1921, 1928), 144–78, esp. 166–67 (59–60).

[7] Nickle, *Collection*, 100.

[8] See, for instance, Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 157–82.

[9] J.J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 158. Cf. Downs, *Offering* (2008), 23 who states that Meggitt identifies "the collection for Jerusalem as the chief example of the practice of mutualism among the early Church communities."

*II. The Collection as Related to the Mission to the Gentiles*

The majority of scholars understands the collection for Jerusalem as part of Paul's mission among the gentiles. As such it is seen in close relationship to the Jerusalem "council" and its decisions. Here Gal 2.10 plays a central role for the interpretation of the collection. The proponents of this position interpret 2.9–10 as Paul's report of the results of the Jerusalem "council"[10] where his mission to the uncircumcised was acknowledged and only one request was given to him, namely, μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι. In light of this stipulation, all the positions which belong to this cluster have in common that the collection plays a role in Paul's mission to the gentiles. The collection is either seen as an obligation of the gentile Christians to the mother church in Jerusalem as a way of facilitating their integration into the church or as a free gift of the gentile Christians to express the unity and partnership in a church consisting of uncircumcised and circumcised people.

*1. Obligation to the Mother Church*

This position is not only built on the above mentioned interpretation of Gal 2.10, but also more specifically on the view that "the poor" in this verse is a technical term for the entire Jerusalem church.[11] Accoring to Karl Holl, the Jerusalem church enjoyed "ein gewisses Besteuerungsrecht über die ganze Kirche."[12] The collection is then seen as the gentile churches' contribution to this taxation which they do not give voluntarily, but as an obligation. Supporters of this position also find evidence for the obligatory nature in the expressions ὀφειλέται εἰσὶν αὐτῶν and ὀφείλουσιν in Rom 15.27. Several scholars suggested that this right of taxation was modeled after the temple tax.[13] Moreover, some scholars suggest that the financial contribution was seen at the time as an identity marker which was to take the place of circumcision.[14]

[10] For a defender of the position that understands the poor to belong to the Jerusalem community see, for instance, H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 102. For a historical overview of the interpretation of οἱ πτωχοί, see Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 157–82.

[11] See especially Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff," 167 (60).

[12] Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff," 164–70. See 168: "es handelt sich doch um eine richtige *Auflage*, die den Heidenchristen von der Muttergemeinde gemacht wird" und "…so sind auch die Heidengemeinden es schuldig, zum Unterhalt der Muttergemeinden beizutragen."

[13] Nickle, *Collection*, 74–93; Wan, "Collection," 201–03; M.J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 94–96.

[14] See J.D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991) 84–85.

There are, however, serious problems with this position. Paul also stresses the voluntary character of the participation in the collection (see the double use of εὐδόκησαν in Rom 15.26–27; cf. also 1 Cor 16.1–4 and 2 Corinthians 8–9). In addition, the collection is organized as a one-time event, not an annual contribution and the amount is not legally fixed, but freely determined by each person according to their means (see 2 Cor 8.3, 8, 10 et al.).[15]

A second, very different type of position uses the ancient Mediterranean social model of benefaction to interpret the obligation which is believed to be at the origin of the collection. Stephan Joubert, using the concept of a "reciprocal relationship"[16] of "benefit exchange,"[17] states that the leaders of the Jerusalem church offered Paul a benefaction by recognizing his preaching of the gospel to the gentiles which put him under obligation of reciprocating (cf. Rom 15.27)[18] which he did by organizing the collection.[19]

The positions that consider the collection as the response of Paul or his gentile communities to a religious or social obligation see Paul's missionary project of preaching the gospel to the gentiles as heavily indebted to the Jewish-Christian mother community in Jerusalem. Even though the Jerusalem church recognized Paul's own missionary project, it continued to assert its primacy religiously (temple tax) or socially (benefaction). However, much of the evidence in the letters of Paul does not confirm this position, and a significant part of the evidence explicitly contradicts it. This will become clear in the following subsection.

### *2. Free Gift by the Gentile-Christian Churches to Express Unity*

The proponents of this position agree with those of the previous position over the conviction that the collection is intended to deal with the new situation that was created by the decisions taken at the Jerusalem "council." However, they take seriously the texts in which Paul emphasizes the voluntary nature of the collection. Klaus Berger was the first to point to the tradition of

[15] See Downs, *Offering* (2008), 11.

[16] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 151.

[17] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 217. See also 116–53.

[18] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 150–51.

[19] Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 116–53, esp. 151. Building on Joubert's work, J.R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 294–332, esp. 324 tries to understand χάρις and with it also the collection in terms of the Hellenistic reciprocity system. Cf. also B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power. The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Lund: Gleerup, 1978) 35–43.