

DE GRUYTER

*Simon Dürr*

# PAUL ON THE HUMAN VOCATION

REASON LANGUAGE IN ROMANS AND ANCIENT  
PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

Simon Dürr

**Paul on the Human Vocation**

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# 1 Introduction to the problem

## 1.1 The problem: Why does Paul use reason language in Rom 12.1?

The goal of this book is to explain Paul's surprising use of reason language in Romans 12.1 (λογικός).<sup>1</sup> Paul does not use the word λόγος or λογικός at an earlier point in the letter in a way that might prepare us for its appearance in Rom 12.1.<sup>2</sup> This word never appears in the Greek traditions of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha (the “Septuagint”). And yet he uses it in this important transition in the letter's argument (Rom 12.1–2):

(1a) I invite you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,

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<sup>1</sup> In a more restricted sense, we use the term “reason language in Rom 12.1” (sometimes just “reason language”) specifically for Paul's use of λογικός. Of course, in a broader sense “reason language”, in discussing Greco-Roman texts, should include other Greek terms (in some of their senses), such as ἄλογος, γνώμη, διαλογισμός, διαλογίζεσθαι, διανοεῖν, διάνοια, ἐνθύμησις, ἔννοια, ἔμφρων, ἐπιστήμη, ἡγεμονικός, καρδία, λογίζεσθαι, λογισμός, λογιστικός, λόγος, νοεῖν, νοερός, νόημα, νόησις, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, σοφία, σοφός, σύνεσις, συνετός, φρήν, φρονεῖν, φρόνημα, φρόνησις, φρόνιμος, or Latin terms, such as *animus*, *cogitatio*, *consilium*, *intellectus*, *mens*, *prudentia*, *ratio*, *rationalis*, *spiritus*. In particular, for Paul, the term νοῦς, given its use in Rom 12.2 (μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς), and elsewhere (in Romans 1.28, 7.23, 7.25, 11.34, 14.5; cf. 1 Cor 1.10, 2.16, 14.14–15, 14.19, Phil 4.7), but also such terms as νοεῖν (Rom 1.20), λογισμός (Rom 2.15), and perhaps certain uses of λογίζεσθαι (Rom 6.11, 8.18, 14.14) seem relevant here.

While a fully integral approach with regards to the reason language used in Rom 12.1–2 might be desirable (cf., for instance, van Kooten 2008), our focus has been more restricted in terms of how we have evaluated the contextual material. That is to say, in our exploration of Paul's intellectual contexts, we have investigated texts using a broader range of reason language (see section 3.1) as well as focussing on the term λογικός (chapter 2), but we have not evaluated the full range of implications of the contextual parallels for all aspects of reason language in Paul. This is because the main intuition this study explores (and defends) is that the Epictetan parallels, especially 1.16 and 1.6, are the best key to understanding λογικός in Rom 12.1, and thus, though this coheres better with certain interpretations of νοῦς, we have not approached Rom 12.1 from the angle of a combination of insights into Paul's “anthropological terms” (as in Jewett 1971, or, more recently, Schnelle 2014, 577–588). This has determined our focus.

While we have studied Rom 1.18–32 closely, due to its noted links with Romans 12.1–2, we have not, for instance, discussed Rom 7.23–25. We probe into some implications of our results for reading νοῦς in Rom 12.2 in section 6.4, though of course this could be explored further. Our focus has thus been not on reconstructing Paul's psychology, but on how his use of reason language in Rom 12.1 points to the idea of a human vocation, in conversation with philosophical tradition, and how Paul applies this to Christ-followers in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> He does use the lexeme λόγος in Rom 3.4; 9.6, 9, 28; 13.9; 14.12; 15.18. But the sense is not the relevant one.

- (1b) to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,  
 (1c) which is your reason-related (λογικός) service-to-God (λατρεία).  
 (2a) Do not be conformed to this world,  
 (2b) but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,  
 (2c) so that you may discern what it is God wants  
 (2d) – the good and acceptable and complete.<sup>3</sup>

Modern readers may find Paul's use of reason language surprising because it is taken for granted that Paul writes about "religion" and that "religion" and "reason" are somewhat antithetical.<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of Paul's use, however, the relevant question is how the ancients used reason language and what they thought such language might imply. Hence, this book is going to explore central strands from the broad philosophical and wider cultural traditions that centre on the theme of reason within ancient discourse.

Interpreters of Paul have adduced many parallels that use the word λογικός in attempts to explain Paul's language here by a reconstruction of some *traditionsgeschichtlich* "background". But some of these reconstructions have too readily assumed that the relevant texts belong to certain already fixed categories ("religion", "ethics", etc.). We propose here a fresh reading of some of these texts in terms of different categories. These emerge from our reading of the wider tradition and are needed for an explanation of what Paul is doing in Rom 12.1–2.

Among these parallels, there is a famous passage by the philosopher Epictetus, *Discourse* 1.16.20–21, which has often been cited but without appreciating its full force because it has never before been fully explored in its own right with a view to explaining Paul's language in Rom 12.1. This study provides an in-depth reading of Epictetus 1.16 in its own context and suggests that this text may offer the best parallel for understanding what Paul is doing in Rom 12.1.

In order properly to appreciate Epictetus 1.16 as a parallel, such a reading needs to look at the role of the section cited by the interpreters (1.16.20) in the

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<sup>3</sup> This translation is the NRSV with significant and substantial changes. The translation of λογικός as "reason-related" is an attempt not to preempt the exegesis by a definite choice (though it does hold on to the fact that reason is in view, and not, for instance, a mere contrast to "outward physical ritual" or something of the sort). The verse division will be used in the following discussion throughout. A similar division is made by Reichert 2001, 230.

<sup>4</sup> The category of religion can be problematic in the application to phenomena of the ancient world if the notion is saturated mainly by modern experience (cf. Nongbri 2013). We use it here with an awareness of the difficulty. Similarly, a notion like "reason" undergoes significant shifts in scope and contexts between the ancient and the modern world. It will be important for our argument to work out some of these differences and to take them into account for our interpretation of Paul's use of reason language.

light of the entire *Discourse* (1.16 as a whole). Furthermore, it needs to contextualise the parallel on the map of ancient philosophy and within its broader cultural setting. Our reading shows that the broader rubric to which it belongs is ancient discourse on what it means to be human and more specifically discourse about the role of human beings within the cosmos.

This identification rests on three characteristics of such discourse. First, the human endowment with reason and speech (the two go closely together for ancient views) is taken to be one of the most prominent characterisations of what makes humans human, of that which is peculiar to human beings (at least in the earthly sphere). Second, this view is given expression in the definition of human beings as “mortal rational animals” (θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα). And third, it is assumed that looking at a thing’s peculiarity, and especially that of which something is uniquely capable, provides a reliable guide to determine its function, end, and purpose. In this way speaking about human beings as those endowed with reason can function, within the ancient cultural encyclopedia,<sup>5</sup> as a way of claiming that this or that way of living is that to which humans are meant to aspire.

At this point there are profound intellectual and cultural differences between the ancient views on humans and their role in the wider world and those prevalent in the modern West. For the purpose of a historical exegesis of Paul’s reason language it is important to be aware of them. The ancient conception of human reason is that which allows us to be in touch with the world. The world, then, is understood as a place of meaning with which human beings need to be in touch in order to realise their purpose.<sup>6</sup> While not universally accepted, such a view is a fixed part of the ancient social imaginary. But this perspective is almost unintelligible to the modern Western outlook, in which reason has been described as more instrumental, concerned with finding means rather than determining ends, and in which the world is made up of stuff that is not concerned with the affairs and worries of humankind, and so meaning has to be constructed and projected, rather than “seen”. The classical definition of human beings as “mortal rational animals” no longer commands widespread assent and, in any case, would be understood to mean something quite different now, given the shifts in how we understand the world, ourselves and human reason.<sup>7</sup> This implies the need for a method that looks at broader contexts than the usual *traditionsgeschichtlich* approaches.

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<sup>5</sup> For the term see Eco 1976 and Eco 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ch. Taylor 1975, 6–7.

<sup>7</sup> These shifts have been charted in great detail by Ch. Taylor 2007.

## 1.2 A new solution in outline

Looking at the relevant parallel texts and especially at the work of Epictetus suggests explaining Paul's use of reason language in Rom 12.1 as an allusion to the definition of human beings as animals endowed with reason. This understanding is prominent in ancient philosophical as well as broader cultural discussions. The definition of human beings in terms of rationality condenses central themes of ancient anthropology and needs to be understood within the horizon of the ancient cultural encyclopedia. Within this horizon, it is natural to assume what might seem strange to many today, namely that human beings have a purpose and function within the cosmos, understood as a larger and ordered whole, and that this function has to do with their unique position in the order of things. Humanity's position in the cosmos is based upon their endowment with reason. We argue that Paul is aware of these traditions and expects his readers to understand him as making a point about the endowment with reason as the human *proprium* in Rom 12.1.

Broadly, the argument is as follows: human beings are understood in many Greco-Roman contexts as having a role in the wider cosmos and that role is based on their place and their unique capacity. This capacity is founded upon the human endowment with reason which enables humans to fulfil their purpose if they use reason rightly. Among those texts which discuss what it means to be human and share the idea that human beings have a purpose in the cosmos<sup>8</sup> one will find different conceptions of what that purpose is concretely, what the cosmos is like, how it is to be understood, and what the right exercise of reason entails. Nevertheless, there is agreement on these points in general terms: that humans have a role in the cosmos, that this role is based on what is constitutive for humans and makes them distinct, and that what constitutes their distinctness, on earth, is human reason. We argue in this book that Paul too endorses these general points and that in Rom 12.1 he draws on the philosophical traditions and language relevant to discourse about such themes. Human beings have a role in the larger cosmos and their reason gives them the potential, given certain conditions, to fulfil that role.

But explaining that Paul uses reason language in Rom 12.1 in order to make a point about the human role in the cosmos in a way that is intelligible within the ancient encyclopedia does not yet provide an answer to what he thinks the role of human beings is concretely and why he would choose to talk about this in his

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<sup>8</sup> This assumption would not be shared by Epicureans and Pyrrhonists for example.

letter to the Romans. To get at this, the textual unit Rom 12.1–2 needs to be understood in its place in the letter and in relation to the overall aims of the letter.

Rom 12.1–2 is an important transition between the argument of Rom 1–11 and of Rom 12–16. Most scholars accept that both parts belong together despite their noticeable differences, which have been variously characterised as a transition from a dogmatic section to one about ethics, or from a theoretical to an applied section. Just how these two parts belong together is a matter of ongoing debate and is tied up with larger questions in Pauline scholarship, such as how “theology” and “ethics” (or the “indicative” and the “imperative”) relate in Paul, a question that owes much of its felt urgency to the fact that it can be used as a platform to debate the modern theological questions about “justification by faith” and what this doctrine is thought to imply about human “works”. It can also sometimes be framed as the distinction between theory and praxis, where Paul first teaches his hearers what to think and then goes on to tell them what to do.<sup>9</sup> More recent scholarship sees these ways of characterising the parts and their relationship as inadequate and has come up with attempts to integrate them more closely.<sup>10</sup> The exegesis of Rom 12.1–2 as the transitional piece plays an important part in these ongoing debates. Our novel explanation of why Paul uses reason language in Rom 12.1–2 has implications for this debate and offers a contribution to these recent attempts at integrating “theology” and “ethics”.

In order to state how our explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 contributes to the integration of these broader categories in which Paul’s thought is discussed, we need to answer the larger question of what the overall aims of Paul’s writing the letter were. Paul is writing his letter to the communities of Christ-followers in Rome, which he has not himself founded, but in whose ways of living together he seems to have an interest and which he includes in his plans for the future. Our study joins those interpretations that see Paul concerned with the formation of particular kinds of communities and hold that Paul wrote Romans to promote a particular way of living in these communities.<sup>11</sup> Paul understands his own role as that of an “apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom 11.13) and

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<sup>9</sup> Wenschkewitz 1932, 125 speaks of a “darlegende[r]” and a “ermahnende[r] Teil.”

<sup>10</sup> On this question, see Zimmermann 2007 and Horn and Zimmermann 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Stowers 2011 problematises the concept of “community” in socio-historical analyses of groups of Christ-followers where its unreflective use as a descriptive term might suggest more social and ideological similarity than can be established. For our purposes, however, the term is useful, as our goal is not a socio-historical description of the groups Paul addresses, but an analysis of the kind of aims Paul might have had in addressing them and with the picture he presents in his writing.

he writes his letter to a partly unknown audience. Thus he is introducing himself through expounding at great length what his own ministry is about at the same time as he is trying to win them for or further encourage them in a certain way of living in these communities.

What is this way of living about? This we submit is the relevant question. Paul's basic belief is that Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's messiah, who died and was raised to new life, and that these recent events have marked the inauguration of a new age, in which a new way of life has become possible for human beings, one in which they can aspire to genuine humanness. Other philosophical and cultural traditions of antiquity similarly operate with the idea of genuine humanness to commend their version of the best life. In texts that operate with the idea of humans having a role in the wider cosmos, the idea of genuine humanness can take the form of fulfilling the human purpose. When the purpose for humans corresponds to a divine intention we will speak of a "human calling" or a "human vocation", that is, the idea that human beings have a task in life that originates in the divine sphere or involves essential reference to that sphere (however it is conceived) and that is incumbent upon human beings as such.<sup>12</sup> Such ideas have wider currency within ancient philosophical and wider cultural traditions. Again, some of the texts in which these ideas become most clear are from the philosopher Epictetus. It is highly significant for our thesis that Epictetus 1.16, which serves as the most important parallel for the reason language in Rom 12.1, is a text in which the idea of a human calling also comes to a particularly clear articulation. Language about the human endowment with reason is often employed in ancient texts to speak about a human role in the cosmos. Some texts go even further in such a way that one may speak of the idea of a human vocation.<sup>13</sup> Epictetus clearly shares in the broader tradition that assumes some role and purpose of human beings, but at some points also goes further and expresses the idea of a human calling.

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**12** We need to state at the outset that though Paul uses the lexeme family *καλεῖν* our use of the term "calling" or "vocation" is not dependent in the first place on what he is trying to say in passages in which these words occur (though that is not to say it is unrelated).

**13** As an example: Aristotle's God, as described in the *Metaphysics* (1072b 18–24), is not concerned with the individual human thinker (the object of his thought is himself and thus at best he considers the world only indirectly, in its general features) and yet Aristotle describes the life of contemplation as one of the highest forms of life in which the thinker most nearly approaches the divine mode of existence, and in this way even transcends the merely human level (cf. EN 1177a 12–18, 1177b 26–31). Thus, there is a role in the order of the whole, based on human reason, which to fulfil is better than not to do so, even though it does not originate in a concern of God with the human.

If Epictetus is indeed the best parallel for understanding Paul's use of reason language in Rom 12.1, as we argue, then we may ask whether Paul too, in the argument of Romans, refers not only to a human role in the cosmos, but even, going further, to the idea of a human vocation. In this book we seek to show that the idea of a human vocation is (a) present in the argument of Rom 1–11, (b) makes excellent sense of the use of the reason language in Rom 12.1 in the light of ancient traditions, and especially the parallels in Epictetus, and (c) underlies the vision of community life which is expressed in Rom 12–16. Furthermore, it is a particular version of the idea of a human vocation that (d) contributes to the integration of Paul's theology and ethics. By considering Paul's writing to the Romans as part of the ancient discourse on what it means to be human and the discussion of what the human role is within the cosmos, our reading goes against the grain of many interpretations that operate with a classical understanding of sin, salvation and justification in terms of systematic theologies which were worked out later. (This does not of course set up an antithesis where one has to choose between a vocational reading and a soteriological one as though the two are mutually exclusive.) To make sense of this claim we need to consider more closely the shape such a human vocation might take in Paul's argument in Romans.

We submit that for Paul, too, the form of life in which genuine humanness is now available is a human calling, a human vocation of a particular sort: it is a messianic existence that takes its bearings from the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus and which aims at living in ways that conform best to the purpose of the new age which has been inaugurated in the resurrection of the messiah. Paul proclaims the good news about the death and resurrection of Jesus and he aims to foster communal life which best witnesses to these events and their implications. Paul is a Jew who believes the messiah has come and that this Christ event has important consequences for Gentiles who can now be rescued from dehumanising idolatry and become members of the messianic communities he intends to promote without them having to become Jews and get circumcised. The way in which Jews and Gentiles live together in these communities is precisely an important part of the new way of being human in which the old divisions are overcome – though overcome only ἐν Χριστῷ.

From this sketch it becomes clear why the idea of a *human* vocation should be suitable for Paul: Paul believes that humans everywhere are called to respond appropriately to the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the messiah of Israel, to be baptised and to become part of the new communities that witness to these events and hence, to become part of the “new creation” which Paul believes is launched in these events. This is the genuinely human existence available in the light of the Christ event. It means understanding the

world in the light of God's action in Christ and responding appropriately by doing things and saying things which give the best expression to the good news and which conform to the new age being launched. If we formulate the structure of this vocation more abstractly, we might say that humans are supposed to come to know what is true about God and the world and to give expression to this understanding by their actions and speech. We will refer to this as humans producing the appropriate signs.<sup>14</sup> The general structure of the vocation as outlined here (getting in touch with truth about God and the world and producing appropriate signs) is, we argue, an important part of Paul's argument in Romans 1 and Romans 6. It is also exactly the structure we find, once more, in Epictetus, not only in *Discourse* 1.16 but also elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, there are considerable differences between Paul and Epictetus (and the broader traditions which find expression in his writings): eschatology, the conception of God, the role of a messiah and so on. But in both we find the idea of a human vocation and of a certain structure to that vocation which at a general level is the same. And both aspects are combined with a particular use of reason language and ideas about the human endowment with reason. Studying Epictetus for these themes and bringing out the full force of the parallels enables us better to explain what is going on in Rom 12.1 and to detect already earlier in the argument the importance of the idea of a human vocation and even its structure. But while Paul shares this structure with Epictetus he goes even further in making the human response instrumental in the further purposes of God: humans are to understand what God has done in Jesus and to produce appropriate signs, which both signal their liberation as human beings and can become the occasion for others to come to learn the truth about what has happened. Those who belong to the messianic communities are to use their reason to find the appropriate signs in a particular situation which may allow others to get in touch with that reality and become part of it by joining the network of messianic communities. If being truly human means fulfilling the human calling, and if the human calling is to produce signs of the truth about God and the world, and if, as Paul believes, that truth is that the God of Israel has raised Jesus, the crucified messiah, then genuinely human action consists in living in such a way as best to produce signs of that truth.

Paul, then, is promoting a certain way of life which he understands to be the fulfilment of genuine humanness. By drawing on a philosophical and cultural tradition on humans as the beings endowed with reason and as such having a

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<sup>14</sup> For our use of the term "sign production", see section 1.4 below.

<sup>15</sup> See section 4.5.

role in the cosmos, he presents the community life he advocates – the appropriate response to the Christ event – as being the fulfilment of the cultural aspirations for genuine humanness.

We can state our main claim then as follows: by using reason language in Rom 12.1, Paul alludes to widely known philosophical and cultural traditions about the role of human beings in the cosmos. Doing so enables him to present his ideal of living and working in the communities of Christ-followers as the fulfilment of the human vocation and of the aspirations to genuine humanness, which is an effective proreptic means in ancient discourse. This contributes to his overall goal of fostering communities which witness to the Christ event and coheres with his theological view that in Christ a new way of being human has been launched in which Jews and Gentiles together, as renewed human beings, are able to praise God (Rom 15.6).

How, then, is this form of the idea of a human vocation a contribution to the integration of theology and ethics? The key is to see that the community life Paul seeks to foster is itself an integrated kind of existence, in which coming to understand what has been revealed about God and the world in what happened to Christ (theology) and living in such a way as to make this understanding the basis of one's actions (ethics) inseparably belong together. The idea of a human vocation bridges the "is" and the "ought", to use the modern formulation, because the "is" itself is understood to be normatively charged, but the "ought" is responsive to the "is" because the signs to be produced are those which express the truth of the "is" that has been grasped by the knower. While ancient philosophy calibrated its "ethics" to be in tune with "physics", for Paul a new age has been inaugurated in the messiah, and therefore the new vocation is based on a new kind of thinking in relation to what might be called a "new physics".

We have now stated the problem which this book seeks to explain, indicated the wider significance of the issues involved, and given an outline of our explanation. It remains for us in this introductory chapter to do the following things. First, we will present a brief overview of previous attempts at explaining Paul's use of reason language (1.3). To a considerable extent these attempts come down to a choice of the texts deemed to be parallels. Second, we will discuss our notions of "vocation", "genuine humanness" and "sign production" (1.4). Third, we will give an overview of the chapters of our book (1.5).

### 1.3 Previous explanations

In this section our aim is to outline the main approaches to answering why Paul uses the language of λογικός in Rom 12.1. We are in the fortunate position that a recent contribution of Scott and the discussion of Reichert already give a good account of the main interpretations of λογικός in Rom 12.1.<sup>16</sup> Since both accounts agree in dividing the main solutions into three similar categories, it seems best first to discuss previous solutions in terms of the structure of their account and then to indicate other solutions in a second step. Finally, we will indicate why another approach is needed.

The three main interpretations, according to Reichert and Scott, assign to λογικός in Rom 12.1 either the meaning “reasonable” (“vernünftig”), “spiritual” (“geistlich”) or “genuine, true, authentic” (“wahr, eigentlich”).<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.3.1 λογικός as “reasonable”

The first solution proceeds on the assumption that the sense of λογικός must be related to reason. An example is Betz, when he explains that Paul calls the λατρεία of Rom 12.1 λογικός “weil es ‘vernünftig’ ist, so zu handeln.”<sup>18</sup> This interpretation takes λογικός to express a sense related to reason, and treats it as expressing a judgment upon an action.<sup>19</sup>

Some interpretations which determine Paul’s overall topic to be the true form of worship or cult (mainly based on the image of sacrifice in 12.1b and the cultic meaning of λατρεία) then develop this as an apologetic statement: Paul describes what the Jesus-followers do in their meetings, where they do not offer animal sacrifice, and Paul assures them that even though they are deprived of sacrifice, it is still reasonable what they do.

Or it could be construed as part of a polemical statement, for instance, directed against pagan forms of sacrifice (which by implication may be cast as irrational).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Scott 2018, 517–525. Reichert 2001, 238–241.

<sup>17</sup> Scott 2018, 517, 519, 524. Reichert 2001, 240–241.

<sup>18</sup> Betz 1988, 212.

<sup>19</sup> So also Evans 1979, 19 (“rational”).

<sup>20</sup> A combination is Walter 1979, 437: Paul defends the “kultlos[e] Gottesdienst der Gemeinde” and calls it “[u]nser ‘sinnvoller Gottesdienst’”, but at the same time he attacks “[k]ultische Handlungen der euch geläufigen Art” as “sinnlos”.

In a third variant, this sense is developed as the “logical” response to what God has done or to what has been explained in the previous argument.<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the subject of evaluation is even God.<sup>22</sup>

The problem with these interpretations is that the word λογικός is not used to express direct judgments upon actions as Scott’s detailed semantic analysis of λογικός has shown.<sup>23</sup>

### 1.3.2 λογικός as “spiritual”

The second type of solution assumes that λογικός means “spiritual” in the sense of “non-material” or “non-physical.”<sup>24</sup> The λατρεία in Rom 12.1 is contrasted with forms of worship in which material offerings or animal sacrifice are employed. These solutions often assume that λογικός is used in Rom 12.1 to say something that could be expressed by πνευματικός. As parallels they point to 1 Peter 2.5 (πνευματικὰς θυσίας).<sup>25</sup> Other parallels often adduced are from the Hermetic writings (for instance Corp. herm. 1.31. [λογικὰς θυσίας]; 13.18 [ὁ σὸς Λόγος δι’ ἐμοῦ ὑμνεῖ σέ. δι’ ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ, λογικὴν θυσίαν]) in which it is assumed that they establish a sense of λογικός which means “spiritual.”<sup>26</sup> But the difficulty for this interpretation is that it is hard to see why Paul should have used a rare word (in the LXX and the NT) like λογικός, when he

<sup>21</sup> Scott cites Bryant 2004, 287 for this option.

<sup>22</sup> McCartney 1991, 128: “the sacrifices which are reasonable for God to expect.”

<sup>23</sup> Scott 2018, 517–518. Though Scott does not point this out, the world εὐλογος would be used in such a sense.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Käsemann 1980, 313. Dunn 1988b, 706. Even though he glosses as “rational”, in effect the position of Ferguson 1980, 1165 amounts to this second type, as he explains the λογικὴ λατρεία as “a service to God that proceeds from man’s spiritual nature, the highest part of his being.”

<sup>25</sup> 1 Peter 2.2 (τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα) is the only other occurrence of λογικός in the New Testament. In contrast to Romans, in 1 Peter there is a use of the word λόγος that is relevant for the interpretation of λογικός, namely 1 Peter 1.23 (διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ). The recipients of the letter are described as born anew (ἀναγεγεννημένοι) through the λόγος of God, which here means the word of God as becomes clear by the explanation in 1 Peter 1.25 (ῥῆμα), which applies the word of God in Isa 40.6–8 to the word that was announced in the gospel (τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς). The metaphor of being born anew for a conversion is then extended in 1 Peter 2.2, where the newborn infants (ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη), that is those who were born anew by responding to the word of the gospel, are encouraged to long for the milk which is characterised as both λογικός and ἄδολος (without deceit, unadulterated). Thus many have seen there a reference to the “milk of the word” (see McCartney 1991, 128).

<sup>26</sup> Scott, however, argues that Corp. herm. 1.31 should be rendered “rational” (2018, 522).

might have chosen the much more frequent πνευματικός. There is little evidence that λογικός is used in such a sense<sup>27</sup> and so an implausible tradition has to be reconstructed, which assumes such a sense in mystical circles about which we remain in the dark.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.3.3 λογικός as “genuine”

The third type of solution assumes that λογικός is used not to describe a property of the λατρεία, but to mark it as the authentic form in contrast to others.<sup>29</sup> Wilckens, for instance, describes the function of the adjective as “den wahren Kult von der Vielfalt der vorhandenen, aber uneigentlichen Kulte zu unterscheiden.”<sup>30</sup> Again it is hard to find evidence where λογικός is used in this sense. Strack points to T. Levi 3.6 (προσφέρουσι δὲ Κυρίῳ ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας λογικὴν, καὶ ἀναίμακτον προσφορὰν),<sup>31</sup> which describes a scene of heavenly worship, but it is far from clear that this text should be interpreted in this way.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, it is possible that T. Levi 3.6 is a Christian interpolation.<sup>33</sup>

### 1.3.4 λογικός as “communicating” (Reichert)

Having argued against all of the first three readings, Reichert proposes a sense of λογικός which corresponds to λόγος as “speech” or “speaking”.<sup>34</sup> Reichert claims 1 Peter 2.2 for her reading (“sprechende, truglose Milch”).<sup>35</sup> She discusses several examples where λογικός is used in such a sense (e. g. Plutarch, *Cor.* 38.3 [μέρεσι λογικοῖς] as “organs for speech”) or Philo, *Mos.* 1.84<sup>36</sup> and a few others). However, having discussed examples in which λογικός is used to refer to speech in a regular sense, she then applies this sense to Rom 12.1 in a transferred sense, for which she has not offered examples. She renders the λογικὴ λατρεία as a

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27 Cf. Scott 2018, 520.

28 Cf. Reichert 2001, 240 n. 75.

29 So for instance Strack 1994, 297–8.

30 Cf. Wilckens 1978–82, 3.6.

31 Strack 1994, 294.

32 The parallel with “bloodless” (ἀναίμακτος) leads Wilckens to take T. Levi 3.6 as evidence for the sense “spiritual”, while Scott argues it could as well be “rational” (521).

33 So Eckhardt 2014, 258 n. 10.

34 Reichert 2001, 241.

35 Reichert 2001, 242.

36 Scott 2018, 513 reads the passage differently.

“sprechender Gottesdienst”, and explains its meaning as a λατρεία which communicates towards outsiders.<sup>37</sup> But her solution cannot be convincing, because her evidence does not bear out this transferred sense.

### 1.3.5 λογικός as “guided by reasoning thought” (Scott)

The recent contribution of Scott (2018) is the most detailed attempt yet to explain Paul’s language in terms of a semantic approach. Scott has analysed 420 occurrences of λογικός in the TLG, assigned these instances to seven “categories of use”, and finds the category “activities performed by or guided by reasoning” to be the pertinent one in Rom 12.1, because this is the sense in which λογικός is used, in his sample, to modify “some human action”.<sup>38</sup> Thus Paul emphasises in this reading, that the λατρεία is a “reasoning worship”, a sacrifice “offered by engaging in rational ethical deliberation.”<sup>39</sup> The strength of this approach is that it offers linguistic parallels, but the weakness is that it may contextualise too narrowly and thus miss the encyclopedic relevance of larger ancient discourses. We will criticise Scott’s contribution in more detail in chapter 2.

### 1.3.6 Conclusion: The need for evaluating qualitative parallels

We have thus indicated some of the main approaches to explaining Paul’s reason language and indicated their shortcomings. All the strategies for explaining Paul’s use of λογική λατρεία ultimately come down to a selection of pertinent parallels and a determination of the respect in which they are deemed to be parallel.

This process is largely guided by a hypothesis on the overall topic of Rom 12.1–2. The overall topic can be assigned to the broad rubrics of either “religion” (true sacrifice, true worship), or “ethics” (moral conduct), or “mission” (missional existence, community formation).<sup>40</sup>

There are two main methods for explaining λογικός in Rom 12.1, the semantic approach and the *traditionsgeschichtlich* approach. The semantic approach looks at lexical parallels for λογικός and seeks a sense of the word which it

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<sup>37</sup> Reichert 2001, 244 (she emphasises the “kommunikative Kraft”, and the fact that this λατρεία “sich Aussenstehenden gegenüber bemerkbar macht”).

<sup>38</sup> Scott 2018, 503, 511, 525.

<sup>39</sup> Scott 2018, 525.

<sup>40</sup> We use these labels heuristically. Cf. the remarks on “missional” and “religion” in section 1.4.

then tries to fit into a reading of Rom 12.1 (e.g. Scott). The *traditionsgeschichtlich* approach identifies a tradition on a topic (e.g. ideas about true worship), determines what Paul would say on the topic, and then explains how Paul's language of λογικός in Rom 12.1 is used to say that. Thus, in this latter approach, interpreters put forward what they deem to be thematic parallels, even if the linguistic links might be less strong.

The problem with the semantic approach is that the parallels may not be thematically relevant. The problem with the *traditionsgeschichtlich* approach is that the parallels may not be linguistically relevant. And, more precariously, they may not even be thematically pertinent.

For example, if, as we shall argue, Paul was not primarily concerned in Rom 12.1 with making a comment upon true sacrifice or "religion", then readings which reconstruct an ancient discourse on sacrifice in which the notions of true sacrifice get increasingly refined,<sup>41</sup> and then make Paul comment critically on it,<sup>42</sup> run the risk of not even being thematically on target.

Thus, we argue here for an approach of evaluating qualitative parallels. Such an attempt is neither deductive (as the traditio-historical approach is: we know what Paul was talking about, and therefore he must have used the language in this way to say that) nor is it fully inductive (as the semantic approach is: here are all the sampled instances, and since in most cases with these features what is meant is this, that is what Paul was talking about), but perhaps should be called "abductive" (if we suppose that this parallel gives us an idea of some "rule" which could apply to Paul as well, what kind of suggestions for reading Paul differently emerge which would make Paul a case of the rule, and does the new reading allow a better resolution of a difficulty?).<sup>43</sup> We seek to offer here a fresh reading of parallels in Epictetus, which are set in the broader context of ancient discourse on what it means to be human. Our use of the term "discourse" points to the method of "discourse analysis".<sup>44</sup> As we shall argue, these Epictete-

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<sup>41</sup> For example Wenschkewitz 1932 or Ferguson 1980.

<sup>42</sup> For an excellent refutation of these readings, see Reichert 2001, 238–241.

<sup>43</sup> On abduction, cf. Eco 1976, 131–133.

<sup>44</sup> On "discourse analysis" cf. Baker 2006, the handbook of Gee and Handford 2012, especially the contribution of Flowerdew 2012 (on "corpus-based discourse analysis" cf. 74), and the introductions into the methods by Jones 2019 (especially 207–2014 on "corpus-assisted discourse analysis") and S. Taylor 2012. Baker (2006, 3–5) helpfully distinguishes various concepts referred to by the term "discourse": (1) "language above the level of a clause or sentence"; (2) "language in use"; (3) "the discourse structure of particular texts" (e.g. a recipe); (4) topical discourses, e.g. political discourse or colonial discourse; (5) discourses in use by particular groups, for instance learners of English; (6) discourses (sometimes written with a capital) for "practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972, 49)

tean parallels are both linguistically relevant and thematically pertinent. But this cannot be demonstrated *in advance* by appeal to a methodological criterion. Rather, we have to offer a reading of the Epictetus parallels in the light of broader ancient contexts and discourses, establish that they are concerned with the idea of a human vocation, and then show why the “hypothesis” that Rom 12.1 also speaks about a human vocation makes excellent sense of Rom 12.1 and the broader context of the letter. If this reading of Rom 12.1 is plausible in its ancient contexts, the “abduction” is successful, and we have found explanatory parallels which are both linguistically and thematically pertinent. For this fresh reading, we need interpretative categories, which we will now briefly discuss.

## 1.4 Remarks on our interpretative terms

As our outline in section 1.2 has indicated, our interpretation of Rom 12.1 in the light of ancient philosophical contexts makes use of such interpretative terms as “human vocation”, “genuine humanness” and “sign production”. Before we launch into our investigation, it is important to offer several remarks on our use of these terms.

First, these terms operate at the level of our interpretation, and thus they do not need to correspond directly to terms used in the sources we discuss. Thus, we do not, as we pointed out, use “vocation” only for passages in which the words

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(this is how Baker uses it, noting it is related to the previous senses). (This is rather different from the use of “discourse analysis” in Runge 2010, where grammatical phenomena such as “connectives” in the New Testament are in focus.)

Our own approach could be characterised as trying to discern thematic parallels to Paul which are linked to specific terminology in other ancient sources, which are investigated by the methods of “corpus-assisted discourse analysis”, employing the TLG or the PHI databases. However, we also use a mixed approach, or what Baker 2006, 15–17, following others, calls “triangulation”: namely to use “multiple methods of analysis” (16). Thus, it could combine “smaller-scale analyses of single texts” with “corpus-based” research to confirm or check the findings in a more systematic manner.

In our case, we investigate the phrase ζῶον λογικόν in section 2.2 in a manner that is “corpus-assisted”, but complement this by an even broader, and more thematic investigation of ancient discourses on what it means to be human, relying on previous literature, in section 3.1. Furthermore, for certain single texts of Epictetus (in chapter 4), and Paul (in chapters 5–7), we give more space to the analysis of longer passages, attempting to attend to the texts in their own right. In these analyses, however, the broader contextualisations inform our interaction with the texts. Finally, we are also in a position to compare Epictetus and Paul in the light of these various contextualisations.

καλεῖν, κλητός, or κλήσις etc. can be found.<sup>45</sup> Nor does our use of the term vocation necessarily correspond to the layers of meaning accrued in later reception history or to its use in modern philosophical readings of Paul.<sup>46</sup>

Second, we use these terms heuristically and develop them in discussion with ancient sources. Thus, for instance, the idea of a human vocation is developed in section 3.2 in dialogue with an investigation of Heinemann<sup>47</sup> and some of the ancient sources he discussed. But in particular our readings of Epictetus 1.16 and 1.6 will show clearly what kind of idea is involved (sections 4.4–4.5). The idea of genuine humanness refers to the normative conceptions of what it means to be human, which we develop from a discussion of source texts in section 3.1, in dialogue with previous scholarship.<sup>48</sup> The point of such terms is to alert to features of the texts, which we can only show in specific readings, and which we identify, so that we may then suggest them as interpretative lenses for reading Paul. Thus, when we discuss Romans in chapters 5–7, we can make use of the conceptions developed in chapters 3–4, because we can

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**45** This also applies to a term like “signs” and σημεῖον. Conversely, the fact that Epictetus uses the term ἐπαγγελία to express the concept of a human vocation (see section 4.2), while Paul in Romans never uses it in this sense, but rather in the sense of “promise” (e.g. Rom 4.13–14), does not constitute a problem for our interpretation. What we propose is that Paul uses the concept of a “human vocation” (using the term λατρεία in Rom 12.1; see section 6.3.1), but his terminology does not necessarily have to overlap with other ancient texts where we detect a similar concept (cf. also Rom 9.4 as a kind of lexical irony, given our remarks here). In the case of λογικός in Rom 12.1, however, Paul does refer to a similar concept and use the same term as the Epictetan parallels.

**46** On the complex reception history of κλήσις (especially as used in 1 Cor 7) as *Beruf* or *Berufung* in Luther, Max Weber and Giorgio Agamben, cf. Frey 2008. Agamben discusses κλήσις in relation to a messianic vocation in his philosophical interpretation of Paul’s letter to the Romans (2005, especially 19–43), but his conception of that vocation based on a reading of 1 Cor 7.20 is very different from ours. For Agamben, κλήσις “indicates the particular transformation that every juridical status and worldly condition undergoes because of, and only because of, its relation to the messianic event” (22). Yet this relation to the messianic event does not determine the meaning of the messianic vocation, as in Agamben’s reading of Paul the “messianic vocation does not ... have any specific content; it is nothing but the repetition of those same factual or juridical conditions in which or as which we are called” (22). In terms of our notion of sign production, Agamben’s messianic vocation would be a sign of nothing beyond itself. By contrast, our reading of the messianic vocation, i.e. the vocation of Christ-followers, sees it as a production of signs of the new creation inaugurated in Christ’s death and resurrection. For a perceptive critique of Agamben’s reading of κλήσις, see Frey 2008, 52–56. For a critique of the interpretations of Paul offered by Agamben 2005, Badiou 2003 and Taubes 2004 based on an evaluation of some of their readings within the context of ancient philosophy, see van Kooten 2019.

**47** Heinemann 1926.

**48** E.g. Landmann 1962.

point out similar features in the text, even while we can allow that Paul's conception of "genuine humanness" could be rather different, if concretely spelled out, from what Epictetus envisages. Yet discussing both sources in terms of these categories allows fresh readings of the texts, which are needed, we maintain, for explaining Paul's use of reason language in Rom 12.1.

Third, terms such as "genuine humanness" and "human vocation" point to much larger discussions on what it means to be human in the ancient world, and indeed, the modern world. Much of these discussions could be brought into fruitful conversation, not just with Romans, but also with Paul's other letters, which might emphasise other conceptions of what it means to be human (for instance, the human capacities for transformation in 1 Cor 15). Our goals in this book are more modest, however. For the focus of this book is not on all that Paul has to say in his letters on the topic of "humanness", on what "genuine humanness" looks like or on what the "human vocation" consists in. Our focus is not even all that he has to say on being human in Romans alone. If much of this book explores the concepts of "genuine humanness" and "human vocation", it is because, within the ancient encyclopedia, they often appear closely linked to human reason, which is key to our explanation of how Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1 works. The case that Paul draws on this link in Rom 12.1 is strengthened by demonstrating that Paul also makes use of these notions at other crucial stages in the argument of Romans. But they are not the topic of this book in their own right.

Even though we have indicated that the terms "genuine humanness" and "human vocation" are used heuristically, we may nevertheless briefly indicate how they relate to and differ from each other. While "genuine humanness" refers to normative conceptions of what it means to be human, which are employed in discourse to commend a certain way of living or acting with recourse to shared or argued for understandings of what human beings are or should be, an idea of a human vocation is also a normative conception of what it means to be human, but one which presupposes that there is a role in the cosmos or a task in life of human beings as such. Any conception of a human vocation also implies a notion of genuine humanness, since the failure to fulfil such a vocation would be to miss out on a crucial aspect of what humans, on this conception, should be and do in the cosmos. But there can be conceptions of genuine humanness without any direct link to an idea of a human vocation, such as when, for instance in ethical discourse, yielding to the vice of aggression is characterised as sinking to the

level of a “ferocious beast”.<sup>49</sup> Hence, these terms, as we employ them, are closely related, but not identical.

Fourth, our use of the term “sign production” may be unusual. While our use of the expression is inspired by Eco’s theory of semiotics,<sup>50</sup> we do not employ “sign production” in the technical sense established there as part of a general theory of what is involved in any type of communication.<sup>51</sup> Rather, we use “sign production” to refer to any human actions, ways of being, relations, attitudes, words, or even thoughts which are either interpretative of larger frameworks of understanding or expressive of them. Actions can have a symbolic significance and a communicative effect. They may express a group identity or embody an ethos.<sup>52</sup> Our notion of sign production aims to point to more than phenomena of status, symbolic capital, or the need for groups to stabilise their identity, however. Rather, it seeks to forefront the active task of creating symbolic articulations that witness to one’s understanding of the world. It thus shifts the emphasis from “ethics” as a response to “theology” and tries to integrate them both. We will develop this term and see its usefulness both in our reading of Epictetus (chapter 4) and in our reading of Paul in Romans (chapters 5–7). In both thinkers, it points to the connection with what humans are supposed to do and how it is based on their being endowed with reason. But in Paul, it is suitable in particular to bring out the “missional” focus of Paul’s goals in forming and shaping communities.

Our reasons for using the term “sign production” are, then, as follows. The first is that its use may help to avoid the often negative theological connotations attaching to words used to discuss human action in Pauline scholarship, entrenched as they are by traditions seeking to avoid the spectre of “works righteousness”. Using a “defamiliarising” term may perhaps be helpful for the purpose of a more positive appraisal of human agency.<sup>53</sup>

Second, its use may forestall some of the modern associations attaching to notions used to discuss ethics, which particularly in traditions looking back to Kant, differ significantly from ancient “eudaimonistic” approaches.<sup>54</sup> It seeks

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<sup>49</sup> This example, taken from Epictetus, is discussed in section 4.2.

<sup>50</sup> Eco 1976, especially chapter 3.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Eco 1976, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. e.g. Wolter 2009.

<sup>53</sup> For an attempt to articulate a more positive account of human agency see Miller 2014, who seeks to do this by drawing on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. the remarks of Annas 1993, 4–10 on the differences between ancient and modern ethics. The modern ethical views often offer a “simple choice between consequentialist and deontological ways of thinking”, such that the focus is either on “calculating consequences” or “relying on

to avoid the sometimes implicit focus on right moral conduct as the exclusive referent of “ethical” action.<sup>55</sup>

Third, its use highlights an aspect of good human actions, which we claim is important both in Paul and in Epictetus (and in associated philosophical traditions), namely that they make reference to a larger whole, the cosmos, and the human role within it (in Paul, in particular, it is the connection of good human action to what God is doing in relation to the world in Christ).<sup>56</sup> From the perspective of the agent, this highlights the fact that thinking about an action in a concrete situation can take into consideration what such an action would signify (hence: “sign”) with regards to the larger contexts in which the agent is embedded.<sup>57</sup> From the perspective of the larger whole, this highlights that actions performed by agents who identify with a larger whole always imply statements about that larger whole (so a philosopher who claims to hold that the cosmos is governed by divine providence, but then complains about his lot, produces a negative sign by his action).

This aspect, fourth, becomes even more important given that ancient thinkers consider human beings as creatures endowed with reason and speech, and hence, as we might put it, communicative beings.<sup>58</sup> Not only do speech acts communicate something else, but many more actions have symbolic layers of mean-

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moral rules”, where the latter is often coupled to the notion that “morality is essentially punitive or corrective” (4). Annas notes that more recently notions of “happiness” and “virtue” have become more important (cf. the rise of “virtue ethics”), which includes for ethics a focus on “the agent’s life as a whole” (4); this point is especially important for our concerns and here we might go beyond Annas in emphasising the importance of the relation of human action to a larger whole, in particular, but not exclusively, in Epictetus and in Paul.

**55** Which also has consequences for the attempts at integrating Paul’s theology and ethics. See chapter 7.

**56** Epictetus 2.10.4 is a particularly clear example: “Now what is the calling of a citizen? Never to approach anything with a view to personal advantage, never to deliberate about anything as though detached from the whole, but to act as one’s hand or foot would act if it had the power of reason and could understand the order of nature, and so would never exercise any desire or motive other than by reference to the whole.” (Transl. R. Hard, cf. section 4.2). Cf. also Epictetus 3.22 (on the life of the ideal Cynic philosopher).

**57** Pauline scholarship since the 1980s is used to discuss issues like circumcision in terms of “identity markers” and “boundary markers”, for which cases the broader notion of sign production could also be applied (producing signs of a particular ethnic identity for instance). Similar remarks apply to the concepts of “ethos” and “identity” used by Wolter 2009.

**58** While sign production has in view other human beings who “see” what is being done, it can also communicate, as in Stoic tradition for example, to the divinity inside looking at what goes on in the individual’s mind (cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 41.1–2), or, in Pauline tradition, to “rulers and powers” (cf. Eph 3.10).

ing (and hence human beings are constantly engaged in “interpreting” actions of others). While this holds in a general sense for most human behaviour, it holds in a more eminent and more precise sense when it applies to a particular human being’s perceived task in life. The notion of sign production is thus especially useful in discussing those actions which are performed as the vocation of beings endowed with reason.

Thus, for Paul, fifth, it particularly serves to highlight the aspect that he considers the actions of human beings to be important for their “missional” function, their being called to witness to a larger truth about the Christ event. In Paul, the notion may also be useful for an emphasis on the eschatological aspect of action in the present, which amount, so we argue, to “signs” of new creation.<sup>59</sup>

A few remarks on the term “missional” as we use it here are in order. When we use the term “missional”, we mean this shorthand to convey Paul’s conviction, first, that as many human beings as possible, both Jews and Gentiles, should come to believe the message about the death and resurrection of Jesus as the messiah of Israel, and, second, that Christ-followers are supposed to act, speak and live in such a way that this message is faithfully proclaimed, that is, to use our terms, their sign production is supposed to communicate this message as “good news”.

Terms such as “mission” are problematic in their description of first-century phenomena, in that their definitions presuppose several concepts which are difficult or contested in their application for the purpose of historical description. For example, if “mission” would be understood as denoting efforts to “convert” the adherents of one religion to another, then this would apply poorly to early Christ-followers (whether Jewish or Gentile) in their communication both with Gentiles and Jews who were not Christ-followers.<sup>60</sup> First, “religion” is not helpful as a category either to describe the varieties of Judaism in the first century, or to describe what Christ-followers’ practices and beliefs were about.<sup>61</sup> Second, by becoming Christ-followers, Jews did not in any way become non-Jewish,<sup>62</sup> in the way such a distinction sometimes came to be established later.

Furthermore, we should be careful to take on board the insights of the so called New Perspective on Paul, however varied its results in detail, which

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 15.58 as a conclusion to the eschatological context of the chapter; 2 Cor 5.17.

<sup>60</sup> Subtler definitions of “mission” as applied to early Jesus-followers are discussed by Schmelzer 2015, 1–11.

<sup>61</sup> On the problematic construction of the category of “religion” and its extension to the study of ancient texts, see Nongbri 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Any more than Paul himself ceased to regard himself as Jewish, as we see, for instance, in Rom 11.1.

seek to avoid the construction of negative foils of varieties of Judaism and their relations to Jewish law which are then contrasted with, for instance, Paul's views on the law and salvation.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, the question of how radical an innovation the belief in a crucified messiah would prove to be in the complicated process loosely called the “parting of the ways” should not be underestimated by such cautionary remarks.<sup>64</sup>

Sixth, our use of the term “sign production” seeks to be comprehensive in scope, that is, ranging over both words, thoughts, emotions, actions, ways of being, relations and so on, and thus to highlight a possible integration of “theory” and “action” in the concept of a human vocation such as we detect in Paul: the sign produced by a particular good action is expressive of the values and meaning of the larger worldview at the same time as it “embodies” it in concrete circumstances.

To summarise and repeat in terms of a definition: we use “sign production” for “human actions performed in such a way as to signify, embody and express those truths and meanings a particular worldview holds to be of paramount importance, and which to communicate in a given context it sees as the role of human beings in the cosmos”.<sup>65</sup>

This definition is thus context-dependent. For Epictetus, it is particularly divine providence and actions in conformity<sup>66</sup> or “yielding”<sup>67</sup> to the rational plan governing the cosmos. For Paul, these truths focus on the significance of Christ's death and resurrection (the “Christ event”) for what God is doing in relation to his creation, and which Paul's proclamation of the “good news” aims to communicate and promote. The relation of the sign production of Christ-followers to the Christ event is, however, more complex than simply the relation of a message about what happened to Jesus of Nazareth to specific acts of proclamation (though of course they might be included). Rather, it must account for the fact that the Christ event is, for Paul, at the same time something that inaugurates

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**63** For a brief overview on the various debates, developments and reactions associated with the New Perspective on Paul, see Horrell 2015, 125–152. For a nuanced assessment of Sanders 1977 and the debate in its wake, focused on “grace”, see Barclay 2015, 151–175.

**64** Cf. Schnelle 2016, 303. On the debate about the so called “parting of the ways” see Paget 2010, 3–23; Lieu 2015, 1–27, 31–49; and the contributions in Becker and Reed 2003 and Baron, Hicks-Keeton, and Thiessen 2018.

**65** Here “action” is conceived broadly, so as not to exclude states and relations which are maintained.

**66** This also where the *imitatio dei* motif in ancient philosophy comes into play. Cf. e.g. Cic. *Tusc* 1.72, 5.70.

**67** Cf. Epictetus 2.23.42 (quoting Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus), 3.22.95, 4.1.131, *Ench.* 53.

a change of conditions such that a new kind of human behaviour is possible,<sup>68</sup> something that reveals the central truth about God which is of paramount importance for humans in the present, something that paradigmatically displays the genuine humanness which Christ-followers are called and destined (in some way) to embody, and something that is both rooted in a larger history of God with humanity and looks toward the new creation. Thus, in the context of Paul, as we aim to show, the notion of sign production could be defined as “actions by human beings (in Christ), performed in such a way as to signify, embody and express the truths and meanings of the Christ event, which to communicate in a given context he sees as the role of human beings in the cosmos.”<sup>69</sup>

## 1.5 Outline of the argument

We will now briefly indicate the structure of our argument such as it unfolds in the remaining chapters.

In chapter 2, we discuss the semantics of λογικός in dialogue with Scott’s recent investigation, noting certain methodological reservations with his approach. In a second part, we perform a corpus-based discourse analysis of the phrase ζῶον λογικόν to show that it was widely used before Paul, initially mainly within Stoicism, but then also in other philosophical traditions. We classify key uses of the concept and find that it is prominently used to discuss the human place in the cosmos, their role and vocation, and what it means to be genuinely human. Furthermore, we address the question of how familiar Paul and his hearers would have been with the definition of human beings as mortal rational animals.

In chapter 3, we investigate the role of reason in Greco-Roman discussions of what it means to be human, finding it to be one of the key characteristics in articulations of genuine humanness. Further, we consider the language used in texts speaking about the human role in the cosmos.

In chapter 4, we focus on Epictetus and how he speaks about genuine humanness and the human vocation, based on the endowment with reason. Through a close analysis of several of his *Discourses*, we discuss how he uses the definition of human beings in order to speak about genuine humanness,

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<sup>68</sup> On various dimensions to these changes, see section 5.3.1.

<sup>69</sup> In attempting to make this definition more conspicuous, we have already drawn on claims this study seeks to establish in the course of its argument; where these are deemed disputable, the reader might replace them with the more generic statements given above (i.e. “expressive of larger frameworks of understanding”).

the importance of providence for his articulation of the human vocation, and the structure of the human vocation (as a sign production based upon understanding). In particular we consider Epictetus 1.16 in detail, because it is about the human vocation and it contains the most important parallel for Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1.

In chapter 5, we turn to Romans. In the light of the themes and context we have studied in chapters 3–4, we consider whether notions of genuine humanness and the idea of a human vocation are part of Paul's argument in Rom 1–8. Genuine humanness appears as an important feature of Rom 5. We also find evidence for Paul's use of the idea of a human vocation in Rom 1 and 6, where it appears that even the structure of the human vocation is similar to the traditions we have studied in chapters 3–4: it is a sign production based upon an understanding of God such as he has made himself known in the Christ event. Romans 8 confirms this picture in dynamical relation to the cosmos waiting to be renewed.

In chapter 6, we analyse Rom 12.1–2 in detail. We show how the consideration of the broader tradition on what it means to be human and in particular Epictetus 1.16.20–21 as a parallel to Rom 12.1 explains Paul's use of reason language as an allusion to the philosophical tradition about the vocation of human beings. This requires us to look in particular at a fresh grammatical solution to how the adjective λογικός modifies the noun λατρεία. What Paul identifies as the human vocation is the “presentation of the body as a living sacrifice” (Rom 12.1b), which retrieves the language crafted in Rom 6 to speak about a sign production for the new way of being human in Christ.

In chapter 7, we investigate how our explanation of Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1 contributes to an understanding of Rom 12–15 as “missional” existence (i.e. one producing signs of the new understanding). This is because Rom 12.1–2 frames the section on Paul's vision of life in the community of Christ-followers (Rom 12–15). Several of the themes Paul discusses in Rom 12.3–13.14 confirm the importance of the ideas of a human vocation based on the human endowment with reason and of a sign production for new creation. In chapter 8, we conclude by summarising our findings.

## 2 The semantics of λογικός and the definition of human beings

In this chapter, we will consider two aspects of the word λογικός. First, we will summarise the semantics of λογικός in conversation with the detailed analysis by Scott (2018). While his study is very helpful, it also is beset by methodological difficulties which we point out. We will also directly challenge the evidence Scott puts forward for his own reading of λογικός in Rom 12.1.

Second, we will perform a discourse analysis of the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα, showing that it was pre-Pauline, associated with Stoicism, but also percolated through other philosophical traditions, and would have been well known to broader audiences, such that it is plausible to assume that Paul could allude to the concept. Furthermore, we will demonstrate how the definition is used to construct discourse on the human place in the cosmos, on their vocation as rational living beings and on what it means to lead a genuinely human life.

### 2.1 The semantics of λογικός in conversation with Scott 2018

Scott's recent study is the most detailed attempt to investigate the semantics of λογικός in Greek literature.<sup>1</sup> Scott's study achieves, despite some methodological questions one might raise, as much as a lexical study can contribute to the interpretation of a passage. While we argue for an approach that focuses on qualitative parallels, it will be useful to consider the results of Scott's investigation, before we raise some methodological points, and, finally, consider the evidence on which his own proposal for λογικός in Rom 12.1 rests.

#### 2.1.1 Scott's seven categories of the use of λογικός

Scott observes, based on the distribution in his sample<sup>2</sup>, that the word λογικός was “primarily a philosophical term with a high register” (502), in contrast to

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<sup>1</sup> In this section, numbers in brackets refer to Scott 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See below, section 2.1.2.

modern translation equivalents (503). He distinguishes “seven categories of use” for λογικός (504–515)<sup>3</sup>:

First, used in substantivised form (τὸ λογικόν) for “reasoned thought” (i.e. “logic” as a branch of study). Scott’s preferred translation is “reasoned”.<sup>4</sup>

Second, used to distinguish “rational beings from irrational animals”. Here often a contrast is made between the λογικὰ ζῶα, including humans, and the ἄλογα. Scott’s explanatory paraphrase here is that the one is “able to exercise reasoned thought”, while the others are not (504). In this sense it is predicated of humans, gods, and even the cosmos itself (505). Scott claims for this sense that “[a]lthough rationality is our distinguishing feature, λογικός never merely means ‘human’. To refer to human beings as τὰ λογικά in this sense is to highlight humanity’s capacity for reasoned thought as our defining attribute” (505–506). The word “merely” in this statement makes it difficult to disagree, but what Scott misses is that, as part of the ancient cultural encyclopedia, (i) λογικός is used in this sense as part of the definition of human beings and (ii) this definition is often used in protreptic and normative contexts to speak about the role of a being within the cosmos. Thus, it can be used to talk about human beings in a normative or aspirational sense. This is based on the human capacity for reason and speech (which should not be split too neatly for ancient thought<sup>5</sup>). We shall come back to this point.

Third, used to distinguish “reasoning human beings from irrational people”. In this sense λογικός refers not just to those endowed with reason, but to those who use it well. An example for this sense is Philo, *Cher.* 39 (τὸν μὲν αὐτῷ [sc. λόγῳ] χρῆσθαι δυνάμενον ὀρθῶς is called λογικὸν ὄντως, τὸν δὲ μὴ δυνάμενον ἄλογόν τε καὶ κακοδαίμονα).<sup>6</sup> Scott claims that “[t]he mere capacity to reason is not enough to make a person fully λογικός (and so fully human) if that capacity is not regularly put to work in actual reasoned thought” (507). Here he rightly detects a normative and aspirational sense of λογικός, which he fails to detect in uses of the concept “human”.<sup>7</sup> More problematic is the use of the phrase “rea-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. his own summary (515–6).

<sup>4</sup> Scott cites as one of the examples Philo, *Leg.* 1.57, where the form is not substantivised as much as there is an ellipsis of μέρος.

<sup>5</sup> As Scott himself recognises (514), even though his preferred glosses with variants of “reasoned” or “reasoning” may suggest otherwise.

<sup>6</sup> Though here the adverb ὄντως is needed to disambiguate. Some of the examples offered by Scott in n. 23 do not neatly fall under his description of “setting those who often exercise reasoned thought over against those who are dominated by their passions.”

<sup>7</sup> On normative conceptions of being human in ancient philosophical context see Gill 1990.

soned thought” because it might be taken to focus too narrowly on syllogistic dexterity. It is better to take it more broadly, as we have indicated, for the good use of the human endowment with λόγος.

Fourth, to distinguish “the reasoning aspect of the soul from other aspects”. This sense is applied to models of the soul in which several parts are assumed.<sup>8</sup> An example is Philo, *Leg.* 2.2 (ἐγὼ πολλά εἰμι, ψυχὴ σῶμα, καὶ ψυχῆς ἄλογον λογικόν). Scott also subsumes here expressions like λογικὴ δύναμις.

Fifth, “objects that consist of, result from, or are employed in reasoning”. Scott’s examples in this category are less than clear. For instance, geometrical lines (τὰς λογικὰς εὐθείας [Heron, *Definitiones* 135.8]) are subsumed here supposedly because they are “lines that exist only in reasoned thought” (510). Or λογικὴ ὁρμή is paraphrased by Scott as “an impulse that arises from reasoned deliberation.”<sup>9</sup> Part of the problem may be that Scott seems to assume that adjectives can only mark out definite properties of “objects”, whereas phrases with adjectives can also function differently, for instance as a generic reference to a domain or as a mere contrast term.

Sixth, used for “activities performed by or guided by reasoning”. This is the sense which Scott proposes for Rom 12.1. He distinguishes between, first, mental activities (e.g. σκέψις, ζήτησις, ἐρμηνεία), in which case the combination with λογικός emphasises that they are “performed by reasoning” (511); second, for other actions, the combination with λογικός marks that their “execution is guided by reasoned thought” (513).<sup>10</sup> Because it is these examples which Scott identifies as a parallel to the λογικὴ λατρεία we will consider them separately in section 2.1.3.

Seventh, “distinguishing what is related to discourse in general”. In this last category Scott admits examples where “λογικὴ denotes discourse in a broad sense, not just reasoned deliberation” (514).<sup>11</sup>

**8** For a brief discussion of ancient models of mind see Annas 1992, Long 2015. The early Stoics had a more unitary account which Posidonius modified. On Galen’s polemical report on Posidonius, see Sorabji 2000, ch. 6.

**9** Scott cites Arius Didymus, *Phil. Sect.* 73.2 for this sense. But that passage explicitly distinguishes two kinds of ὁρμή, namely τὴν τε ἐν τοῖς λογικοῖς γιγνομένην ὁρμήν, καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις. This passage in fact is a parallel to DL 751 (see our discussion in section 6.3.3.4). For a discussion of impulse in Stoicism see Inwood 1985.

**10** Scott distinguishes a third category, where acts of discourse are involved, but we may ignore it for our purposes.

**11** An example is Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Comp.* 11 where the rhythms and melodic patterns (vocal accent) of speech and music are compared (p. 82 in the Loeb edition; transl. Stephen Usher).

One important corollary of Scott's study is the observation that λογικός is not used to offer a third-person evaluation upon an action (517–518). This rules out those interpretations of Rom 12.1 which see it as a comment on what is “reasonable”.<sup>12</sup>

We have thus summarised the main findings of Scott's semantic analysis of λογικός, which is sufficient for our purposes. We have already indicated some reservations, and now turn to several problems with Scott's approach.

### 2.1.2 Problems with Scott's approach

In this section we indicate several problems with Scott's in many respects very useful work.

First, his choice of corpus. Scott has chosen to include in his sample every instance the TLG lists, in its chronological ordering, as later than Chrysippus and before Plutarch (349 instances) plus 71 earlier instances (503). This means that he considers roughly the evidence between 200 BC and AD 100. Unfortunately, this means that he does not include in his sample writers like Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, or indeed Plutarch, who by many accounts are full of parallels worthwhile exploring when it comes to understanding the New Testament.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, there needs to be some delimitation of workload. But chronology may not be a very good guide here: does Teucer the Astrologer offer better parallels to Paul than Epictetus? Scott does mention the problem that many of the instances that fall into the scope of his sample are fragments preserved in later authors (e.g. Diogenes Laertius), but dismisses the influence on his chosen sample.<sup>14</sup> Further, Scott's results could be complemented by including more epigraphical evidence of λογικός.<sup>15</sup>

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**12** See section 6.3.5 for how our interpretation takes this observation into account, but also goes beyond it.

**13** In this respect McCartney 1991, 131 seems more appropriate.

**14** 501 n. 4. The chronological ordering of the TLG may be doubtful in certain cases, as Scott admits (502 n. 4). But this would suggest widening the sample to include further authors, not a sharp cut-off. There is also the problem that the TLG sometimes includes editions that are overlapping or based on less-well established texts. An example is Mullach's edition in 1867 of Arius Didymus' *Liber de philosophorum sectis* (included in Scott's sample), which at 53,2.25 ascribes to Arius Didymus text which Wachsmuth in 1882 recognised as in fact belonging to Epictetus (now frag. 1 in the ed. of Schenkl). This text is preserved in the fifth-century collection of Stobaeus.

**15** Scott discusses one of the examples which LSJ (s.v. λογικός) list, SEG 2.184 (515). Other epigraphic evidence in the *Searchable Greek Inscriptions* database (<https://epigraphy.packhum.org>) documents the following uses. First, it appears in the context of festivals, which staged compet-

Second, his use of his own translations. While this is in part inevitable, where no translations exist, or where lexicographical traditions need to be challenged, there is a risk of supplying one's own favourite rendering ("reasoned") in more cases than would be warranted and then presenting it with the supposed weight of statistical evidence.

Third, overspecification in cases of polysemy. Many instances of a phrase like λογική δύναμις, for instance, are polysemous, without a possibility of neatly distinguishing between the various similar and related senses. In several instances this leads Scott to overspecification (e.g. Philo, *Congr.* 17 in n. 27 is broader than "rational" as the context makes clear).

Fourth, he does not account sufficiently for the different ways adjectives can modify nouns.<sup>16</sup> (We will discuss some of these in section 6.3.3.1).

Fifth, while he is rightly sensitive to grammatical and syntactical features, the differences induced by the semantics of the noun modified are sometimes not given sufficient weight (see below). He thus contextualises too narrowly.

Sixth, missing aspects of the cultural encyclopedia and indirect evaluation. While it is not a problem for a lexical investigation, for the interpretation of the meaning in a concrete text<sup>17</sup> one should account for the fact that words may re-

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itions in various disciplines, not just music and athletics (cf. Price 1984, 90). In lists of victors of such competitions, the phrase ἐνκωμῖαι λογικῶι indicates the category of prose encomia (*IOropos* 523 [c. 80–50 BC], *IOropos* 526 [c. 80–50 BC]; *IG* VII 2727 [first century BC], *IG* IX,2 531 [late first century BC or early first century AD]). At imperial festivals in the first century AD competitions in encomia to the emperor were held (cf. again Price 1984, 90), and the victors' list includes the category of prose encomia with the phrase ἐνκωμῖαι λογικῶι (*IKorinthMeritt* 19 [reign of Claudius?]). Similarly, a second-century AD inscription from Antinoopolis (*IPDésert* 10) mentions an organiser of a contest in declamation ([ἀγω]νοθήτης λογικοῦ ἀγῶνος; cf. Del Corso and Pintaudi 2016, 265).

Second, in several inscriptions λογικός appears to designate something like a profession, i.e. a logician (e.g. Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Λογικός [*IG* IX,2 969 (Roman period)], similarly *TAM* II 48 [Roman period], *TAM* II 355 [Roman period]), though the dating is uncertain, and it might function simply as an epithet. In *IMaked* 13 (Λόγικη Διονύσω εὐχή) it even appears to function as a proper name, though the inscription is undated.

Besides these, there are two special cases. The first is *SEG* 2.184 (ca. 171–146 BC at Tanagra), in which the Athenian musician Hegesimachos is honoured for his theoretical and practical lectures (ἐποεῖτο ἀκροάσεις λογικὰς τε καὶ ὀργανικὰς), which we already mentioned. The second is an inscription from the middle of the first century AD, in which a physician named Menecrates is honoured, among other things, as a founder of his own logical-empirical medical system (ιδίας λογικῆς ἐναργούς ἰατρικῆς κτίστη), on which see Benedum 1977, 386. This may be related to the school of medicine that styled itself "rational" (cf. Scott, 507).

<sup>16</sup> Though in n. 83 he is aware of some of them.

<sup>17</sup> For this difference, see the useful discussion of Eco 2014, especially 550.

call items of shared cultural knowledge from the ancient encyclopedia and may activate evaluative connotations which escape a narrowly semantic investigation. So the fact that λογικός is used in the definition of human beings means, as we will see, that broader themes of what it means to be human could be in view (see chapters 2.2 and 3).

The pertinence of these critical remarks may only become apparent in light of our own attempt at a broader contextualisation in the following chapters.

### 2.1.3 The evidence on which Scott's solution rests

In this section we briefly analyse the parallels Scott offers as the closest for understanding the λογική λατρεία in Rom 12.1. Scott's proposed sense is that this is a λατρεία which is "guided by rational deliberation", since λατρεία is not, he assumes, a mental act, and it is one of the results of his study that in the case of acts which are not "mental in nature", the adjective "signals that the act is guided by rational deliberation" (516). Thus, in effect, based on the instances of his sample that he assigns to this category of use (513–514),<sup>18</sup> Scott's proposal

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<sup>18</sup> Some of Scott's examples cited in this category are not pertinent. For instance, Scott cites Philo, *Det.* 47, which he introduces as "Philo calls any action in which reasoning is not involved an 'irrational act' (μη λογική φορά)", but this example is misleading. For Philo has just distinguished (*Det.* 46) two senses in which the term ἄλογος is used, first, to describe something παρά τὸν αἰρουῦντα λόγον, as for example a foolish person (ἄφρων); second, to describe something in which there is no reason altogether (κατ' ἔκτρομὴν λόγου), as in the case of animals not endowed with reason (ὡς τῶν ζῴων τὰ μη λογικά). Philo then applies this distinction to the movements of the mind (τὰς μὲν οὖν ἀλόγους αὐτοῦ [sc. νοῦ, cf. *Det.* 45] φοράς [*Det.* 47]), which means this example is not a case "beyond the sphere of mental acts" (513) to which Scott has assigned it. And further, Philo describes the second sense of ἄλογος with μη λογικά (τὰς δὲ καθ' ἑτέραν ἐκδοχὴν ἀλόγους [sc. φοράς], οὐχ αἱ παρά τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον εἰσὶν ἀλλ' ὅσαι μη λογικά, ὧν καὶ τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα κοινῶνται), not the first. These movements are such that they cannot and could not be directly controlled by "reasoned thought" (though they may be trained to be aligned with it); while Scott's sense requires that they could be so controlled. Thus, this example does not support Scott's analysis.

Similarly, Severus Iatrosophista, *De instrumentis* 7 (τέχνη ... λογικώτερη) and 22 (λογικώτερα μέθοδος), where the context is medical practice, are not good examples for acts "not mental in nature" (516). Again, Scott cites (n. 90) Posidonius, *Frag.* 309b which compares the variability of human actions with the uniformity of actions by other animals. Thus the λογικά πράξεις are those performed by λογικά ζῶα. Naturally, these actions involve the exercise of reason, but that is not what is emphasised by the use of the adjective, which functions as a contrast term. Also, Scott cites Arius Didymus, *Phil. sect.* 58.1.24, but misconstrues λογικόν as adverbially modifying συναισθάνεσθαι, while it refers back to πάθος. (The ascription of frag. 309b to Posidonius is problematic, cf. section 2.2.)

amounts to the claim that the best parallels for the λογική λατρεία in Rom 12.1 are ὁ λογικός βίος in Philo, *Opif.* 119<sup>19</sup> and *Somn.* 1.179, and the λογική ζωή in Philo, *Post.* 68.<sup>20</sup>

But these parallels are mainly grammatical and syntactical; the semantical meanings of the nouns modified are all very similar (something with “life” or “living”); and none of them is very close to λατρεία or thematically close to something about which Paul might be speaking in Rom 12.1.

Thus, having looked at the evidence put forward by Scott, we maintain that a better approach is to evaluate qualitative parallels, which are linguistically close and also thematically pertinent. This is what we attempt to do with a re-reading of Epictetus 1.16 in chapter 4, for which chapter 3 provides a larger context in ancient discourse. Before we do this, however, it will be useful to establish that the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα was widely known in Paul’s time.

## 2.2 The definition of human beings as ζῶον λογικόν

In this section our aim is to show that the definition of human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν or as a ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν is pre-Pauline, that it is distinctly associated with Stoic philosophy, and that it is more widespread and widely known.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, we want to chart some of the discourses in which this idea is explored, with our result being that this notion is used to discuss the human place in the cosmos, the human vocation, and genuine humanness. We will also consider the question of which audiences might be supposed to have been familiar with this definition. The themes that appear in our discussions

<sup>19</sup> The fragment from *περὶ ἀριθμῶν* which Scott lists in n. 87 is basically the same as *Opif.* 119.

<sup>20</sup> Scott also cites Arius Didymus, *Phil. sect.* 93.1.25–26 (Οἷς γὰρ λογικόν ἐστὶ τὸ ζῆν, τούτοις καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὑπάρχειν) but the context of this last example does not permit a clear determination of the sense which Scott sees documented here. Scott’s phrase “guided by reasoned thought” or “steered by rational judgments” cannot be neatly separated from the senses which he rejects like “in keeping with reason”. We might compare, for a similar statement, but with different import, namely a “vocational” sense for which we argue, Aspasius, *In ethica Nicomachea commentaria* 18.1–2 (λείπεται δὲ [τὸ] ἔργον [εἶναι] τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ πρακτικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ζωὴ, τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν), which comments on Aristotle’s function (ἔργον) argument (cf. our discussion of Epictetus 1.16.21 in chapter 4).

<sup>21</sup> Standard dictionaries used by New Testament scholars routinely note as evident that λογικός, in the sense of “with reference to reason” is “a favourite term in Greek philosophy, especially among the Stoics” (TDNT, s.v.) or a “favourite expression of the philosophers since Aristotle” (BDAG, s.v.). This section aims to investigate the matter afresh with regards to ζῶον λογικόν.

as directly associated with the notion of human beings as rational mortal animals will then be investigated from a different angle in the next chapter, where we draw more on secondary literature to contextualise this discussion more broadly, before launching into a close reading of Epictetus, and finally, Paul.

Our aim for this section requires a closer investigation of the term ζῶον λογικόν and how it is used in the extant corpus of Greek literature. Our approach is to use the proximity text search function of the TLG and apply it to its corpus, using its inbuilt chronological ordering as a first approximation (which, however, needs to be critically evaluated).<sup>22</sup> We have searched for instances of the lemma ζῶον occurring within 10 words near the lemma λογικός. This will generate some irrelevant search results (such as when the two occurrences belong to different texts, for instance in a collection of fragments; or when there are counting overlaps between phrases that occur closely together), but these can be eliminated by the examination of the search results. In this section, we will refer to the results of our search (before the elimination of false hits) as our “sample”.

There are some methodological difficulties, which we will briefly discuss here by looking at concrete examples from among our sample. The first issue concerns the attribution of authorship in the TLG canon. In the case of early Stoic figures like Chrysippus (3d century BC) or Posidonius (c. 135–51 BC)<sup>23</sup> we only have access to their work through collections of fragments,<sup>24</sup> which reflect the source-critical predilections of their times and their editors. The TLG canon includes for Posidonius the collections of Jacoby and Theiler, but not those of Edelstein and Kipp. While Edelstein and Kipp include as fragments only passages in which Posidonius is named, Theiler includes over 300 passages in which he detects Posidonius as a source, directly or in some way derived from him.<sup>25</sup> These passages include Posidonius frag. 309a Theiler,<sup>26</sup> which is taken from the work *De natura hominis* by the bishop of Emesa, Nemesius (written around 400).<sup>27</sup> In

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**22** Thus, we are using the method of “corpus-based” discourse analysis here (see our comments in section 1.4).

**23** For ancient authors, we follow the chronology offered in the respective articles in the DNP.

**24** Since von Arnim’s collection *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, in volumes 2 and 3, presents the material attributed to Chrysippus alongside other generically assigned Stoic material, one cannot straightforwardly assign the material to Chrysippus (the same policy applies in volume 1 for Zeno).

**25** On Theiler’s collection (1982) see the very useful review of Sandbach 1984.

**26** Which is not included in the collection of Jacoby or Edelstein and Kipp.

**27** For the dating, cf. DNP, s.v. “Nemesios”. An excellent translation with introduction and notes is provided by Sharples and van der Eijk 2008. Theiler 1982, 2.188–189 supposes, following W. Jaeger and E. Skard, that Nemesius used both a lost treatise by Galen and, for the more obvious-

this fragment there are clear references to human beings as a ζῷον λογικόν<sup>28</sup> and the passage itself is a fascinating instance of ancient anthropological reflection, gathering many of the motifs and themes that we study in section 3.1.<sup>29</sup> However, due to the disputable nature of the evidence, we will, in a first instance, not admit such passages as evidence for Posidonius having used the phrase ζῷον λογικόν for human beings.

The second issue concerns the attribution of ideas and formulations. Among the earliest search hits for ζῷον λογικόν that occur in our sample there are multiple instances in fragment 44b<sup>30</sup> which is attributed to the philosopher Antisthenes (c. 445–365 BC), a student of Socrates. Fragment 44b is taken from Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* 1043 b23, p. 553,29–554,33. The commentary discusses the statements made by Aristotle in book 8 of his *Metaphysica* (1043b 23–28) concerning a problem about definitions “raised by the school of Antisthenes” (οἱ Ἀντισθένειοι [1043b 24]).<sup>31</sup> The commentary on Aristotle explains the point Antisthenes is supposed to have made using its own example (no example is provided in Aristotle for this point), namely the definition (ὀρισμός) of human beings, in the longer version ζῷον λογικόν, θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν (“rational animal, mortal and receptive of intellect and knowledge”), which using several words is a long formulation (λόγον μακρόν), whereas the term “human being” (τὸ ἄνθρωπος ὄνομα) uses only one word. Based upon this difference, they are supposed to have rejected the possibility of a definition (οὐκ ἔστιν ὀρίσασθαι). In this example, it is probable that the point about definitions itself does go back to Antisthenes (or one of his students),<sup>32</sup> but it is highly unlikely that the formulation

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ly Christian passages, Origen’s commentary on Genesis (whose supposed teacher Ammonius Sakkas is assumed to have been familiar with the teaching of Posidonius). For a concise discussion of Posidonius as a source for Nemesius see Sharples and van der Eijk 2008, 21–23, who are sceptical of a systematical attribution to a work of Posidonius, even if they grant that it cannot be ruled out in some cases.

**28** For instance, in a longer version, “they define human being as a rational animal, mortal and receptive of intellect and knowledge” τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὀρίζονται ζῷον λογικόν, θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν (Posidonius frag. 309 l. 143 Theiler = Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.11; transl. Sharples and van der Eijk, adapted).

**29** The text is important, for instance, for Dierauer 1977, whose work gathers many ancient passages that include reflection on human beings (see section 3.1).

**30** In the collection of Caizzi 1966.

**31** Transl. W. D. Ross (in Barnes 1995).

**32** Cf. also DL 6.3.

ζῶον λογικόν had already been used by Antisthenes.<sup>33</sup> The same holds true for the other instances in frag. 44b: they all use the definition of human beings as ζῶον λογικόν as an example for a definition, but since this has become the standard example for a definition, certainly by the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias (around AD 200), who uses it very frequently in his commentaries on Aristotle, this cannot be taken as evidence for Antisthenes' use of this formulation. However, in the case of fragment 44b it gets even trickier, since scholarship only considers the first five books of *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria* as genuinely by Alexander of Aphrodisias,<sup>34</sup> the rest (including the passage which is fragment 44b) were probably written by Michael of Ephesus in the 12th century.<sup>35</sup> Thus we also have to rule out cases such as fragment 44b of Antisthenes, where the formulation appears to be later than the point formulated.

Having considered these examples in detail, we will begin by seeking to establish the main and incontrovertible points with the most robust evidence, and use the rest to complete the picture.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.2.1 The phrase ζῶον λογικόν is pre-Pauline

First, we can be certain that the phrase ζῶον λογικόν for human beings was used in the first century AD, since it occurs in a papyrus from Herculaneum (no later than 79 AD, when Mount Vesuvius erupted). P. Herc 1065 represents a work by the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus (c. 110 – 40 BC), *Περὶ φαινομένων καὶ σημειώσεων*, in which he defends the method of logical inference based on analogies between the world of appearances and things not directly recognisable.<sup>37</sup> As one example mentioned in this work we find the phrase:

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33 In addition, the extension νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν appears to have originated in Neoplatonic circles (cf. Sharples and van Eijk 2008, 46 n. 232).

34 That is, up to page 439 in the edition of Hayduck.

35 On which see DNP, s.v. “Alexander von Aphrodisias”.

36 In a few cases, we will also complete the picture by using passages where the phrase ζῶον λογικόν does not occur as such but is implied, or when it is clear on contextual grounds that the same thought is expressed as in a related passage, which does use the phrase. We will also occasionally bring in evidence from Latin sources. While Cicero (104–43 BC) understood himself to be an Academic philosopher, his philosophical writings are nevertheless important sources for Stoicism. For instance, Cicero draws heavily on the Stoic Panaetius (c. 185–109 BC) in his *De officiis*. In book 2 of *De natura deorum*, he presents Stoic theological material, drawing also on Posidonius (cf. ND 2.88).

37 Cf. DNP, s.v. “Philodemus von Gadara”.

ῶ[σ]περ ὅταν | εἶπωμεν τὸ σῶμα καθὸ σῶμα | ὄγκον ἔχειν καὶ ἀντι[τυ]πίαν, | καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἢ ἄνθρωπος | ζῶιον λογικόν “as when we say that a body insofar as it is a body has mass and resistance, so also (we say that) the human as human is a rational animal.” (P. Herc 1065, col. frag. 52, 8–9 DeLacy)<sup>38</sup>

Thus, it is clearly already established that the phrase in its use for humans is pre-Pauline, attested in the first century BC (and by an Epicurean).

### 2.2.2 Early Stoics used ζῶιον λογικόν for human beings

Second, we can be quite certain that already the early Stoic Chrysippus used ζῶιον λογικόν for human beings, because Plutarch (c. AD 45– before AD 125) provides us with a valuable quotation that appears to be quoting directly from a work of Chrysippus himself.

In his *De virtute morali*, Plutarch tries to refute those who deny the distinction between a “passionate and irrational” part (τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ ἄλογον) and one that is “reasoning and judging” (τοῦ λογιζομένου καὶ κρίνοντος), and charges his opponents with conceding the distinction in all but name.<sup>39</sup> He seeks to show this by directly quoting from Chrysippus’ *Περὶ Ἀνομολογίας* (450C). We can be confident that he is working with a copy of the text and not just relying on a handbook by the fact that he indicates the order in which the statements appear in his *Vorlage*, using characteristic formulations (ἐν δὲ τοῖς περὶ Ἀνομολογίας ὁ Χρύσιππος εἰπὼν ὅτι “in his books on inconsistency Chrysippus says that”; μικρὸν προελθὼν “proceeding a little further” [450C]) and that he even quotes the words of Menander, which he claims Chrysippus adduced as evidence after the first two quotations (εἶτα χρῆται μάρτυρι τῷ Μενάνδρῳ λέγοντι [450C]).<sup>40</sup> The first two statements concern anger (ἡ ὀργή) and passions generally and how they drive out “processes of reasoning” (πάθη ἐκκρούει τοὺς λογισμούς [450C]). This context of the passions makes it absolutely clear that Chrysippus is speaking of human beings; the Stoic gods and the sage do not suffer from these conditions.

Then comes the relevant quotation, which clearly demonstrates that already Chrysippus used ζῶιον λογικόν for human beings:

<sup>38</sup> Our translation.

<sup>39</sup> Plutarch, *Virt. mor.* 450B. Transl. W. C. Helmbold, here and below, adapted.

<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, there are other polemical works by Plutarch that could only be written with access to written sources, e.g. *De Stoicorum repugnantiis*, *Stoicos absurdiora poetis dicere*, *De communibus notitiis contra stoicos*.

καὶ πάλιν ὁ Χρυσίππος προελθὼν “τοῦ λογικοῦ” φησι “ζῶου φύσιν ἔχοντος προσχρῆσθαι εἰς ἕκαστα τῷ λόγῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τούτου κυβερναῖσθαι πολλάκις ἀποστρέφεσθαι<sup>41</sup> αὐτὸν<sup>42</sup> ἡμᾶς ἄλλη βιαιότερα φορᾶ χρωμένους,” ὁμολογῶν τὸ συμβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸν λόγον τοῦ πάθους διαφορᾶς.

And again, Chrysippus proceeds to say that “every rational creature is so disposed by nature as to use reason in all things and to be governed by it; yet often reason is rejected when we are under the impulse of some other more violent force.” Thus in this passage he plainly acknowledges what conclusion is to be drawn from the difference which exists between passion and reason. (Plutarch, *Virt. mor.* 450D = SVF 3.390)<sup>43</sup>

Again, there are indicators that we have a direct quotation by Chrysippus (προελθὼν ... φησι), and the transition to the commentary by Plutarch is clearly marked (ὁμολογῶν), given his intent to demonstrate that Chrysippus admits the difference between reason and passion (or affections). Helmbold’s translation “rational creature” is apposite here, because the statement in which ζῶον λογικόν itself occurs is only positive and normative (from τοῦ λογικοῦ to κυβερναῖσθαι), nature (φύσιν) as it can and should be. In principle, in this statement ζῶον λογικόν could also apply to other rational beings in the cosmos. But human beings are certainly included among the referents here, and they come into focus in the second statement (from πολλάκις ... χρωμένους), where ἡμᾶς refers to “us humans.” Thus this passage is also relevant in showing that ζῶον λογικόν was already used by Chrysippus in a normative sense for the nature of human beings, to which they should aspire to live up. The passage further shows the close connection between ζῶον λογικόν and (λόγος), which here must be reason, and not only speech, given that it is contrasted with affections.

Our conclusions concerning Chrysippus are strongly confirmed by direct quotations of Chrysippus in Galen’s *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, which is very similar to the Plutarchean passage we have just discussed.<sup>44</sup> Galen aims to expose inconsistencies in Chrysippus’ definitions of affection (τῶν κατὰ τὸ πάθος ὀρισμῶν [4.2.8]), one as “an irrational and unnatural movement of the soul” (ἄλογόν τε καὶ παρὰ φύσιν κίνησιν ψυχῆς [4.2.8]), the other as “excessive conation”<sup>45</sup> (πλεονάζουσαν ὀρμήν [4.2.8]), and to show how they contra-

41 Cf. also the similar statement in DL 7.89 (διαστρέφεσθαι δὲ τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον), where contextually it is possible that Diogenes Laertius is still reporting on Chrysippus.

42 Sc. λόγον.

43 We have inserted the quotation marks to indicate the direction quotation (the same words are marked in SVF).

44 For PHP, we use the edition and translation of de Lacy 1978. Galen’s polemical interaction with Chrysippus is excellently analysed in Sorabji 2000, cf. especially chapter 2.

45 Or “excessive impulse”.

dict the Chrysippean thesis that “affections are judgments” (κρίσεις εἶναι τὰ πάθη [4.2.8]). Galen introduces the following as quoting Chrysippus’ own words (τὰς ῥήσεις αὐτοῦ παραγράφαντες [4.2.9]), which thus include the phrase ζῶον λογικόν used for human beings:

“δεῖ δὲ πρῶτον ἐντεθυμηθῆσαι ὅτι τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον ἀκολουθητικὸν φύσει ἐστὶ τῷ λόγῳ καὶ κατὰ τὸν λόγον ὡς ἂν ἡγεμόνα πρακτικόν. πολλάκις μέντοι καὶ ἄλλως φέρεται ἐπὶ τινα καὶ ἀπὸ τινων, ἀπειθῶς τῷ λόγῳ ὠθούμενον ἐπὶ πλεῖον”.

First one must keep in mind that the rational animal is by nature such as to follow reason and to act with reason as his guide. (11) But often they move in another way toward some things and away from some things in disobedience to reason when they are pushed too much. (Galen, PHP 4.2.10–11, part of SVF 3.462)

In the passage quoted by Galen, Chrysippus applies both definitions of affections to this irrational movement. He compares them to expressions found in ordinary language (somebody is “pushed and moved irrationally, without reason and judgment” ὠτεισθῆναι καὶ ἀλόγως φέρεσθαι ἄνευ λόγου <καὶ> κρίσεως [4.2.12]). The last sentence of the quotation again includes the phrase λογικὸν ζῶον for human beings:

<οὐ γὰρ> ...<sup>46</sup> ταῦτ’ ἐπισημαίνόμεθα, ἀλλὰ μάλιστα καθ’ ἣν ὑπογράφει φοράν, οὐ πεφυκός τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου κινεῖσθαι οὕτως κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον.”

[For when we use these expressions ...] we use them most of all with reference to the movement that he describes, since it is not the nature of a rational animal to move thus in his soul, but in accordance with reason. (Galen, PHP 4.2.13, part of SVF 3.462)

Galen clearly marks off what he claims is a direct quotation (τῶν τοῦ Χρυσίππου ῥήσεων) from Chrysippus’ first book “On the affections” (τὸ πρῶτον σύγγραμμα περὶ παθῶν [4.2.14]). The context of the discussion makes it abundantly clear that the phrase λογικὸν ζῶον is again used for the nature (πεφυκός) of human beings; it is again related to reason (κατὰ τὸν λόγον), in a normative conception (from which, however, there is often [πολλάκις] a deviation).<sup>47</sup> Thus we have established that at least since Chrysippus (3d century BC) the phrase λογικὸν ζῶον is used for human beings, in a normative and ethical context (the emotions under control of reason). Perhaps it is possible to push this even further, to the founder of the Stoic school, Zeno of Citium (c. 334–262/1 BC), given that

<sup>46</sup> We have omitted a few words.

<sup>47</sup> The similarities with the Plutarchean passage are apparent, and they make the attribution to Chrysippus even more probable.

the referent of ὑπογράφει (“he describes” [4.2.13]) might be Zeno,<sup>48</sup> but of course that does not yet show that the statement that follows goes back already to Zeno, for which our sample offers no specific evidence.<sup>49</sup> However, given the importance of Chrysippus for the Stoic school,<sup>50</sup> we can conclude that Stoics were familiar with the phrase λογικὸν ζῶον as applied to human beings at least since Chrysippus became head of the school.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.2.3 Early Stoics used ζῶον λογικόν for the cosmos and God

Third, Stoics at least since Chrysippus applied the phrase ζῶον λογικόν to the cosmos. There is some evidence that might indicate that the phrase ζῶον λογικόν was already applied to the cosmos as a whole by Zeno himself. The Pyrrhonian Sceptic Sextus Empiricus (end of the 2nd century AD), in his *Adversus Mathematicos* attributes several arguments to Zeno of Citium which aim to show that the cosmos itself is an animal and rational.<sup>52</sup> He compares some of them to those of Socrates in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* (AM 9.101),<sup>53</sup> whose conclusion is that the cosmos is rational (λογικόν<sup>54</sup> ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος [AM 9.101, 9.104, cf. 9.103]; also “intelligent” [νοερός (AM 9.104)]). Sextus then discusses arguments in Plato’s *Timaeus* (29d–30b), and quotes, in AM 9.106 the following passage:

48 This is suggested by Sorabji 2000, 60, who, however, adds a question mark to his suggestion.

49 In SVF 1, fragments 230 and 244 use the phrase in a way that applies to human beings, but they are both generic statements about Stoic doctrine and not specific in pointing to Zeno. The phrase οἱ τὰ τοῦ Κιτιέως Ζήνωνος φιλοσοφούντες (“the philosophers who follow Zeno of Citium” [Origen, *Cels.* 7.63 = SVF 1.244]; transl. Chadwick 1986) is simply designating the school by its founder.

50 Cf. the famous statement that there would be no Stoa if it were not for Chrysippus (DL 7.83).

51 The ascription of DL 7.61 (which uses ζῶον λογικόν to illustrate a division [διαίρεσις], quoted below) to the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon (c. 240–150 BC, a student of Chrysippus), listed as a part of frag. 25 in von Arnim’s collection (at SVF 3, p. 214), has been challenged by Mansfeld 1986, 367; so we will disregard this passage as evidence for early Stoic use of the notion of ζῶον λογικόν, though of course it documents general Stoic use.

52 For Sextus Empiricus, AM we adapt the translation of R. G. Bury. Note that AM 7–8 = *Adversus logicos* 1–2, AM 9–10 = *Adversus physicos*, AM 11 = *Adversus ethicos*.

53 Sextus Empiricus quotes from Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.2 at AM 9.92–94. Cf. section 3.1.6.

54 The fact that in AM 9.104 λογικόν (contrast with νοερός; cf. λογικός [AM 9.103]) is not congruent with ὁ κόσμος might suggest that a neuter like ζῶον is to be supplied. However, the construction with a “neuter adjective used as predicative complement” is a noted exception to the basic rule of agreement in CGCG 27.8.

Guided by this reasoning (λογισμόν) he put (συνιστάς) intelligence (νοῦν) in soul (ἐν ψυχῇ), and soul in body (ἐν σώματι), and so he constructed (συνετεκταίνεται) the Universe (τὸ πᾶν). He wanted to produce a piece of work that would be as excellent and supreme as its nature would allow (ὅτι κάλλιστον εἴη κατὰ φύσιν ἄριστόν τε ἔργον ἀπειργασμένος). This, then, in keeping with our likely account (κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα), is how we must say divine providence brought our world into being as a truly living thing, endowed with soul and intelligence (τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ζῶον ἔμψυχον ἔνουν τε τῆ ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι πρόνοιαν). (Plato, *Tim* 30b)<sup>55</sup>

Then follows the passage, which perhaps suggests that Zeno applied the phrase ζῶον λογικόν to the cosmos, though it is tricky to evaluate, given that Sextus presents a sort of blended quotation (the elements which also figure in the *Timaeus* passage are underlined in the following):

δυνάμει δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν τῷ Ζήνωνι λόγον ἐξέθετο· καὶ γὰρ οὗτος τὸ πᾶν κάλλιστον εἶναι φησι, κατὰ φύσιν ἀπειργασμένον ἔργον καὶ κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον, ζῶον ἔμψυχον νοερόν τε καὶ λογικόν.

*In terms of its sense, he (Plato) has put forth the same argument as Zeno. For he (Zeno) also affirmed that “the All is most fair, being a work executed according to nature and according to the likely account a living creature endowed with soul, both intelligent and rational.” (Sextus Empiricus, AM 9.107 = SVF 1.110)<sup>56</sup>*

It does not seem possible, then, to consider this passage as providing robust evidence for Zeno having used the words ζῶον λογικόν for the cosmos, given that Sextus put the point he understands Zeno to have made in terms of the words of Plato’s *Timaeus* (in order to show how Plato’s argument is the same as Zeno’s). Only for the summary phrase overlapping with what he had already presented from Zeno (νοερόν τε καὶ λογικόν) can we safely infer that it seems to be material from Zeno (though it could just be a paraphrase added by Sextus to the words from the *Timaeus*); for ζῶον this is not possible, given the kind of quotation Sextus employs. But we can be relatively certain that Zeno already used the word λογικός in the sense of “endowed with reason” in speaking of the cosmos.<sup>57</sup>

While the phrase ζῶον λογικόν used for the cosmos cannot be established for Zeno, there is more robust evidence that Chrysippus already used it. In the

<sup>55</sup> Transl. of the *Timaeus* Donald J. Zeyl (in Cooper 1997).

<sup>56</sup> Transl. R. G. Bury, which we have revised (indicated by italics). Bury’s translation here seems confusing; he renders οὗτος as “the former” (i.e. Plato), when it should have been “the latter” (i.e. Zeno). SVF, volume 1 figures under “Zeno” in the TLG canon.

<sup>57</sup> Because τὸ πᾶν (the whole) appears in the passage of the *Timaeus* we cannot be sure whether Sextus implies they are found as such in a work of Zeno.

doxographer Diogenes Laertius (3d. century BC), who summarises Stoic doctrine in his seventh book of his *Vitae philosophorum*, we find the following evidence for Chrysippus' and other Stoics' use of ζῶον λογικόν<sup>58</sup> for the cosmos:

The doctrine that the world is a living being, rational, animate and intelligent ("Ὅτι δὲ καὶ ζῶον ὁ κόσμος καὶ λογικὸν καὶ ἔμψυχον<sup>59</sup> καὶ νοερόν) is laid down by Chrysippus in the first book of his treatise On Providence (Περὶ προνοίας), by Apollodorus in his Physics, and by Posidonius. (143) It is a living thing (ζῶον) in the sense of an animate substance endowed with sensation (οὐσίαν ἔμψυχον αἰσθητικήν); for animal (ζῶον) is better than non-animal, and nothing is better than the world (κόσμου), ergo the world is a living being (ζῶον ἄρ' ὁ κόσμος). And it is endowed with soul (ἔμψυχον), as is clear from our several souls being each a fragment of it (τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ἐκείθεν οὐσης ἀποσπάσματος). Boëthius, however, denies that the world is a living thing. (DL 7.142–143 = SVF 2.633 [Chrysippus]<sup>60</sup> = Apollodorus, frag. 10 [in SVF, vol. 3] = Posidonius frag. 304 Theiler)<sup>61</sup>

In addition to Chrysippus and Posidonius, the phrase ζῶον λογικόν for the cosmos is here also attributed to the Stoic Apollodorus of Seleucia<sup>62</sup> (2nd century BC). The same point is also noted in an earlier passage in Diogenes Laertius, where, in the light of the evidence already discussed, the connection to providence<sup>63</sup> is noteworthy:

The world, in their view, is ordered by reason and providence (Τὸν δὴ κόσμον διοικεῖσθαι κατὰ νοῦν καὶ πρόνοιαν) ...<sup>64</sup> inasmuch as reason pervades every part of it (εἰς ἅπαν αὐτοῦ μέρος διήκοντος τοῦ νοῦ), just as does the soul in us. Only there is a difference of degree; in some parts there is more of it, in others less. (139) For through some parts it passes as a "hold" or containing force (ὡς ἔξισ κεχώρηκεν), as is the case with our bones and sinews; while through others it passes as intelligence (δι' ὧν δὲ ὡς νοῦς), as in the ruling part of the soul (ὡς διὰ τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ). Thus, then, the whole world is a living being, endowed with soul and reason (τὸν ὅλον κόσμον ζῶον ὄντα καὶ ἔμψυχον καὶ λογικόν). (DL 7.138–139 = SVF 2.634 [Chrysippus] = Posidonius frag. 345 Theiler)

**58** Though the formulations (καὶ ζῶον ... καὶ λογικόν [DL 7.143], ζῶον ὄντα ... καὶ λογικόν [DL 7.139] are not yet as closely tied together as the phrase ζῶον λογικόν is. We will pass over this slight difference henceforth.

**59** We note that here ζῶον ἔμψυχον (which was uncertain in Sextus Empiricus, AM 9.107) is explicitly stated.

**60** Note that SVF 2.633–645 are all under the heading of the cosmos as a rational animal.

**61** Transl. R. D. Hicks, for Diogenes Laertius, here and below, adapted.

**62** Cf. SVF 3, p. 259.

**63** This will be important also in chapter 4 on Epictetus.

**64** We have omitted the explicit references to the works of Chrysippus and Posidonius to which this point about providence is attributed.

This passage also suggests that the cosmos being a ζῶον λογικόν can be explained with reference to its being pervaded by reason (νοῦς), which comes in different forms. In human beings (δι' ὧν δὲ),<sup>65</sup> or, to be more precise, in the ruling part of their soul (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν), however, it takes the form of intelligence (νοῦς). The connection between reason in human beings and in the world as a whole is important (see below).

Given the close association or identification of God and the cosmos in Stoic thought,<sup>66</sup> it is no surprise to find that in early Stoic sources God (θεός) is also called a ζῶον λογικόν:

Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον, λογικόν, τέλειον<sup>67</sup> ἢ νοερόν ἐν εὐδαιμονίᾳ, κακοῦ παντὸς ἀνεπίδεκτον, προνοητικὸν κόσμου τε καὶ τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ· μὴ εἶναι μέντοι ἀνθρωπόμορφον. εἶναι δὲ τὸν μὲν δημιουργὸν τῶν ὄλων καὶ ὡσπερ πατέρα πάντων κοινῶς τε καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ διήκον διὰ πάντων.

God, say they, is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect or intelligent in happiness, admitting nothing evil [into him], taking providential care of the world and all that therein is, but he is not of human shape. He is, however, the artificer of the universe and, as it were, the father of all, both in general and in that particular part of him which is all-pervading, and which is called many names according to its various powers. (DL 7.147 = SVF 2.1021)

Besides being a clear testimony for the Stoic use of the phrase ζῶον λογικόν for God (θεός), this passage also hints at several other aspects of the Stoic doctrine of God which are condensed here in the definitory formula.<sup>68</sup> We have already

**65** Other beings could be in view, but human beings are clearly included.

**66** Note that the first of three senses of cosmos (κόσμος) offered in DL 7.137 is God (θεός): Λέγουσι δὲ κόσμον τριχῶς· αὐτόν τε τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν, ὃς δὴ ἄφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἀγέννητος, δημιουργὸς ὧν τῆς διακοσμήσεως “The term universe or cosmos is used by them in three senses: of God himself, the individual being whose quality is derived from the whole of substance; he is indestructible and ingenerable, being the artificer of this orderly arrangement.” At DL 7.148, the “substance of God” (Οὐσίαν δὲ θεοῦ) is said to be “the whole world and the heaven” (τὸν ὅλον κόσμον καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν); the view is ascribed to Zeno, Chrysippus, Posidonius. In Philodemus, *De pietate* 14 (= SVF 2.636) there is a statement that Chrysippus (cf. SVF 3, p. 204), in the fifth book *On nature* (περὶ Φύσεως) “asked for accounts on whether the cosmos is a living being and rational and understanding and a god” (καὶ λόγους ἐρωτᾷ περὶ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ζῶον εἶναι καὶ λογικόν καὶ φρονεῖν καὶ θεόν [our translation]).

**67** Several terms used in DL 7.147 are also interesting in view of Rom 12.1–2: τέλειον and κακοῦ παντὸς ἀνεπίδεκτον for Rom 12.2 (τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον). Further, we note (δι' ὧν τὰ πάντα [DL 7.147]) in comparison with Rom 11.36 (δι' αὐτοῦ). Cf. also (τοῦ ζῆν αἰτίος [DL 7.147]) with Rom 12.1 (ζῶσαν).

**68** Cf. also the links of θεός with νοῦς and λογός implied in the following statements: “God is one and the same with Reason, Fate, and Zeus” (“Ἐν τ' εἶναι θεὸν καὶ νοῦν καὶ εἰμαρμένην καὶ Δία

established the use of νοερόν and λογικόν, applied to the cosmos, in Zeno. There is again a statement about providence (προνοητικόν), both for the cosmos as a whole and for its parts (including humans). The first term applied to God is ἀθάνατον. Given that both human beings and gods are designated as a ζῶον λογικόν, the term ἀθάνατος serves to distinguish, where required, between humans, who are also θνητός, and gods.<sup>69</sup>

This distinction is explained explicitly in another passage in Plutarch's *De communibus notitiis contra stoicos*,<sup>70</sup> which offers further confirmation for God as a ζῶον λογικόν, and links it to Chrysippus and the Stoic Cleanthes (c. 331/0 – 230/29 BC).<sup>71</sup> Plutarch seeks to show that the common conception of God's indestructibility and eternity<sup>72</sup> militate against the Stoic statements<sup>73</sup> that "all the gods have come into being and will be destroyed (φθαρσιμόνους) by fire."<sup>74</sup> This prompts the following argument:

Now, as the notion that human beings are immortal (τὸ ἄνθρωπον ἀθάνατον εἶναι) is at odds with the common conception so also is the notion that God is mortal (τὸ θεὸν θνητόν),

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[DL 7.135]) and fate (εἰμαρμένη) defined as "the reason or formula by which the world goes on" (λόγος καθ' ὃν ὁ κόσμος διεξάγεται [DL 7.149]).

**69** The phrase ζῶον λογικόν ἀθάνατον is also applied to the cosmos in works containing Stoic doxographical material, cf. Pseudo-Galen, *De historia philosophica* 124 (κόσμος), Pseudo-Plutarch (c. 2nd century AD), *Placita philosophorum* 908F (κόσμος), Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 1.43 (κόσμος). Diels 1879 (DG = *Doxographi Graeci*) has reconstructed from various sources, but including all three works mentioned here, a doxographical work by the first century AD philosopher Aëtius, which features the passage on page 432. Curiously, Stobaeus and Aëtius, also mentioned someone (or something?) inspired by a god (τὸν ἔνθεον) as a ζῶον λογικόν ἀθάνατον. The critical editions indicate certain corruptions in the text. Diel's reconstruction of Aëtius is now to be replaced by Mansfeld and Runia 1996–2020.

**70** Transl. Harold Cherniss for *Comm. not.*, here and below, adapted.

**71** They are mentioned at *Comm. not.* 1075A.

**72** Cf. *Comm. not.* 1074F ("For what other human being is there or has there been in whose conception the divinity is not indestructible and everlasting?" τίς γάρ ἐστιν ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ἢ γέγονεν, ὃς οὐκ ἄφθαρτον νοεῖ καὶ αἰδίων τὸ θεῖον); 1075A ("not a single man has there been who having a conception of God did not conceive him to be indestructible and everlasting" θεὸν δὲ νοῶν μὴ νοῶν δ' ἄφθαρτον μηδ' αἰδίων ἄνθρωπος οὐδὲ εἷς γέγονεν). Cf. Rom 1.23 (τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ).

**73** Plutarch notes that these statements are found "expressly stated" (διαρρήδη) in their works "on the Gods and Providence, on Destiny and Nature" (ἐν τοῖς περὶ Θεῶν καὶ Προνοίας Εἰμαρμένης τε καὶ Φύσεως γράμμασι [*Comm. not.* 1075B]).

**74** τοὺς ἄλλους θεοὺς ἅπαντας εἶναι γεγονότας καὶ φθαρσιμόνους ὑπὸ πυρός (*Comm. not.* 1075C). Cf. Plutarch, *Stoic. Rep.* 1052A, where Plutarch quotes Chrysippus and paraphrases him very similarly. For further Stoic texts where it is stated that the cosmos (κοσμός) is perishable (φθαρτός), see SVF 2.589–595, especially DL 7.41 (ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτοῖς καὶ φθαρτὸν εἶναι τὸν κόσμον "they hold that the world is perishable").

or rather I do not see what difference there would be between God and human beings (τίς ἔσται θεοῦ πρὸς ἄνθρωπον διαφορά) if God too is an animal rational and subject to destruction (εἰ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ζῶν λογικὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν ἐστίν). For, if they retort with this fine subtlety that human beings are mortal (θνητὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον) whereas God is not mortal but is subject to destruction (οὐ θνητὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἀλλὰ φθαρτὸν), look at their predicament: they would be saying either that God is at once immortal and subject to destruction or that he is neither mortal nor immortal (ἢ γὰρ ἀθάνατον εἶναι φήσουσιν ἅμα τὸν θεὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν, ἢ μήτε θνητὸν εἶναι μήτ' ἀθάνατον). (Plutarch, *Comm. not.* 1075C)

This passage is notable because it shows that even someone as critical of Stoics as the Platonist Plutarch can take for granted that both God and human beings should be defined as ζῶν λογικόν (and it does not seem like he is simply adopting his opponent's premises for the purposes of refutation).<sup>75</sup> The addition of either θνητὸν or ἀθάνατον then serves as the *differentia* needed in their respective definitions.<sup>76</sup> The same applies to the following passage in Sextus Empiricus, in which he criticises a definition of φαντασία (“impression”) made by Zeno on the grounds that it fails to distinguish adequately from other things which also fit the same description, but are obviously different. To illustrate this point about a bad definition, Sextus resorts to a comparison with the definition of ζῶν λογικόν, which applies both to human beings and to God:

The definition (ὄρος), therefore, is a bad one, as it suits many different things; and just as he who defines “human being” (ὁ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὀρισάμενος) and says that “humans are a rational animal” (ἄνθρωπός ἐστι ζῶν λογικόν) does not give a sound description of the notion of “human being” (τὴν ἔννοιαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) because “God” also is a rational animal (διὰ τὸ καὶ τὸν θεὸν ζῶν εἶναι λογικόν). (Sextus Empiricus, AM 7.239)

Here Sextus seems to take for granted that ζῶν λογικόν applies equally to human beings and to God, though in his case it seems to be simply a sceptical strategy of adopting the premises of an opponent and exposing their internal contradictions.<sup>77</sup> That the definition of human beings serves as a useful example to illustrate points about definitions can also be seen in Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* 2.209, where the measure of wrong definitions is that they “include any attributes not belonging either to all or to some of the objects de-

75 This is clear not least from Plutarch's own use of the phrase at *Am. prol.* 495C.

76 Thus it is explicitly stated in Alexander of Aphrodisias' *In Aristotelis topicorum libros octo commentaria*, p. 353 l. 22–24: εἶδη μὲν γὰρ ζῴου λογικοῦ ἄνθρωπος καὶ θεός, διαφορά δὲ αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὸ θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον “For the species of the rational animal are human beings and God, and their *differentia* is according to ‘mortal’ and ‘immortal’” (our translation).

77 Cf. his criticism of definitions at Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr.* 2.205–212. For the *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* we adapt the translation of R. G. Bury.

fined”, so, for instance, defining human beings (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) as “a rational, immortal animal” (ζῶον λογικὸν ἀθάνατον) or as “a rational mortal literary animal” (ζῶον λογικὸν θνητὸν γραμματικόν).

This is also the place to discuss a peculiar attestation of the phrase ζῶον λογικόν being used both for human beings and for God, and for that being which in the view of his followers straddles the boundaries between the human and the divine, namely Pythagoras. The Platonist Iamblichus (c. 245–325 AD), in his *De vita Pythagorica* writes:

ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς περὶ τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς φιλοσοφίας διαίρεσιν τινα τοιάνδε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐν τοῖς πάνυ ἀπορρήτοις διαφυλάττεσθαι· τοῦ λογικοῦ ζώου τὸ μὲν ἐστὶ θεός, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ οἶον Πυθαγόρας.

Aristotle relates in his books *On the Pythagorean Philosophy* that the following division was preserved by the Pythagoreans as one of their greatest secrets: of rational living creatures, some are gods, some men, and some beings like Pythagoras. (Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* 6.31 = Pythagoras, *Testimonia* frag. 7 DK<sup>78</sup> = Aristoteles, frag. 192 Rose)<sup>79</sup>

If these words could be traced back to Aristotle or even the “Pythagoreans”, they would be the earliest attestation for ζῶον λογικόν, but this is very unlikely. Not just because it is hard to be sure about the exact wording of “unmentionable” secrets of an exclusive society, on which Neoplatonists and others liked to foist their own views. It also does not seem like Iamblichus signals he is quoting the point from Aristotle’s work (διαίρεσιν τινα τοιάνδε “some such distinction”; ἱστορεῖ). Furthermore, this would be the only instance of the phrase ζῶον λογικόν in the Aristotelian corpus, which, had it really been used by Aristotle, we might have expected much more frequently. A division into gods, ordinary humans and Pythagoras may well have been related in Aristotle’s work, but the formulation very likely belongs to a much later period.

#### 2.2.4 For Stoics, God and human beings as ζῶα λογικά are related

Fourth, the Stoic use of ζῶον λογικόν for God (or the cosmos) and human beings is closely related.<sup>80</sup> This can be seen already in an argument for the existence of

<sup>78</sup> In the chronological ordering of the TLG, these are listed as 6th/5th century BC.

<sup>79</sup> Transl. Jonathan Barnes and Gavin Lawrence (in Barnes 1995).

<sup>80</sup> Cf. already the notion of ἀπόσπασμα used in DL 7.143 quoted above.

God (i. e. the cosmos as a rational living being) Sextus Empiricus ascribes to Zeno of Citium:<sup>81</sup>

“That which projects (προϊέμενον) the seed of the rational (σπέρμα λογικοῦ) is itself rational (λογικόν); but the Universe projects the seed of the rational (ὁ δὲ κόσμος προίεται σπέρμα λογικοῦ); therefore the Universe (κόσμος) is rational (λογικός). And thereby the existence thereof is also concluded.” (Sextus Empiricus, AM 9.101)

Thus the rationality ascribed to the cosmos is linked in Zeno’s argumentation to that of the “seed of the rational” (σπέρμα λογικοῦ), which seems to refer to human beings as λογικός, but it might include other beings or be more abstract in its diction, owing to the terse nature of syllogistic arguments. Sextus explains the direct quotation in words that seem to reflect later Stoic sources (which his aim will then be to refute). Sextus first refers to a principle that links the ruling part with each particular thing:

For the origin of motion (ἡ καταρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως) in every nature and soul seems to come from “the regent part,” (ἀπὸ ἡγεμονικοῦ) and all the powers that are sent forth into the parts of the whole (αἱ ἐπὶ τὰ μέρη τοῦ ὅλου ἐξαποστελλόμεναι δυνάμεις) are sent forth from the regent part as from a fount (ἀπὸ τινος πηγῆς<sup>82</sup>), so that every power which exists in the part exists also in the whole owing to its being distributed from its regent part (πᾶσαν δυνάμιν τὴν περὶ τὸ μέρος οὔσαν καὶ περὶ τὸ ὅλον εἶναι διὰ τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἡγεμονικοῦ διαδίδοσθαι). (Sextus Empiricus, AM 9.102)

Given a principle that the ruling part must be better than the parts, he reports an interpretation in terms of ζῶα λογικά (including human beings) which is as follows:

Consequently, if the Universe projects the seed of a rational animal (λογικοῦ ζώου), it does not do so, like man (ἄνθρωπος), by frothy emission, but as containing (περιέχει) the seeds of rational animals (σπέρματα λογικῶν ζώων); but it does not contain them in the same way as we might speak of the vine “containing” its grapes, – that is, by way of inclusion (κατὰ περιγραφὴν), – but because the “seminal reasons” of rational animals (λόγοι σπερματικοὶ λογικῶν ζώων) are contained in it. So that the argument is this (ὥστε εἶναι τοιοῦτο τὸ λεγόμενον) – “The Universe contains (ὁ δὲ γε κόσμος περιέχει) the seminal reasons of rational animals (σπερματικούς λόγους λογικῶν ζώων); therefore the Universe (κόσμος) is rational (λογικός).” (Sextus Empiricus, AM 9.103)

<sup>81</sup> Which we referenced, but have not quoted above.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. also Philo’s use of λογικὴ πηγὴ in *Det.* 83, *Migr.* 47, *Somm.* 1.115 (God), *Spec. Leg.* 2.202. Cf. also Marcus Aurelius 8.35.

Thus, in the interpretation of Zeno's argument as reported by Sextus, the σπέρμα λογικοῦ is paraphrased as λόγοι σπερματικοὶ λογικῶν ζῴων, using the Stoic technical term λόγοι σπερματικοί (“seminal principles”),<sup>83</sup> and more particularly the seminal principles of human beings, addressed as ζῶα λογικά. The upshot from this passage is that the rationality of the cosmos and that of human beings within it are closely linked.

This link expressed in arguments for the existence of God also has ethical implications,<sup>84</sup> as the following passage from Diogenes Laertius makes clear with regard to Chrysippus. As Diogenes Laertius relates (DL 7.87), Zeno had given, in his work *Περὶ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως* (On the nature of human beings), a formula for the goal of life (τέλος) in terms of “living in agreement with nature” (τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν). This is explained as “a virtuous life” (κατ’ ἀρετὴν ζῆν), given that nature is said to lead us towards the goal of virtue (ἄγει γὰρ πρὸς ταύτην [sc. ἀρετὴν] ἡμᾶς ἢ φύσις). Chrysippus’ own variation is rendered as “living in accordance with experience of the actual course of nature” (κατ’ ἐμπειρίαν τῶν φύσει συμβαινόντων ζῆν). The reason for Chrysippus’ definition of the *telos* is given in a statement which expresses the close link between human beings and the whole:

For our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe (μέρη γὰρ εἰσὶν αἱ ἡμέτεραι φύσεις τῆς τοῦ ὅλου). And this is why the end (τέλος) may be defined as life in accordance with nature (τὸ ἀκολουθῶς τῇ φύσει ζῆν), or, in other words, in accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe (κατὰ τε τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὅλων), a life in which we refrain from every action forbidden by the law common to all things (ὁ νόμος ὁ κοινός), that is to say, the right reason (ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος), which pervades all things (διὰ πάντων ἐρχόμενος), and is identical with this Zeus (Διί), lord and ruler of all that is (καθηγεμόνι τούτῳ τῆς τῶν ὄντων διοικήσεως ὄντι). (DL 7.88)

The same point is then repeated about Chrysippus, in contrast to Cleanthes:

Φύσιν δὲ Χρῦσιππος μὲν ἐξακοῦει, ἧ ἀκολουθῶς δεῖ ζῆν, τὴν τε κοινὴν καὶ ἰδίως τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην· ὁ δὲ Κλεάνθης τὴν κοινὴν μόνην ἐκδέχεται φύσιν, ἧ ἀκολουθεῖν δεῖ, οὐκέτι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ μέρους.

<sup>83</sup> Long and Sedley (1987, 1.277, cf. 2.272) explain λόγοι σπερματικοί as “seminal principles”, which “describe the mode of god’s activity in matter, a rational pattern of constructive growth which is both the life of god and the ordered development of all particular things.”

<sup>84</sup> Cf. also Forschner 2018, 149, who comments on the aims of Stoic proofs of the existence of God as follows: “der göttliche Grund, so das übergeordnete Ziel aller Argumente der stoischen Theologie, sichert die durchdringende Rationalität der Weltordnung und ermöglicht es dem Menschen, aufgrund seiner Rationalität sich passend in das vernünftige Weltgeschehen einzufügen.”

By the nature with which our life ought to be in accord, Chrysippus understands both universal nature and more particularly the nature of human beings, whereas Cleanthes takes the nature of the universe alone as that which should be followed, without adding the nature of the individual. (DL 7.89)

Given that both human nature and the natural order are understood as rational (being ζῶα λογικά), living in agreement with nature or according to virtue can simply be explained as living in agreement with reason (λόγος):

But when reason (λόγου) by way of a more perfect leadership (κατὰ τελειοτέραν προστάσιν) has been bestowed on the beings we call rational (τοῖς λογικοῖς), for them life according to reason rightly (τὸ κατὰ λόγον ζῆν) becomes the natural life (ὀρθῶς γίνεσθαι <τού> τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν). For reason supervenes to shape impulse scientifically (τεχνίτης γὰρ οὗτος [sc. λόγος] ἐπιγίνεται τῆς ὀρμῆς). (DL 7.86)

Here both human beings and gods are addressed as rational beings (τοῖς λογικοῖς) and both are able (at least in principle) to live in accordance with nature at the level of reason, in contrast to other animals.<sup>85</sup>

Having established that reason and their rational nature is what connects human beings and the gods with regard to pre-Pauline Stoics, we can confirm this basic picture by drawing on later Stoics, such as the Roman Emperor and Stoic Marcus Aurelius (AD 121–180), who repeatedly makes these points explicitly, in the following passages, in which the phrase ζῶον λογικόν is used for both human beings and gods, emphasising their relations:

Τῷ λογικῷ ζῴῳ ἡ αὐτὴ πράξις κατὰ φύσιν ἐστὶ καὶ κατὰ λόγον.

For a rational being, to act in accordance with nature is also to act in accordance with reason. (Marcus Aurelius 7.11)<sup>86</sup>

For Marcus Aurelius, rational creatures include both gods and human beings, both understood as part of a polity (πολιτεία)<sup>87</sup> or a community (κοινωνία):

τέλος δὲ λογικῶν ζῴων τὸ ἔπεσθαι τῷ τῆς πόλεως καὶ πολιτείας τῆς πρεσβυτάτης λόγῳ καὶ θεσμῷ.

And the end for rational creatures is to follow the reason and the rule of that most venerable archetype of a governing state – the Universe. (Marcus Aurelius 2.16.1)

<sup>85</sup> See the context of οἰκείωσις in DL 7.85–86.

<sup>86</sup> We have adapted the translation of Martin Hammond for the *Meditations* (Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Marcus Aurelius 9.16, 10.2.

Each creature is made in the interest of another; its course is directed to that for which it was made (πρὸς ὃ δὲ κατεσκευάσται, πρὸς τοῦτο φέρεται); its end (τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ) lies in that to which its course is directed; and where it ends, there also for each is its benefit and its good (ὁ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκάστου). It follows that the good of a rational creature is community (τὸ ἄρα ἀγαθὸν τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου κοινωνία).<sup>88</sup> It has long been shown that we are born for community (πρὸς κοινωνίαν γεγόναμεν<sup>89</sup>). (Marcus Aurelius, 5.16)

Marcus Aurelius takes up Chrysippus' point about following one's own nature and the nature of the whole, discussed above, and expresses it in terms of the constitution of rational creatures (τῆ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου κατασκευῆ). The implications for Marcus Aurelius are not only a relation towards the gods (τῆν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀκολουθίαν) but also to fellow human beings (τῆν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους οἰκείωσιν):

Revere your power of judgment (ὑποληπτικὴν δύναμιν). All rests on this to make sure that your directing mind (τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ) no longer entertains any judgment (ὑπόληψις) which fails to agree with the nature or constitution of a rational being (ἀνακόλουθος τῆ φύσει καὶ τῆ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου κατασκευῆ).<sup>90</sup> And this state guarantees (ἐπαγγέλλεται) deliberate thought (ἀπροπτωσίαν), affinity with other human beings (τῆν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους οἰκείωσιν), and obedience to the gods (τῆν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀκολουθίαν). (Marcus Aurelius 3.9)

Such ethical implications towards fellow humans are developed in the following passage:

And what is it you will resent (δυσχερανεῖς)? Human wickedness (τῆ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κακία)? Recall the conclusion that rational creatures are born for each other's sake (τὰ λογικὰ ζῶα ἀλλήλων ἔνεκεν γέγονε), that tolerance is part of justice (τὸ ἀνέχεσθαι μέρος τῆς δικαιοσύνης), that wrongdoing is not deliberate (ἄκοντες ἀμαρτάνουσι). (Marcus Aurelius 4.3.2)

Marcus Aurelius even makes the relation of humans' rational nature to community explicit in definitory formulae, such as when he speaks of himself, in a normative context of human nature, as wanting "to follow the nature of a rational

<sup>88</sup> Cf. also especially Marcus Aurelius 9.9.2 ("among the rational creatures there were civic communities, friendships, households, assemblies: and in war, treaties and truces" ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν λογικῶν ζῶων πολιτεία καὶ φιλία καὶ οἶκοι καὶ σύλλογοι καὶ ἐν πολέμοις συνθήκαι καὶ ἀνοχαί). Cf. further, Cicero, *Off.* 1.22.

<sup>89</sup> We note here also in particular the language for the "human vocation" that is used. See section 3.2.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Marcus Aurelius 10.2 ("Next, you should observe what your nature as an animate being requires [τί ἐπιζητεῖ σου ἡ ὡς ζῶου φύσις]: again, adopt all of this, as long as your nature as a rational being will not be impaired [εἰ μὴ χεῖρον μέλλει διατίθεσθαι ἡ ὡς ζῶου λογικοῦ φύσις]), where the rational being's "vocation" is based on its constitution. See section 3.2.

and social being “ (θέλω δὲ <ᾶ> κατὰ φύσιν τοῦ λογικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ ζώου [5.29]) or when he states that actions constitute “good or ill” for a “rational, social being” (τὸ τοῦ λογικοῦ πολιτικοῦ ζώου κακὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν [9.16]).<sup>91</sup> Further, the common rational nature of human beings and the gods is also expounded in terms of its implications for freedom, for justice and for self-control:

There are two things common (δύο ταῦτα κοινὰ) to the souls of all rational creatures, God or human beings (τῆ τε τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῆ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ παντὸς λογικοῦ ζώου ψυχῆ): they are immune to any external impediment (μὴ ἐμποδίζεσθαι ὑπ’ ἄλλου), and the good they seek resides in a just disposition and just action (ἐν τῆ δικαίῃ διαθέσει καὶ πράξει ἔχειν τὸ ἀγαθόν), with this the limit of their desire (τὴν ὄρεξιν ἀπολήγειν). (Marcus Aurelius 5.34)<sup>92</sup>

In the constitution of the rational being (ἐν τῆ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζώου κατασκευῇ), I can see no virtue that counters justice (δικαιοσύνης κατεξαναστατικὴν ἀρετὴν): but I do see the counter to pleasure (ἡδονῆς) – self-control (ἐγκράτειαν). (Marcus Aurelius 8.39)

Injustice is sin (Ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀσβεῖ). When universal Nature has constituted rational creatures for the sake of each other (τῆς γὰρ τῶν ὄλων φύσεως κατεσκευακίας τὰ λογικὰ ζῶα ἔνεκεν ἀλλήλων) – to benefit one another as deserved (ὠφελεῖν μὲν ἀλλήλα κατ’ ἀξίαν), but never to harm (βλάπτειν). (Marcus Aurelius 9.1.1)

## 2.2.5 Mainly Stoics but also many others: The use of ζῶον λογικόν

Fifth, among the texts in our sample in which ζῶον λογικόν is used in the time before Paul and up to the second century AD, most are by philosophers, and in fact most of them are from Stoic philosophers, especially before the first century BC, or found in authors which interact in some way with Stoic philosophy.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Marcus Aurelius 9.9.2 (ἔστι δὲ τὸ λογικὸν εὐθύς καὶ πολιτικόν “rational directly implies social”).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. also Marcus Aurelius 8.35, where human beings as rational beings are compared to nature as a whole with regards to its power to “turn things to its own purpose” (πᾶν τὸ ἐνιστάμενον καὶ ἀντιβαῖνον ἐπιπεριτρέπει): “the rational being can also convert any obstacle into material for its own use” (τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον δύναται πᾶν κώλυμα ὕλην ἑαυτοῦ ποιεῖν καὶ χρῆσθαι αὐτῷ). In 8.35 the nature of the whole is also said to be the source of all faculties in rational beings (τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις ἐκάστω τῶν λογικῶν † σχεδὸν ὅσον ἢ τῶν ὄλων φύσις). Cf. also Marcus Aurelius 10.28 (“Think of all the threads that bind us, and how only rational creatures are given the choice of submitting willingly to events” [μόνον τῶ λογικῶ ζῶω δέδοται τὸ ἐκουσίως ἔπεσθαι τοῖς γινομένοις]).

### 2.2.5.1 Predominantly among Stoics, especially before the first century BC

So far we have quoted passages documenting the use of the phrase by the Stoics Zeno of Citium, Chrysippus, (possibly) Cleanthes, Apollodorus, and Posidonius. But to this list we can add the Stoic philosopher Arius Didymus (1st century BC),<sup>93</sup> the Stoic geographer Strabo (c. 62 BC–AD 20),<sup>94</sup> the Roman Stoic Cornutus (1st century AD),<sup>95</sup> and the Stoic astronomer Cleomedes (between 50 BC and 250 AD).<sup>96</sup> In the following passages, Arius reports Stoic ethical doctrine; Strabo defends the use of poetry against Eratosthenes; Cornutus, in explaining the name of a Greek god, mentions that only human beings have been made ζῶα λογικά on earth – and Cleomedes considers even the antipodes:

Τοῦ δ' ἀνθρώπου ὄντος ζῴου λογικοῦ θνητοῦ, φύσει πολιτικοῦ, φασὶ καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν πᾶσαν τὴν περὶ ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ζῶν ἀκόλουθον ὑπάρχειν καὶ ὁμολογουμένην φύσει.

As humans are a rational creature, political by nature, they also say that every virtue which is associated with human beings and the happy life is consistent with and in agreement with nature. (Arius Didymus, *Epitome* 2.7.6)<sup>97</sup>

In the first place, I remark that the poets (ποιηταὶ) were not alone in sanctioning myths (μύθους), for long before the poets the states (πόλεις) and the lawgivers (νομοθέται) had sanctioned them as a useful expedient, since they had an insight into the natural affections of the reasoning animal (βλέψαντες εἰς τὸ φυσικὸν πάθος τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου); for human beings are eager to learn, and their fondness for tales are a prelude to this quality. (Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.2.8)<sup>98</sup>

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**93** The identification of Didymus the Doxographer and the Stoic philosopher Arius, who was a confidant of Augustus, is generally accepted, though uncertainties remain (cf. DNP, s.v. “Arius Didymus”; Pomeroy 1999, 2). On his Stoicism see Pomeroy 1999, 3 (though again it can only be inferred indirectly). For Arius Didymus, we indicate the paragraphs in terms of Wachsmuth’s edition of Stobaeus, *Anthologium* (from which they are extracted). Note that the edition of Arius Didymus in the TLG canon is outdated.

**94** On his professed adherence to Stoicism, see DNP, s.v. “Strabon”.

**95** Cornutus was banned from Rome between AD 63 and 65 according to Cassius Dio 62.29.2–3 (cf. DNP, s.v. “Cornutus”).

**96** On the dating see Brown and Todd 2004, 2–3; on his Stoicism and the influence of Posidonius, see Brown and Todd 2004, xi–xii.

**97** For Arius Didymus, we use the translation of Pomeroy (1999).

**98** Transl. Horace Leonard Jones. In another passage (*Geogr.* 15.1.42), in which he draws on the fourth century BC historian Megasthenes’ *Indika*, Strabo relates how elephants are captured and tamed. Strabo comments on one stage of this process with the following remarks, in which he uses ζῶον λογικόν for a comparison of elephants with human beings: “After this they are taught to obey commands (πειθαρχεῖν διδάσκουσι), some through words of command (διὰ λόγου) and others charmed by certain songs and the beating of drums. It is rare that they are hard to tame,

τυγχάνει δὲ ὁ Ἑρμῆς ὁ λόγος ὦν, ὃν ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ οἱ θεοί, μόνον τὸν ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶων λογικὸν ποιήσαντες, ὃ παρὰ τᾶλλα ἐξοχώτατον εἶχον αὐτοί.

And “Hermes” happens to be reason, the preeminent possession of the gods, which they sent to us from heaven, making humans alone of the terrestrial animals rational. (Cornutus, *De natura deorum* 20.18–21)<sup>99</sup>

The theory of Nature teaches us that circumhabitants, antipodes, and contrahabitants must exist, since none of these [groups] are described by direct reports. We simply cannot travel to our circumhabitants because the Ocean separating us from them is unnavigable and infested by beasts (θηριώδη); nor to the inhabitants of the contratemperate zone, since we cannot traverse the torrid zone. Yet the regions of the Earth that are equally temperate are necessarily inhabited to an equal extent, given that Nature loves Life (φιλόζωος γὰρ ἡ φύσις), and Reason requires (λόγος αἰρεῖ) that all [parts] of the Earth, where possible, be filled with animal life, both rational and irrational (τῆς γῆς πάντα ἐμπεπλησθαι καὶ λογικῶν καὶ ἀλόγων ζῶων). (Cleomedes, *Caelestia* 1.1.262)<sup>100</sup>

Other Stoics, including those later than Paul up to the second century, who use ζῶον λογικόν, are Epictetus,<sup>101</sup> and Marcus Aurelius (as we have seen).

There are two instances of ζῶον λογικόν for human beings in Dio Chrysostom,<sup>102</sup> who combines in his philosophical approach elements from Stoicism and Cynicism. In his second discourse on Fortune (*Or.* 64),<sup>103</sup> Dio Chrysostom aims to show that the charges humans lay at the door of Fortune (τύχη) should rather be turned into occasions of her praise (64.1). He finds support for his side in Socrates:

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for by nature their disposition is mild and gentle (φύσει γὰρ διάκεινται πράως καὶ ἡμέρως), so that they are nearly rational animals (ἐγγύς εἶναι λογικῶν ζῶων).” (Transl. Duane W. Roller.)

This passage is also listed in collections fragments of Megasthenes, which would make it one of the earliest instances, if these words could be ascribed to Megasthenes himself. Given that the phrase ζῶον λογικόν is taken for granted and not geared to a philosophical audience, it seems on balance more probable, however, that the formulation is Strabo’s (in any case later than Megasthenes). On Megasthenes, cf. *Brill’s New Jacoby*, s.v. “Megasthenes (715)” (where the translation by Duane W. Roller is published). Note that a very similar point and formulation are used in Origen, though concerning other animals: “so that the action (ἔργον) of hunting dogs (τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἰχνευταῖς κυσίν) and war horses (ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἵπποις) comes close, if I may speak thus, to the rational faculty (ἐγγύς που εἶναι, ἴν’ οὕτως εἴπω, τοῦ λογικοῦ)” (Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.3 = SVF 2.988; transl. Behr 2017, here and below). Cf. further Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.4.15.  
99 Transl. Boys-Stones 2018, adapted.

100 Transl. Brown and Todd 2004. This passage is similar to Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.69.

101 Epictetus uses the phrase ζῶα λογικά for human beings at Epictetus 1.2.1, 1.6.12, 1.10.10, 1.19.13, 2.9.2, 3.1.25, 4.6.34, 4.7.7. In this chapter, we will only discuss those Epictetean examples which are not treated in chapter 4.

102 We will discuss one of them, *Or.* 36, in detail below.

103 Some have doubted its authenticity.

Socrates, at any rate, counted himself fortunate for many reasons – not only because he was a rational being, but also because he was an Athenian (ὅτι ζῶον λογικόν καὶ ὅτι Ἀθηναῖος). (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 64.7)<sup>104</sup>

### 2.2.5.2 Doxographers and philosophers from other schools from the first century BC onwards

But then also a range of other authors, who are not Stoics or not known to be Stoics use it, showing that the definition of human beings as ζῶον λογικόν is much more widespread. Among them are the first century AD doxographer Aëtius, the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus,<sup>105</sup> the Middle Platonists<sup>106</sup> Philo of Alexandria (c. 15 BC–c. AD 50),<sup>107</sup> Plutarch (c. 45 – before 125),<sup>108</sup> Alcinous (2nd century AD),<sup>109</sup> an anonymous commentator on Plato (2nd century AD),<sup>110</sup> and

**104** Transl. H. Lamar Crosby.

**105** As we have seen.

**106** The label is of course modern and its application debatable. We simply use the label here based on whether the author is discussed by Dillon 1996 [1977].

**107** Cf. the statement of David T. Runia (in DNP, s.v. “Philo of Alexandria [I 12]”) that “Philo’s philosophical ideas are closest to contemporary Middle Platonism; Stoic and Aristotelian ideas are also significantly present, above all in the area of ethics.” For Sterling 2010, Philo’s philosophy is eclectic, drawing on different philosophical systems, but with Platonism as his “basic frame of thought” (1069). Niehoff 2018 sees development in Philo’s philosophical thought “from Alexandria to Rome”, distinguishing an earlier period with “overall Platonic concerns” (though interest in Stoicism) from a later period, after his embassy to Rome, in which he “interpret[s] his essentially Platonic theology in a more Stoic light” (10–11 and throughout). For Philo we adapt the translation by G. H. Whitaker and F. H. Colson.

Philo assumes the definition of human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν unproblematically at *QG* 1 frag. 31 Petit (the snake was called clever [φρόνιμος] because it intended to deceive the rational animal, the human [τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον τὸν ἄνθρωπον]) and *Ebr.* 69 (the people slain in Exod 32.27 are interpreted allegorically: “For it is not human beings [ἄνθρώπους], as some suppose, who are slain by the priests, not living reasoning animals composed of soul and body [ζῶα λογικὰ ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος συνεστῶτα]. No, they are cutting away from their own hearts and minds all that is near and dear to the flesh [οἰκεῖα καὶ φίλα τῇ σαρκὶ ἀποκόπτουσι τῆς διανοίας ἐαυτῶν].”). Further examples below.

**108** See the references quoted in this chapter; cf. also *Am. Prol.* 495C quoted in section 3.1.10.

**109** Note that the author of the *Didaskalikos* is referred to as Albinus in the TLG canon based on a disputed identification with Albinus of Smyrna.

**110** The phrase ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν for human beings is used as a standard example of a correct definition (as Socrates searches for the definition of knowledge) in the Anonymous “Theaetetus” Commentary (P. Berol. inv. 9782 Fragment D), which is dated to the second century, and perhaps goes back to Eudorus of Alexandria. It occurs, in the edition of Diels and Schubart (by column and line) at 18.41–46, 20.7–9, 22.5–14, and 22.45–47 (where it is pointed out that, while indeed it would be strange to greet Socrates as “Hello, rational mortal animal” [Χαῖρε ζῶιον

Galen (AD 129 to c. 216),<sup>111</sup> the Pyrrhonist Sextus Empiricus (end of the 2nd century AD),<sup>112</sup> and the Peripatetics Aspasius, the commentator on Aristotle (first half of the second century AD),<sup>113</sup> and Alexander of Aphrodisias (around 200 AD).<sup>114</sup> It is important to note that most of these are also our sources for the reconstruction of Stoicism before the first century BC, including Philodemus, Philo of Alexandria, Aëtius, Plutarch, Galen, Sextus Empiricus, and Alexander of Aphrodisias.<sup>115</sup>

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λο[γ]ικὸν θνητόν (22.46–47)), the purpose of definitions is not their use in greetings [ἀσπάζεσθαι (23.2)] but the clarification of common conceptions [πρὸς τὸ ἀναπλῶσαι τὰς κοινὰς ἐννοίας (23.5–8)].

**111** We have already quoted instances of Galen above; further ones see below. Galen presupposes ζῶον λογικόν for human beings at *Adhortatio ad artes addiscendas* 1.18–19, 9.14–15 (θνητόν), Galen, *De usu partium* 3.184.16, 3.190.12, 3.192.13, 3.245.12–13, 4.126–127.1, 4.156.7; *De semine libri ii* 4.514.11; PHP 4.2.10, 4.2.12, 4.4.33, 5.1.10, 9.3.23; *De sanitate tuenda libri vi*, 6.13.14, 6.52.9; *De alimentorum facultatibus libri iii* 6.584.8; *De symptomatum causis libri iii* 6.584.8; *De differentia pulsuum libri iv* 8.739.10 (θνητόν), 8.752.16 (θνητόν); *De methodo medendi libri xiv* 10.38.18, 10.129.6–7 (θνητόν), 10.151.11 (θνητόν), 10.151.16 (θνητόν); *In Hippocratis librum vi epidemiarum commentarii vi* 17b 227.3–4 (where the edition of Kühn is cited by volume, page, and line, except for PHP; we have added θνητόν, regardless of the form in which it appears in instances of ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν).

**112** We have quoted some instances of Sextus Empiricus already. He uses ζῶον λογικόν for human beings at *Pyrr.* 2.25, 2.209 (implied by two examples of an incorrect definition). He pokes fun at the definition at *Pyrr.* 2.211. He uses it in a wider sense (including human beings) at *Pyrr.* 2.225. Further, he presupposes it at AM 7.238, in a longer version at AM 7.269 (ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν), also at 7.271, 274, 277, 8.87, and in an introduction to a quotation ascribed to Empedocles at 8.286. Further, at 9.103, 10.288 (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν), 11.8 (to illustrate a logical point [= SVF 2.224, though the formulation falls outside what can be attributed to Chrysippus]) and at 4.16. He uses it for God at AM 7.238, cf. 9.107 (discussed above).

**113** We refer to his commentary on the Nicomachean ethics (*In ethica Nicomachea commentaria*) simply by his name. Aspasius presupposes human beings as ζῶον λογικόν at 4.10–11, 27.11–19, 44.1–3, 130.6–12 (cf. with Rom 1.28–31, section 5.2.2), 153.7–9 (see also below). For Aspasius, we adapt the translation by David Konstan (2006) throughout.

**114** In the works listed as belonging to Alexander of Aphrodisias, there are a great many occurrences of ζῶον λογικόν, though most of these simply employ the definition of humans as the standard example for illustrating a logical point. Furthermore, in his *In Aristotelis metaphysica commentaria*, only those covering the first five books of Aristotle's *Metaphysica* are probably genuine, while the others were probably written by Michael of Ephesus in the 12th century AD (as mentioned above). Hence only those occurrences up to page 439 in the edition of Hayduck should be considered.

**115** Cf. the list in Forscher 2018, 30, where, as further sources, Cicero, Clement of Alexandria, and Diogenes Laertius are mentioned.

Aëtius, relating the opinion of Aristotle on whether plants (τὰ φυτὰ) are also animals (ζῶα), says:

Ἀριστοτέλης ἔμψυχα μὲν, οὐ μὴν ζῶα. τὰ γὰρ ζῶα ὀρμητικὰ εἶναι καὶ αἰσθητικά, ἔνια δὲ καὶ λογικά.

Aristotle affirms that they have a soul, but denies that they are animals. For, says he, animals have impulse and sensation, and some of them are also rational. (Aëtius, DG 438 = Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita* 910B = Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 1.45.2)<sup>116</sup>

Alcinous seems to take a reference to human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν for granted, when, in discussing friendship and love, he distinguishes three kinds of “erotic love” (ἔρωτικῆ), the “honourable” (ἀστεία), the “base” (φαύλη), and the “median” form (μέση), and points out how they correspond to three different states of the soul:

Therefore, even as there are three states of the soul of a rational being (τρῆς εἰσὶν ἕξεις ψυχῆς λογικοῦ ζῴου), the one good, the other bad, and a third which is median, so it would follow that there are three forms of erotic love, differing from each other in form. (Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 33.3)<sup>117</sup>

The phrase ζῶον λογικόν for human beings has further spread to various other writers,<sup>118</sup> such as the Greek Sophist Aelian (2nd century AD),<sup>119</sup> the astronomer

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**116** Our translation. Given that Aristotle (apart from frag. 192 Rose, where we have argued already against the formulation ζῶον λογικόν being Aristotle’s) does not use the formulation ζῶον λογικόν, this report by Aëtius shows that doxographical accounts are not restricted to the terminology used by the authors on which they report. Since Aëtius depends on sources (cf. Rumia 1992) which go back to Theophrastus (c. 371/0 – 287/6 BC), the student and successor of Aristotle, it is tempting to wonder whether perhaps already Theophrastus had used the phrase. We have discussed Aëtius, DG 432 above.

**117** Transl. Dillon 1993.

**118** We have excluded in this list certain instances whose dating in the TLG canon seems doubtful, e.g. in the case of the rhetor Cocondrius (probably Byzantine), or the Pseudo-Clementines (probably fourth century AD), though *Hom.* 10.17 is fascinating, scolding Egyptian animal worship because “they bow before irrational animals, even though they themselves are rational beings” (ἐπεὶ ἄλογα ζῶα λογικοὶ ὄντες προσκυνοῦσιν).

**119** Aelian explains at *Nat. an.* 2.11.56–57, that, by contrast to the elephants – about whom he has just reported that they can be tamed to such a degree that they can even dance and march in step with music –, it is no wonder that there should be humans who are experts at music, since after all humans are a “rational animal capable of understanding and logical thought” (ζῴον ἐστὶ λογικόν καὶ νοῦ καὶ λογισμοῦ χωρητικόν; transl. A.F. Schofield). At *Nat. an.* 7.10, having shared a story of the fidelity of dogs, Aelian laments the fact that even though nature gave human beings as rational animals (τῷδε τῷ ζῴῳ τῷ λογικῷ) an altogether greater share in kindness and love than the irrationals (τοῖς ἀλόγοις, i.e. here: dogs), humans are not using this gift

Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century AD),<sup>120</sup> the grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus (1st half of the 2nd century),<sup>121</sup> and (perhaps) to his son, the grammarian Aelius Herodianus (2nd century AD),<sup>122</sup> and to the Platonic mathematician Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 100 AD).<sup>123</sup> It is further found in works of a lexical nature, though the ascription in such cases can be difficult.<sup>124</sup>

### 2.2.5.3 Christian authors in the second century

Among Christian authors living in the second century, the philosopher Justin Martyr (died AD 165),<sup>125</sup> Irenaeus (c. 130/140–after 190 AD), Athenagoras (2nd century AD), and Tatian (born around 120 AD) seem to take for granted that human beings are ζῶα λογικά.<sup>126</sup> The same applies for Clement of Alexandria (died before AD 215/221),<sup>127</sup> and Origen (185/6–254 AD).

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very well. It pains him that a dog should show more loyalty than a human being (κύων ... ἀνθρώπων πιστότερος). (Note that in the TLG canon this passage is also listed among the fragments of the grammarian Aristophanes of Byzantium [c. 265/257–190/180 BC].)

**120** The definition of human beings as ζῶον ἐστι λογικόν is employed in *De iudicandi facultate et animi principatu* (Περὶ κριτηρίου καὶ ἡγεμονικοῦ) at vol. 3.2 p. 6 and p. 17 (where it is explained that humans share with horses their being a ζῶον, but differ in being λογικόν). With regard to this work, Claudius Ptolemy has been described as combining the views of Stoics and Aristotle (cf. DNP, s.v. “Ptolemaeus [65]”).

**121** At *De adverbii*, part 2, vol. 1.1, p. 123 (humans are included in the reference to λογικά ζῶα).

**122** At *Partitiones*, p. 83 (ed. Boissonade) we find, among various etymological explanations that treat words as compounds, the statement “for humans alone among the other animals are rational” (μόνον γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων ὁ ἄνθρωπος λογικός [our translation]). This work could, however, very well be spurious.

**123** In his *Theologoumena arithmeticae* (Θεολογούμενα τῆς ἀριθμητικῆς), a numerological work, at pp. 25 and 65 in the ed. of de Falco.

**124** For instance it is attested in a fragment of the first-century BC grammarian Philoxenus of Alexandria (λογικὸν γὰρ ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος “for the human is a rational living being”).

**125** Justin Martyr was acquainted with other schools but was an adherent of a middle Platonic school of philosophy prior to the time of his conversion to Christianity (cf. DNP, s.v. “Iustinus [6]”).

**126** In the case of the *Seniores Alexandrini* frag. 6 (ed. Pitra) (2nd century AD [?]), who offer a christological exegesis of Ps 115.1 LXX, the words ἐγὼ δὲ ἐταπεινώθημ σφόδρα are explained as being the effect of human beings reflecting upon how great the truths are with which their short-lived nature may become acquainted. The speaker of the psalm is interpreted as being humbled by the insight into how among so many rational beings, humans are the lowliest (συνεῖς ὅσων λογικῶν ἐστὶν ζῶων ταπεινώτερος ἄνθρωπος). (On a partitive genitive used with a comparative as marking the highest degree cf. CGCG 32.1 and 32.9.) The dating into the second century is based on Pitra’s claim that Origen used these texts for his commentary on the Psalms.

Justin Martyr uses the phrase ζῶον λογικόν to explain who is one's neighbour:<sup>128</sup>

πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, ὁ ἄνθρωπος  
But a human's neighbour is nothing other than a similarly-feeling and rational animal, i. e. a human. (Justin, Dial. 93.3)<sup>129</sup>

Irenaeus argues (in language redolent of Paul) that the resurrection of human bodies will be much easier than their creation from nothing. He seems to take for granted that human beings are a λογικὸν ζῶον:

For if he will not make alive (ζωοποιεῖ) what is mortal (τὸ θνητόν) and will not lead what is perishable (τὸ φθαρτόν) into incorruption (ἀφθαρσίαν), then God is not powerful (δυνατός). But that he is powerful in all these things, we should understand from our own origin (ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἡμῶν συννοεῖν), that God took dust from the earth (χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς), and made human beings (ἐποίησε τὸν ἄνθρωπον), even though it was much more difficult and incredible that he should have made them exist from non-existent bones and sinews and the rest of the disposition which accords to human beings, and have produced an animate and rational creature (ἐκ μὴ ὄντων ὁστέων τε καὶ νεύρων καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς τῆς κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οἰκονομίας ποιῆσαι εἰς τὸ εἶναι καὶ ἔμψυχον καὶ λογικὸν ἀπεργάσασθαι ζῶον), than that he restore again (αὐθις ἀποκαταστήσαι) what had already been made, and then dissolved into earth, which had proceeded into those things, from which, at the beginning, when they had not yet come to be, human beings were made (ὄθεν τὴν ἀρχὴν μηδέπω γεγονώς ἐγενήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος). For how much more will he – who at the beginning made them, at any time he wanted – restore again those that have already come to be, should he want to, into that life which is being given by him. (Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* frag. 5)<sup>130</sup>

Athenagoras does not directly use the phrase ζῶον λογικόν, though by implication of the following text passage he must have been familiar with it. The following passage is further important since the idea of a human vocation (cf. section 3.2) is clearly expressed in it (and hence the link between the language of λογικός and such a vocation), such that its inclusion in our discussion is well mer-

<sup>127</sup> In a context of teaching about definitions, Clement uses as example the definition of human beings as ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν at *Strom.* 8.6.18.7 and 8.6.21.1 (where the further characteristics χερσαῖον “terrestrial”, πεζόν “going on one’s feet”, and γελαστικόν “able to laugh” are included), cf. *Strom.* 8.6.21.5. Human beings as ζῶον λογικὸν are presupposed further, in a vocational context, at *Paed.* 1.12.100.3; in an ethical context, at *Paed.* 2.5.46.2 (moderation in laughter).

<sup>128</sup> Lev 19.18, cf. Mk 12.31; Mt 19.19, 22.39; Rom 13.9.

<sup>129</sup> Our translation.

<sup>130</sup> Our translation. Fragment 5 in the edition of Doutreleau, Mercier, and Rousseau of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* corresponds to the Latin translation at *Adv. Haer.* 5.3.2.

ited.<sup>131</sup> In *De resurrectione* 13, Athenagoras wants to demonstrate the resurrection (ἡ ἀνάστασις) of human beings based on the purpose of their creator and the cause for which they have been brought into the world (τῇ τῆς γενέσεως αἰτία καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ ποιήσαντος [13.2]). Christians hope in assurance that they will perdure in incorruptibility (τὴν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ διαμονὴν ἐλπίζομεν βεβαίως),

trusting the most unerring pledge, the intention of the one who fashioned us (τῇ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς γνώμῃ), with respect to which he made human beings out of an immortal soul and a body (καθ' ἣν ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον ἐκ ψυχῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ σώματος), and at the same time constituting them with intellect (νοῦν τε συγκατεσκεύασεν αὐτῶ) and an inborn law for the preservation and care of all those things, which have been given to them by him (καὶ νόμον ἐμφυτον ἐπὶ σωτηρία καὶ φυλακῇ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ διδομένων), the things which are befitting to a life of understanding and a life of reason (ἐμφροني δὲ βίῳ καὶ ζωῇ λογικῇ προσηκόντων), well aware, that he would not have constituted this sort of living being (οὐκ ἂν τοιοῦτον κατεσκεύασεν ζῶον) and would not have adorned it with things suited for perdurance (πᾶσι τοῖς πρὸς διαμονὴν ἐκόσμησεν), if he had not wanted that what had come to be should perdure (εἰ μὴ διαμένειν ἐβούλετο τὸ γενόμενον [13.1]).<sup>132</sup>

While the adjective λογικός modifies ζωή and not ζῶον,<sup>133</sup> the fact that it is the kind of living being (τοιοῦτον ζῶον) which can have such a life seems to make it probable that Athenagoras is aware of the notion of humans as rational beings. This passage resonates with the traditions about the role of human beings in the cosmos, yet Athenagoras thinks these traditions through in terms of resurrection. Here νοῦς and the life of reason (ζωῇ λογικῇ) are closely linked, and part of the constitution of human beings (the language of κατασκευάζειν and κατασκευή is important).

Tatian disparagingly challenges the definition of human beings, but in turn confirms that this is an established doctrine of the philosophers:

**131** This passage is not discussed by Heinemann 1926 (cf. section 3.2).

**132** Our translation. Athenagoras, *De resurrectione* 12 contains further relevant language on a human purpose in the cosmos (see section 3.2).

**133** Cf. also Aspasius, *In ethica Nicomachea commentaria* 17.29–18.2 (where λογική ζωή is explained as τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν). Cf. further, the text listed as Origen, *Fragmenta in Psalmos 1–150* (ed. Pitra), whose provenance is doubtful, but that probably was written before the fourth century, which, in commenting on Psalm 118.107 LXX, states that rational animals live in a way that makes use of reason, insofar as in respect of their nature they have been constituted as rational, in contrast to irrational animals (Τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ζῆ, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄλογα· τὰ ζῶα δὲ λογικὰ λογικῶς, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ φύσει κατασκευασθέντα λογικά).

Human beings are not (ἔστι γὰρ ἄνθρωπος οὐχ), as those with a croaking voice like a raven pontificate (ὥσπερ οἱ κορακόφωνοι<sup>134</sup> δογματίζουσι), rational animals, receptive of understanding and knowledge (ζῶον λογικὸν νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν), for against them speaks the fact that also irrational animals (τὰ ἄλογα) are capable of understanding and knowledge: Human beings alone, however, are made in the image and likeness of God (μόνος δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις τοῦ θεοῦ) – I speak of those humans who are not behaving like animals (ἄνθρωπον οὐχὶ τὸν ὅμοια τοῖς ζώοις πράττοντα), but of those who have advanced in their movement from humanity (ἀνθρωπότητος) towards God himself (πρὸς αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν). (Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 15.1)<sup>135</sup>

### 2.2.6 The phrase ζῶον λογικόν used in discourse on the human place and role in the cosmos

Having thus established that the phrase ζῶον λογικόν is pre-Pauline, strongly associated with Stoics, but then also, that it has reached wider educated circles, we turn to an investigation of the discursive function that the use of the definition of human beings as rational mortal living beings serves. While a considerable number of uses of the definition are either for the purpose of explaining a logical point, or as a standard example of a definition (often in commentaries on the logical works of Aristotle), the examples we discuss here are those in which the notion of humans as rational yet mortal creatures figures in anthropological reflection. The three main themes that emerge concern the place of humans in the cosmos (section 2.2.6.2), the vocation of human beings (section 2.2.6.3) and the reflection on what it means to be genuinely human (section 2.2.6.4). But before we turn to these three themes, we consider the question about the place of human beings itself.

#### 2.2.6.1 Raising the question about the place and role of human beings in the cosmos

A passage in Epictetus explicitly raises the question of the role of human beings, articulating it in terms of the notion of human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν. (We will

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<sup>134</sup> The pun in this reference to the philosophers may have to do with the fact that they as human beings, capable of reason and speech, are nevertheless speaking in the manner of an animal (cf. the use of ravens [κόρακες] as an example of an animal that can produce articulate sound [ἐνάρθρους προφέρονται φωνάς] at Sextus Empiricus, AM, 8.275). It probably also trades on negative connotations of curses such as ἐξ κόρακας.

<sup>135</sup> Our translation. On the traditions about assimilation to God, cf. van Kooten 2008 (though this passage is not explicitly discussed).

discuss Epictetus in detail in chapter 4.) His remark regarding the works of Chrysippus, albeit incidental, suggests this question resonates already with earlier tradition too. Epictetus parodies an imagined petition an overly busy Roman administrator receives requesting permission to export grain<sup>136</sup> by imagining the kind of request a philosopher should receive concerning his reading programme on a given day:

παρακαλῶ σε παρὰ Χρυσίππου ἐπισκέψασθαι τίς ἐστίν ἡ τοῦ κόσμου διοίκησις καὶ ποίαν τινὰ χώραν ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχει τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον· ἐπίσκεψαι δὲ καὶ τίς εἶ σὺ καὶ ποῖόν τι σοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν.

I request you to examine what Chrysippus has to say about the administration of the universe, and the place that a rational animal occupies within it; and to consider also what you are, and what is good for you, and what is bad. (Epictetus 1.10.10)<sup>137</sup>

Note that the term ἡ τοῦ κόσμου διοίκησις (“administration of the universe”) also appears in a fragment attributed to Chrysippus.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, our passage clearly shows that in a broader Stoic tradition the question of the role of human beings in the cosmos can be asked in terms of their being a λογικὸν ζῶον. Interestingly, the question about the place of human beings in the cosmos (ποίαν τινὰ χώραν ἐν αὐτῷ [sc. κόσμῳ] ἔχει τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον) is raised in similar terms in Middle Platonic tradition (τίνα χώραν ἐν κόσμῳ ἔχων):<sup>139</sup>

The aim of theology is knowledge of the primary, highest, and originative causes (περὶ τὰ πρῶτα αἴτια καὶ ἀνωτάτω τε καὶ ἀρχικὰ γνώσις). The aim of physics is to learn what is the nature of the universe (τίς ποτ' ἐστίν ἡ τοῦ παντὸς φύσις), what sort of an animal humans are (τι ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος), and what place they have in the world (καὶ τίνα χώραν ἐν κόσμῳ ἔχων), if God exercises providence over all things (εἰ θεὸς προνοεῖ τῶν ὄλων), and if other gods are ranked beneath him, and what is the relation of humans to the gods (ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς σχέσις). (Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 7.1)<sup>140</sup>

Although in this passage the phrase λογικὸν ζῶον is not used, it is clearly in view as the answer to the question posed (τι ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος), given that the *Didaskalikos* uses this definition as well (as quoted above). Having considered the

**136** παρακαλῶ σε ἐπιτρέψαι μοι σιτάριον ἐξαγαγεῖν (1.10.10). Note the use of παρακαλῶ (cf. Rom 12.1).

**137** Transl. R. Hard, here and below.

**138** SVF 2.1005 (taken from Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De fato*; the phrase is found at 210.16–17, 211.1, 211.4–5).

**139** Which confirms the importance of Platonic tradition to Epictetus, on which cf. the literature at Long 2002, 178.

**140** Transl. Dillon 1993.

question itself, we turn to the answers given in the sources that use the notion of humans as rational living beings.

### 2.2.6.2 Logical divisions and placing humans on a *scala naturae*

As our first main theme, we consider in this section how the attempts at logical classification of beings according to their natures serve the function of placing humans in the cosmos. This often takes the form of locating humans on a *scala naturae*. There is a discourse on human beings as on the boundary between what is mortal and what is immortal, between rational and irrational, between good and evil. Other texts order human beings as rationals in terms of purposive relations or in terms of different “powers” within beings of various natures. These classifications are often put to use in ethical-protreptic contexts, and are linked to discussion of human freedom, responsibility, and happiness.

#### 2.2.6.2.1 Humans as a being on the boundary

Discourse on human beings, then, often involves the conception of a *scala naturae*, in which different beings are ordered in an ascending order. The place of human beings, as a ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν, is compared both with regards to the gods or higher beings and with regards to animals (τὰ ἄλογα [ζῶα]).

This can be seen, first, from a passage in Philo of Alexandria. In *De confusione linguarum*, Philo offers a division of beings into rationals and irrationals, putting human beings in between animals (with, naturally, bodies) and unbodied souls (which he explicitly designates as angels):<sup>141</sup>

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**141** Philo identifies the unbodied souls as angels at *Conf.* 174 (ἀγγέλους). This may also be the place to note a few other things sometimes called ζῶα λογικά. Since the stars are also considered to be gods for the Stoics (cf. Cicero, ND 2.39 = SVF 2.684, where, having considered the divinity of the cosmos, it is argued that “the same divinity [must be assigned] to the stars” [*tribuenda est sideris eadem divinitas*], such that they may rightly be called “to be living beings endowed with sensation and intelligence” [*et animantia esse et sentire atque intellegere*]; on the Stoic views on the stars cf. SVF 2.681–692), they are also called ζῶα λογικά as, for instance, in Origen, *Cels.* 5.10 (= SVF 2.685): “supposing that the stars in heaven are also rational and good beings” (εἴπερ καὶ οἱ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστέρες ζῶά εἰσι λογικά καὶ σπουδαῖα). Similarly, Marcus Aurelius 9.9.2 describes the higher form of unity within the class of rational creatures (τῶν λογικῶν ζῴων) found among the higher beings (ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἔτι κρείττωνων), including the stars (ἐπὶ τῶν ἀστρῶν).

Plutarch finds it absurd that Stoics categorise as bodies (σώματα ποιουμένων) even such things as virtues (ἀρετὰς), vices (κακίας), skills (τέχναι), memories (μνήμας), mental images (φαντασίας), affections (πάθη), impulses (ὀρμᾶς), acts of assent (συγκαταθέσεις) (*Comm. not.* 1084AB; cf. the translation of H. Cherniss), and utterly ridiculous that they make these

ἡ μὲν φύσις τῶν ζώων  
 εἷς τε ἄλογον καὶ λογικὴν μοῖραν,  
 ἐναντίας ἀλλήλαις, ἐτμήθη τὸ πρῶτον,  
 ἡ δ' αὖ λογικὴ πάλιν εἷς τε τὸ φθαρτὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον εἶδος,  
 φθαρτὸν μὲν τὸ ἀνθρώπων,  
 ἀθάνατον δὲ τὸ ψυχῶν ἀσωμάτων,  
 αἶ κατὰ τε ἀέρα καὶ οὐρανὸν περιπολοῦσι.

Living nature was primarily divided into two opposite parts, the unreasoning and reasoning, this last again into the mortal and immortal species, the mortal being that of human beings, the immortal that of unbodied souls which range through the air and sky. (Philo, *Conf.* 176)<sup>142</sup>

All beings have their places, either here below, or up there. We may note here that a similar division occurs at *Agr.* 139, where Philo does not use the term ζῶα, but the more abstract formulation ψυχὴν ἔχοντα.<sup>143</sup> Philo divides the ψυχὴν ἔχοντα (“animates”) into λογικά (“rationals”) and ἄλογα (“irrational”), and further subdivides the λογικά into θνητά (“mortals”) and θεῖα (“divine existences”). Finally, the mortal rationals are divided into male and female [ἄρρεν – θῆλυ]. Philo indicates that such a division is representative for broadly held philosophical views by introducing this division as one in which “the whole choir of philosophers ... [are] harping on their wonted themes” (καὶ τῶν φιλοσοφούντων χορὸς ἅπας τὰ εἰωθότα διεξίω [Agr. 139]).<sup>144</sup> This estimation is confirmed by similar divisions in other philosophers.<sup>145</sup>

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things also rational animals (μὴ μόνον σώματα ταῦτα ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζῶα λογικά [1084B]). (The list is even extended in 1084C to include walking, dancing and a host of other activities.) Philo, *Decal.* 33 calls the voice that spoke to Israel in the wilderness a living rational being. Cf. also one of several different images Stoics use to explain the three parts of philosophy, logic, ethics and physics (at DL 7.40), in which philosophy itself is compared to a living being (ικάζουσι δὲ ζῶα τὴν φιλοσοφίαν) and the discipline of logic with the bones and sinews (ὄστοις μὲν καὶ νεῦροις τὸ λογικόν). But this is not properly an instance of ζῶον λογικόν.

**142** We have divided the Greek text into lines to highlight the divisions.

**143** Perhaps he considered this more appropriate with respect to divine natures, given that ζῶον is typically used for mice and men. Similarly, the distinction is sometimes expressed as between “inanimate beings” (τὰ ἀψυχα) and “animated beings” (τὰ ἐμψυχα), as for instance in Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.2.

**144** For a stemmatic diagram of *Agr.* 139 see Terian 1981, 35 (from which the glosses above are taken).

**145** See Früchtel 1968, 42–45 who presents diagrams of similar divisions in the Platonist Antiochus of Ascalon (c. 130/120 – 68/67 BC), the Middle Platonist Maximus of Tyre (2nd century AD), and Seneca, which supports the notion that such divisions are widespread. Seneca’s exposition of a similar division at *Ep.* 53.13–15 “seems muddled” (Inwood 2007, 120), given that he presents

Philo's division in *De confusione linguarum* logically amounts to the same as the definition of human beings as rational mortal animals.<sup>146</sup> Philo's point is not, however, just classification for its own sake. Philo's point in this context is that the “unbodied” souls, just like the “irrationals” are exempt from wickedness (κακίας ἀμέτοχοι [*Conf.* 177]), which Philo locates only in the mortal rational animal.<sup>147</sup> The notion of what it means to be a ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν is not just incidental here but directly used in Philo's exposition, as he argues that human beings alone have both freedom and responsibility, rooted in their being rational, and, at the same time, are exposed and vulnerable to evil, because of their being bodily and mortal. Having stated that the unbodied souls are “immune from wickedness”, Philo continues:

And this immunity is shared by unreasoning natures (ἀμέτοχοι δὲ καὶ <αἱ> τῶν ἀλόγων), because, as they have no gift of understanding (ἀμοιροῦσαι διανοίας), they are also not guilty of wrongdoing willed freely as a result of deliberate reflection (τῶν ἐκ λογισμοῦ συμβαινόντων ἐκούσιων ἀδικημάτων ἀλίσκονται). (178) Humans are practically the only beings who having knowledge of good and evil (μόνος δὲ σχεδὸν ἐκ πάντων ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν ἔχων ἐπιστήμην) often choose the worst (αἰρεῖται μὲν πολλακίς<sup>148</sup> τὰ φαυλότατα), and shun what should be the object of their efforts (φεύγει δὲ τὰ σπουδῆς ἄξια), and thus they stand apart as convicted of sin deliberate and aforethought (αὐτὸν μάλιστα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκ προνοίας ἀμαρτήμασι καταγινώσκεσθαι). (Philo, *Conf.* 177–178)

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the division in an unusual ordering. The comparison with others suggests there is some flexibility in the terminology. For instance, Philo (at *Her.* 138) divides the εἶδος λογικῶν (or λογικόν) into ἄφθαρτον and θνητόν, while Maximus of Tyre frequently simply divides into θνητός and ἀθάνατος.

An instructive passage on life as a shared characteristic between humans and gods, which differs in its quality (ζωὴ αἰώνιος versus ἐφήμερος), is Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 6.1. Cf. also the very detailed division in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.8.9–29, which expressly notes the principle that one part of these divisions into two is always better (11.8.5–7). Thus, for instance: “The perceptive can be divided into the rational and the irrational, of which the rational is superior” (τοῦ δὲ αἰσθητικοῦ τὸ μὲν λογικόν, τὸ δὲ ἄλογον· κρεῖττον δὲ τὸ λογικόν τοῦ ἀλόγου [11.8.13–15]; transl. Trapp 1997). The passage ends with an ascent to the highest form of intellectual contemplation.

**146** An example which illustrates this connection between division and definitions, which ultimately goes back to Plato's explanation of the dialectic method in the *Sophistes*, can be found in Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* 11.8 (which we referenced in the previous note).

**147** The further context is that God delegated those parts of his creation to lower beings which would be unworthy of him, drawing on ideas in Plato's *Timaeus* (cf. Runia 1986, 242–249).

**148** The term πολλακίς in this context recalls similar passages quoted above (Plutarch, *Virt. mor.* 450D = SVF 3.390, Galen, *PHP* 4.2.10–11 = SVF 3.462, cf. also Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.10.6–8), though the word is of course so frequent that this may not indicate more than analogous points being expressed in the most straightforward manner.

When speaking of the irrationals here, Philo perhaps has in mind not only animals, but also children or “crazed” persons.<sup>149</sup> In any case, it appears that reflection on humans’ place in the order of things situates them at the boundary between good and evil, in a way that depends on the exercise of their freedom.

A second elaboration of how humans fare with respect to both the gods and other animals can be found in Galen’s *Adhortatio ad artes addiscendas*, which is a protreptic speech seeking to encourage the study of medicine. Galen employs the definition of human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν to express how they occupy a middle position:

τὸ δὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος, ὃ παῖδες, ἐπικοινωνεῖ θεοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις, τοῖς μὲν καθ’ ὅσον λογικόν ἐστί, τοῖς δὲ καθ’ ὅσον θνητόν.

For humankind, O children, has something in common both with the gods and with the irrational animals, with the former insofar as they are rational, with the latter, insofar as they are mortal. (Galen, *Adhortatio ad artes addiscendas* 9.15–16)<sup>150</sup>

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**149** For children, see Philo’s discussion of the development of capacities of humans in steps of seven years at *Leg.* 1.10 (“they say that humans become a reasoning being during their first seven years” λογικόν τέ φασιν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ἑπταετίαν γίνεσθαι). For a discussion of Stoic theories about the development of reason, see Frede 1994.

As to the “crazed” person, Philo distinguishes two different senses of ἄλογος at *Sacr.* 46–47, which concern precisely this point: the first sense of ἄλογος is to refer to what “defies convincing reason” (τὸ παρὰ τὸν αἰρούντα λόγον), for which the example is a “the foolish man” (τὸν ἄφρονά), the second sense is “the state from which reason is eliminated”, for which the example is the “unreasoning animals” (τῶν ζῴων τὰ μὴ λογικά). (Philo draws a different contrast at *Det.* 38, where he is concerned with giving a favourable interpretation of Moses’ professed ineloquence in Exodus 6.12 [ἐγὼ δὲ ἄλογός εἰμι], which, he informs us, is not to be confused with ἄλογος in the sense used for the “animals without reason” [τὰ μὴ λογικά τῶν ζῴων].)

For children as not yet λογικός in the full active sense of the word, yet at the same time λογικός given their nature as such beings who are capable in principle of developing to its full sense, see also the exposition of the Peripatetic commentator Aspasius 27.14–17 (“For a child too is by nature capable of performing such actions [i.e. the fully rational activities in which according to Aristotle happiness consists], since he is a rational animal [φύσει μὲν καὶ ὁ παῖς πρακτικός, ὢν λογικόν ζῶον], but because of his youth [διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν] he is not yet capable of performing them. For a child too is somehow a non-rational creature [ἄλογον μὲν γὰρ πώς ἐστί καὶ ὁ παῖς], but he differs from nonrational animals because he is rational by nature [διαφέρει δὲ τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων ὅτι φύσει λογικός ἐστίν]).

**150** Our translation, here and below. There follows a disparaging remark on women in a comparison with Fortune personified as a woman (2.3–7). On Galen’s mostly negative view of women cf. Hankinson 2008, 2 (with note 8 on page 25).

In the prooemium Galen explains, again using the notion of human beings as rational animals, how humans stand between the world of animals and the gods. Being capable of learning the arts, humans could go either way. They can strive to emulate the gods through the arts, or they can disregard them and consign their fate to Fortune or a life devoted to less refined pleasures.

Galen begins by declaring the question whether the animals called “irrational” (τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα) do not have any form of reason-and-speech (λόγος) as unsettled (1.1–2).<sup>151</sup> Perhaps they do not have reason as expressed in speech (κατὰ τὴν φωνήν, ὃν καὶ προφορικὸν ὀνομάζουσιν), but are nevertheless capable of thinking internally (<κατὰ> τὴν ψυχὴν, ὃν ἐνδιάθετον [1.2–4]).<sup>152</sup> That humans (οἱ ἄνθρωποι) surpass the other animals by far when it comes to reason, is clear from the “multitude of the arts which this animal cultivates” (πλήθος τῶν τεχνῶν ὧν μεταχειρίζεται τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο) and from the fact that “only humans, being capable of knowledge, are able to learn any art they wish” (καὶ ὅτι μόνος ἄνθρωπος ἐπιστήμης ἐπιδεκτικὸς ἦν ἂν ἐθελήσῃ τέχνην μαθάνει [1.4–7]). For the other animals (τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα) are almost all without arts (σχεδὸν ἄτεχνα πάντ’ ἐστὶ), with few insignificant exceptions, which occur by nature, not by deliberate exercise of an art (φύσει μᾶλλον ἢ προαιρέσει τεχνῶν [1.8–9]). By contrast, human beings (ὁ δ’ ἄνθρωπος) are not only able to imitate (ἐμμήσατο) whatever animals can do (weave like spiders,<sup>153</sup> shape like bees, swim though made for walking [πεζός]), but have acquired even the divine arts (καὶ τῶν θεῶν τεχνῶν), competing with Asclepius in the art of medicine<sup>154</sup>, with Apollo in his arts (archery, poetry, divination, and all those associated with the Muses), even geometry and astronomy (1.9–14). By industriousness (φιλοπονίας) he has even figured out (ἐξεπορίσατο) the “greatest of divine goods, philosophy” (τὸ μέγιστον τῶν θεῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλοσοφίαν [1.16–17]). Based on all this, Galen concludes:

<sup>151</sup> Cf. the literature on the ancient debates on animal rationality cited in section 3.1.1.

<sup>152</sup> On the distinction between λόγος προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος, cf. Sextus Empiricus, AM 8.275–276.

<sup>153</sup> A similar point is made by Aspasius, 2.26–3.2: “For there are also products (ποιήματα) made by non-rational creatures (τῶν ἀλόγων), for example the honeycombs of bees and what are called spiders’ ‘webs’. But none of these produces in a way accompanied by reason (μετὰ λόγου ποιεῖ); rather, animals employ natural instinct (ὀρμῆ φυσικῆ χρώμενα τὰ ζῶα). Artistic products, however, are products made by rational creatures who make use of reason (τὰ δὲ τεχνικὰ ποιήματα λογικῶν ἐστὶ ποιήματα καὶ τῷ λόγῳ χρωμένων).”

<sup>154</sup> For the example of medicine in reflections on what it means to be human cf. the famous passage from Sophocles’ *Antigone* discussed in section 3.1.5.

διὰ ταῦτα τοίνυν <εἶ> καὶ λόγου μέτεστι τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις,  
κατ' ἐξοχὴν αὖθις πάλιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος μόνος ὀνομάζεται λογικός.

Therefore, then, even if the other animals have a share in reason, again, in a preeminent sense, it is humans alone who are called rational. (Galen, *Adhoratio ad artes addiscendas* 1.18–19)

Given its protreptic context, the definition of human beings as ζῷον λογικόν becomes the occasion for the encouragement to make the best use of that specific capacity (by taking up study):

πῶς οὖν οὐκ αἰσχρόν, ὃ μόνῳ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν κοινωνοῦμεν θεοῖς, τούτου μὲν ἀμελεῖν, ἐσπουδακέναι δὲ περὶ τι τῶν ἄλλων, τέχνης μὲν ἀναλήψεως καταφρονοῦντα, Τύχη δ' ἑαυτὸν ἐπιτρέποντα.

How then is anything but shameful, to neglect that within us in which alone we share with the gods, but to show eagerness about the other things, thinking little of the acquisition of the arts, yet committing ourselves to Fortune. (Galen, *Adhoratio ad artes addiscendas* 2.1–3)

Thus, as this example shows, discourse involving the notion of humans as ζῷον λογικόν can focus on the development of the arts and the capacity for knowledge as one of the signatures of being human.

A third example for reflection on humans as being on the boundary between other animals and the divine realm is the extract from Nemesius' *De natura hominis*, which scholars such as Theiler have ascribed to Posidonius. We have explained in section 2.2. why we have not used Posidonius frag. 309a Theiler as direct evidence to support the claim that already Posidonius used the phrase ζῷον λογικόν for human beings. But as a clear instance of reflection on what it means to be human, employing the notion of a rational mortal animal, it merits being included in our discussion. Even though written around 400 AD, it draws on many philosophical sources that we have already discussed<sup>155</sup> and hence may also be illuminating even for the purposes of a comparison with thinkers in the first century AD.<sup>156</sup>

In the first book of his work, Nemesius discusses the human place in the cosmos. He begins early with the observation that, as a rational mortal animal, hu-

<sup>155</sup> On the sources for Nemesius, cf. Sharples and van Eijk 2008, 18–23, who discuss, among others, Origen, Philo, Porphyry, Aëtius, Arius Didymus, Galen, and, of course, Posidonius (21–23).

<sup>156</sup> Though admittedly other authors could have been discussed, the amount of attention this text has received by scholarship on Stoic and other philosophical traditions may provide a sufficient basis for this decision.

mans occupy a position in the middle, bound simultaneously both to the divine and to the creaturely and even the earthly:

γνώριμον δὲ ὅτι καὶ τοῖς ἀψύχοις κοινωνεῖ  
καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων μετέχει ζωῆς  
καὶ τῆς τῶν λογικῶν μετείληφε νοήσεως.

It is well known that humans have something in common even with inanimate things, that they have a share in the life of non-rational animals, and that they participate in the thinking of rational beings. (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.2.13–15 = Posidonius frag. 309a Theiler)<sup>157</sup>

Having neatly introduced these three aspects, he continues to expand upon each of them in turn, once more, ascending the steps of the scale, in terms very similar to the other texts already discussed,<sup>158</sup> which build up additively, the lower contained in a transformed form in the higher as well:

[Human being] is associated with inanimate things (κοινωνεῖ γὰρ τοῖς μὲν ἀψύχοις) in virtue of the body (κατὰ τὸ σῶμα) and the mixture of the four elements (τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων κρᾶσιν),

with plants (φυτοῖς) both in virtue of these things and in virtue of the power of growth and generation (κατὰ τε ταῦτα καὶ τὴν θρεπτικὴν καὶ σπερματικὴν δύναμιν),

and with non-rational beings (τοῖς δὲ ἀλόγοις) both in virtue of these things (καὶ ἐν τούτοις) and, for good measure, in virtue of movement by impulse (τὴν καθ' ὄρμην κίνησιν), desire (ὄρεξιν), spirit (θυμὸν), and the power of sensation and breathing (τὴν αἰσθητικὴν καὶ ἀναπνευστικὴν δύναμιν). For all these are common to humans and to non-rational animals (ταῦτα γὰρ ἅπαντα κοινὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ἐστίν), even if not all to all.

But humans are linked by rationality to the incorporeal and intellectual natures (συνάπτεται δὲ διὰ τοῦ λογικοῦ ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις καὶ νοεραῖς φύσεσι), in reasoning and apprehending and judging each matter (λογιζόμενος καὶ νοῶν καὶ κρίνων ἕκαστα), pursuing the virtues (τὰς ἀρετὰς μεταδιώκων) and cherishing piety, the coping stone of the virtues (τῶν ἀρετῶν τὸν κολοφῶνα τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἀσπαζόμενος). (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.2.15–23)

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**157** Translation here and below by Sharples and van Eijk (2008), adapted. We have divided the Greek into lines, which happen here to be isocola, reinforcing the sense of an orderly layering which is presented.

Posidonius frag. 309a Theiler begins with the quotation above and includes all the other quotations from the first book of Nemesius' *De natura hominis*, but we will only refer to Nemesius' work from this point on.

**158** And which already point forward to the aspect of an ascending scale of inner "powers" that will be discussed in section 2.2.6.2.3.

The element of rationality (διὰ τοῦ λογικοῦ) is what links humans up (συνάπτεται) to the higher elements of the cosmos, and allows the activities of reasoning and apprehending the truth about the cosmos, which is the basis for the virtues and piety.<sup>159</sup> At the same time humans share in themselves, by virtue of their embodied existence, all that is mortal and finite: sensation, desire, generation, growth, the elements.

This is the boundary at which human beings are placed. Nemesius, probably inspired by Philo,<sup>160</sup> expresses this in terms of their being “on the boundary between intelligible and perceptual being”, which he combines with an explicit exposition of the notion of human beings as a ζῶον λογικόν:

διὸ καὶ ὡσπερ ἐν μεθορίοις ἐστὶ νοητῆς καὶ αἰσθητῆς οὐσίας,  
 συναπτόμενος κατὰ μὲν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὰς σωματικὰς δυνάμεις τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις τε καὶ  
 ἀψύχοις,  
 κατὰ δὲ τὸ λογικὸν ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις οὐσίαις.

So they are, as it were, also on the boundary between intelligible and perceptual being. They are joined together with non-rational and inanimate beings in virtue of the body and bodily powers, and to incorporeal beings in virtue of reason. (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.2.24–1.3.2)<sup>161</sup>

Nemesius uses the same language of humans as a being placed at the boundary (though here between rational and non-rational nature) in another remarkable passage, in which he even alludes to and quotes Paul on 1 Cor 15.47–49<sup>162</sup> in order to explain the ethical implications of the placement of humans in the cosmos and what genuine humanness requires:

Therefore humans were assigned a place on the boundary between the non-rational and the rational nature (Ἐν μεθορίοις οὖν τῆς ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς φύσεως ὁ ἄνθρωπος

**159** On the connection between the virtues towards God and towards fellow humans in ancient tradition cf. Dihle 1968. Cf. also the explication of piety (εὐσέβεια) as “contemplation of realities” (ἡ τῶν ὄντων θεωρία [Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.5.23]).

**160** Cf. Philo, *Opif.* 135 calls humans themselves the boundary (μεθόριον): “Hence it may with propriety be said that humankind is the borderland between mortal and immortal nature (τὸν ἄνθρωπον θνητῆς καὶ ἀθανάτου φύσεως εἶναι μεθόριον), partaking of each so far as is needful (ἐκατέρας ὅσον ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι μετέχοντα), and that they were created at once mortal and immortal (γεγενῆσθαι θνητὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀθάνατον), mortal in respect of the body (θνητὸν μὲν κατὰ τὸ σῶμα), but in respect of the mind immortal (κατὰ δὲ τὴν διάνοιαν ἀθάνατον).” Cf. Clement of Alexandria’s use of the idea at *Strom.* 2.18.81.2 (cf. also the preceding statement about assimilation to Christ and agreement with God at *Strom.* 2.18.80.5).

**161** We have again divided the Greek into lines.

**162** And, for good measure, Gen 3.19 and Ps 48.13, 21 LXX.

ταχθείς<sup>163</sup>). If they incline towards the body and love more the things of the body (ἐὰν μὲν ἐπὶ τὸ σῶμα ῥέψῃ καὶ τὰ τοῦ σώματος πλέον ἀγαπήσῃ), then they embrace the life of the non-rational beings (τὸν τῶν ἀλόγων ἀσπάζεται βίον) and will be reckoned among them (συναριθμηθήσεται), and they will be called “earthy” (χοϊκός), as by Paul (κατὰ Παῦλον), and will be told “For you are earth, and to earth you will return”<sup>164</sup> and “he was compared to the foolish cattle and made like unto them” (παρεσυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτήνεσι τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὁμοιώθη αὐτοῖς).<sup>165</sup> But, if they move towards the rational and despise all the bodily pleasures (ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν χωρήσῃ καταφρονήσας τῶν σωματικῶν πασῶν ἡδονῶν), they will enter into the divine life that is most dear to God (τὴν θεῖαν τε καὶ θεοφιλεστάτην ζωὴν μετέρχεται) and pre-eminently human (ὡς ἀνθρώπου προηγουμένως), and they will be like a heavenly being (ἐπουράνιος), in accordance with the saying “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.”<sup>166</sup> But the summit of the rational nature is to flee from and turn away from evils, but to pursue and choose things that are good (τῆς δὲ λογικῆς φύσεως τὸ κεφάλαιόν ἐστι φεύγειν μὲν καὶ ἀποστρέφασθαι τὰ κακά, μετιέναι δὲ καὶ αἰρεῖσθαι τὰ καλά). (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.5.9–1.5.19)<sup>167</sup>

This passage is, for our concerns, remarkable for several reasons. It makes the point of humans as beings at the boundary, here between the rational and the non-rational. It connects it with an ethical and protreptic appeal, which concerns human actions in the body and opposing its desires.<sup>168</sup> It shows how the contrast with animals can function in ethical contexts (τὸν τῶν ἀλόγων ἀσπάζεται βίον).<sup>169</sup> It weaves in the motif of a divine life (τὴν θεῖαν ... ζωὴν), which is also a feature of discourse on humans as rationals, as we have seen.<sup>170</sup> It features the concept and language of genuine and true humanness (ὡς ἀνθρώπου προηγουμένως), based on the proper exercise of the endowment with reason.<sup>171</sup> The

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**163** For the language of τάξις used by Epictetus 1.16 cf. sections 4.4.2–3.

**164** Gen 3.19 LXX.

**165** Ps 48.13, 21 LXX.

**166** 1 Cor 15.48 (οἶος ὁ χοϊκὸς τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ χοϊκοί, καὶ οἶος ὁ ἐπουράνιος τοιοῦτοι καὶ οἱ ἐπουράνιοι).

**167** Naturally, all the biblical references have been removed in Theiler’s reconstruction of Posidonius frag. 309a.

**168** Cf. Rom 6.12.

**169** Epictetus makes this move as well in Epictetus 2.9.2 (see section 4.2), where, we note, Epictetus also expounds the definition of human beings as rational mortal animals.

**170** Cf. Aspasius 153.7–9, and reason as that which binds the gods and humans together in Stoic thought (section 2.2.4).

**171** Cf. also Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.4.16, where human beings are called the truly rational animal (τὸ ἀληθῶς λογικὸν ζῶον τὸν ἄνθρωπον), in contrast to those animals that “appear near to the rational animal” (ὡς ἐγγυὸς λογικῶν [1.4.15], cf. Strabo, discussed above). Further, Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.5.23–1.6.1 “Now such as choose to live a human life as that of

quotations from Genesis, the Psalms and Paul are interesting in their own right, though not our central concern here. But finally, the last sentence (τῆς δὲ λογικῆς φύσεως τὸ κεφάλαιόν ἐστι φεύγειν μὲν καὶ ἀποστρέφεσθαι τὰ κακά, μετιέναι δὲ καὶ αἰρεῖσθαι τὰ καλὰ), which Theiler assigns to Posidonius,<sup>172</sup> seems like a remarkable parallel to Paul in Rom 12.9, 12.17, 12.21 (cf. Rom 7.19, 16.19),<sup>173</sup> especially when, as we argue, Paul draws in Rom 12.1c on the idea of humans as λογικοί and the concept of a human vocation, and connects it to what one does with the body (12.1b, with links to Rom 6).<sup>174</sup>

We may sum up our discussion with a passage in Nemesius that explains the elements of the definition of human beings as a ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν (in an expanded version), which is worth quoting, because it provides further evidence for how the definition of human beings is not just incidental to discussions about what it means to be human, but an important means for the condensation of further anthropological reflection:

They also define (ὀρίζονται) humans (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) as a rational animal, mortal and receptive of intellect and knowledge (ζῶον λογικόν, θνητόν, νοῦ καὶ ἐπιστήμης δεκτικόν). An animal (ζῶον), because humans too are an animate, sensitive being (οὐσία ἐστὶν ἐμψυχος αἰσθητική): for this is the definition of an animal (ὄρος ζώου). “Rational”, in order to separate them from non-rational animals (λογικὸν δέ, ἵνα χωρισθῇ τῶν ἀλόγων).<sup>175</sup> “Mortal” (θνητόν), in order to separate them from rational immortals (χωρισθῇ τῶν ἀθανάτων λογικῶν). “Receptive of intellect and knowledge”, because it is by learning that we acquire skills (διὰ μαθήσεως προσγίνονται ἡμῖν αἱ τέχναι) and the sciences (ἐπιστήμαι); for we have a capability to receive both intellect and skills (δύναμιν δεκτικὴν καὶ τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τῶν τεχνῶν), but the actual possession of these is the result of learning (τὴν δὲ ἐνέργειαν κτωμένοις ἐκ τῶν μαθημάτων). (Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 1.11.3–9)<sup>176</sup>

With this concluding passage from Nemesius, we have now seen several examples of how human beings as rational animals are described as standing at the boundary between two domains and how their behaviour aligns with either of

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a human and not just the life of a mere animal” (ὅσοι τοίνυν τὸν ἀνθρώπου βίον ὡς ἀνθρώπου ζῆν προαιροῦνται καὶ μὴ ὡς ζώου μόνου, τὰς ἀρετὰς μετέρχονται καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν).

**172** There seems at least to be a Stoic parallel here, as the formulation αἰρεῖσθαι τε δέη τάγαθὰ καὶ φεύγειν τὰ κακά “you have to choose what is good and flee what is evil” appears in Ariston of Chios (around 250 BC), frag. 374 (in SVF 1, p. 85 [= Galen, PHP 7.2.3, which notes the controversy of Ariston with Chrysippus (SVF 3.256)]). Cf. also Sextus Empiricus, AM 11.113.

**173** Even though Paul uses the language of πονηρόν in 12.9.

**174** See sections 5.3.2 and 6.3.

**175** Cf. with Epictetus 2.9.2, section 4.2.

**176** Nemesius continues with a report on an alternative explanation that the addition “being receptive of intellect and knowledge” to the definition, serves to distinguish human beings from “nymphs” and “other kinds of demons” (1.11.10–14).

them. This alignment depends on human actions. According to the Stoics, though, other things turn out to have already been aligned by nature with humans as rational beings in view.

### 2.2.6.2.2 Ascending scales of value and purposive relations

Hence, the ascending scales in which humans as rational animals are placed can also be discussed in terms of value and purposive relationships. In the following texts from Origen's *Contra Celsum*, which reflect Stoic doctrine at this point, rational beings tower high above the irrational animals. All other beings are made for the sake of rational natures. The imagery used to express this superiority of rational beings is drastic:

They [i. e. the Stoic school of philosophers (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς φιλόσοφοι)] quite rightly put humankind (προταττόντων τὸν ἄνθρωπον) and the rational nature in general above all irrational beings (καὶ ἀπαξασπλῶς τὴν λογικὴν φύσιν πάντων τῶν ἀλόγων), and say that providence has made everything primarily for the sake of the rational nature (διὰ ταύτην λεγόντων προηγουμένως τὴν πρόνοιαν πάντα πεποιηκέναι). Rational beings (τὰ λογικά) which are the primary things (προηγούμενα) have the value<sup>177</sup> of children who are born (παίδων γεννωμένων); whereas irrational and inanimate (τὰ δ' ἄλογα καὶ τὰ ἄψυχα χορίου) things have that of the afterbirth which is created with the child (συγκτιζομένου τῷ παιδίῳ). (Origen, *Cels.* 4.74 = SVF 2.1157)<sup>178</sup>

While the usefulness of farm animals for humans might be obvious, the Stoic view Origen relates holds that even wild animals serve a useful function for rational animals:

εἰ δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀγριωτάτοις τῶν ζῴων τροφὰς κατεσκεύασεν, οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν· καὶ ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ ζῶα καὶ ἄλλοι τῶν φιλοσοφησάντων εἰρήκασι γυμνασίου ἔνεκα γεγονέναι τῷ λογικῷ ζῴῳ.

Even if He also made nourishment for the wildest of animals, there is nothing remarkable about that; for other philosophers have said that even these animals were made for the exercise of the rational being. (Origen, *Cels.* 4.75 = SVF 3.1173)

The idea is that all things are subservient to rational creatures:

<sup>177</sup> Here the word λόγος appears close to λογικός (λόγον μὲν ἔχει τὰ λογικά ... παίδων γεννωμένων), but is used in the sense of value, not reason (cf. GE, s.v. λόγος, 4D for other examples of the phrase “to have the value of”).

<sup>178</sup> Transl. of Origen's *Contra Celsum* by Chadwick 1986, here and below, adapted.

Δοῦλα οὖν πάντα τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς αὐτοῦ συνέσεως κατεσκεύασεν ὁ δημιουργός.

The Creator, then, has made everything to serve the rational being and its natural intelligence. (Origen, *Cels.* 4.78)

This will also be important for Epictetus 1.16, as we shall see.<sup>179</sup>

### 2.2.6.2.3 Ascending scales of faculties, impulses and impressions

Furthermore, as we have already seen, but shall explore more here, the ascending scale in which human beings are placed goes along with an ascending scale of “powers”, “faculties” and “capacities”. This idea is clearly expressed in the following longer passage from Philo’s *Legum Allegoriae*, which reflects Stoic ideas and terminology:<sup>180</sup>

The mind when as yet unclothed and unconfined by the body (ὁ γυμνὸς καὶ ἀνένδετος σώματι νοῦς) ... has many powers (δυνάμεις). It has the power of holding together (ἐκτικτὴν), of growing (φωτικτὴν), of conscious life (ψυχικτὴν), of thought (διανοητικτὴν), and countless other powers,<sup>181</sup> varying both in species and genus.

Lifeless things, like stones ..., share with all others the power of holding together (ἔξις κοινή καὶ τῶν ἀψύχων), of which the bones in us, ... partake.

“Growth” (φύσις) extends to plants (ἡ δὲ φύσις διατείνει καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ φυτὰ), and there are parts in us, such as our nails and hair, resembling plants; “growth” (φύσις) is coherence capable of moving itself (ἔξις ἥδη κινουμένη).

(23) Conscious life (ψυχή) is the power to grow, with the additional power of receiving impressions and being the subject of impulses (φύσις προσειληφύτα φαντασίαν καὶ ὀρμήν). This is shared also by creatures without reason (κοινή καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων). Indeed our mind (ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς) contains a part that is analogous to the conscious life of a creature without reason (τι ἀλόγου ψυχῆ). Once more, the power of thinking (ἡ διανοητικὴ δύναμις) is peculiar to the mind (νοῦ), and while shared, it may well be, by beings more akin to God (κοινή μὲν τάχα καὶ τῶν θειοτέρων φύσεων), is, so far as mortal beings are concerned, peculiar to human beings (ἴδια δὲ ὡς ἐν θνητοῖς ἀνθρώπου).

This power or faculty is twofold. We are rational beings, on the one hand as being partakers of mind (μὲν καθ’ ἣν λογικοὶ ἐσμεν νοῦ μετέχοντες), and on the other as being capable of discourse (καθ’ ἣν διαλεγόμεθα). (Philo, *Leg.* 2.23–24)<sup>182</sup>

<sup>179</sup> See section 4.4.1. The Stoic material on this topic is collected at SVF 2.1152–1167.

<sup>180</sup> Witness its inclusion in collections such as SVF 2.458, LS 47P.

<sup>181</sup> Philo adds ἡ αἰσθητικὴ at *Leg.* 2.24.

<sup>182</sup> We have omitted several details from this passage (some of which, such as the mention of wood as an example, would render the link to other passages, such as Origen’s *De oratione* 6.1–2

This account is additive in so far as the higher forms include the “powers” of the lower forms. At the level of animals, what is added are “impressions” and “impulse” (φαντασίαν καὶ ὄρμην). The various “powers” (δυνάμεις), all associated with mind (νοῦς) in its non-embodied form, are distributed among embodied creatures to various degrees. Only in rational beings does the power of “mind” show itself in the form of thinking (ἡ διανοητικὴ δύναμις). The highest manifestation of this power is peculiar to humans, among mortal creatures (as there may be higher ones).<sup>183</sup>

The same account is given in the following passage by Clement of Alexandria, who also makes an ethical point:

Of “holding together” (ἔξωως), then, even stones (οἱ λίθοι), of “growth” (φύσεως) also plants (τὰ φυτὰ), of “impulses” (ὄρμησις) and “impressions” (φαντασίας) and the two just mentioned, even irrational animals partake (καὶ τὰ ἄλογα μετέχει ζῶα). But the rational capacity (ἡ λογικὴ δὲ δύναμις), being peculiar to the soul of humans (ἰδία οὕσα τῆς ἀνθρωπιᾶς ψυχῆς), is not supposed to be impelled in the same manner as the irrational animals (οὐχ ὡσαύτως τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις ὄρμᾶν ὀφείλει), but to distinguish the impressions and not to be carried away by them (ἀλλὰ καὶ διακρίνειν τὰς φαντασίας καὶ μὴ συναποφέρεσθαι αὐταῖς). (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.20.111.1–2)<sup>184</sup>

The same point is repeated in Origen, who expands on the ethical implications, including the attribution of praise and blame:

The rational animal (λογικὸν ζῶον), however, in addition to its imaginative nature (πρὸς τῇ φανταστικῇ φύσει), also has reason (λόγον ἔχει), which judges the images, rejecting some and accepting others, so that the animal may be led in accordance with them (τὸν κρίνοντα τὰς φαντασίας, καὶ τινὰς μὲν ἀποδοκιμάζοντα, τινὰς δὲ παραδεχόμενον, ἵνα ἄγῃται τὸ ζῶον κατ’ αὐτάς). Therefore, since there are, in the nature of reason (ἐν τῇ φύσει τοῦ λόγου), means to contemplate both the good and the shameful (ἀφορμαὶ τοῦ θεωρῆσαι τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσχρόν) – following which, contemplating (θεωρήσαντες) the good and the shameful, we choose (αἰρούμεθα) the good but avoid (ἐκκλίνομεν) the shameful – we are praise-

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[see below], even more conspicuous). By inserting paragraphs, we have sought to highlight the various “levels” of being and, concomitantly, capacities. Cf. similarly and more succinctly, Philo, *Aet.* 75, where “the nature of the world or cosmic system” (τὴν τοῦ κόσμου φύσιν) is described as closely unified and hence as “appearing as cohesion in wood and stone (τὴν ξύλων μὲν καὶ λίθων ἔξιν), growth in crops and trees (σπαρτῶν δὲ καὶ δένδρων φύσιν), conscious life in all animals (ψυχῆν δὲ ζῶων ἀπάντων), mind and reason in humans (ἀνθρώπων δὲ νοῦν καὶ λόγον) and the perfection of virtue in the good (ἀρετὴν δὲ σπουδαίων τελειοτάτην).” Cf. further Philo, *Deus* 35 (where various bodies are inseparable from “in some cases cohesion [ἔξει], in others growth [τὰ δὲ φύσει], in others life [τὰ δὲ ψυχῆ], in others a reasoning soul [τὰ δὲ λογικῆ ψυχῆ]”).

<sup>183</sup> As we have seen at Philo, *Conf.* 176.

<sup>184</sup> Our translation.

worthy (ἐπαινετοῖ) when devoting ourselves to the practice of the good (ἐπιδόντες ἑαυτοῦς τῇ πράξει τοῦ καλοῦ), but blameworthy (ψεκτοῖ) in the opposite case. (Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.3 = part of SVF 2.988)<sup>185</sup>

This theme of appropriately discriminating the impressions (φαντασίαι), making the right use of them, i.e. rationally, is of great importance to Epictetus, as we shall see in chapter 4, but may here already be illustrated by the following passage, in which Epictetus makes a point about personal adornment and what should be made beautiful:

Learn first to know who you are (γνώθι πρῶτον τίς εἶ), and then adorn (κόσμι) yourself accordingly. You're a human being (ἄνθρωπος εἶ); that is to say, a mortal animal who has the capacity to make use of impressions in a rational manner (θνητὸν ζῶον χρηστικὸν φαντασίαις λογικῶς). And what does it mean, to use them rationally (τὸ δὲ λογικῶς τί ἐστίν)? To use them in accordance with nature and perfectly (φύσει ὁμολογουμένως καὶ τελέως). What is superior in you, then (τί οὖν ἐξαίρετον ἔχεις)? The animal in you (τὸ ζῶον)? No. The mortal (τὸ θνητόν)? No. The capacity to make use of impressions (τὸ χρηστικὸν φαντασίαις)? No. The rational element in you (τὸ λογικὸν ἔχεις ἐξαίρετον) – that is what is superior in you. Adorn and beautify that (τοῦτο κόσμι καὶ καλλώπιζε); but as for your hair, leave it to him who made it in accordance with his will. (Epictetus 3.1.25–26)<sup>186</sup>

The distinction between the impressions (φαντασίαι) in the case of animals and human beings is also noted in the following passage from Diogenes Laertius:

Ἔτι τῶν φαντασιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι λογικαί, αἱ δὲ ἄλογοι· λογικαὶ μὲν αἱ τῶν λογικῶν ζώων, ἄλογοι δὲ αἱ τῶν ἀλόγων. αἱ μὲν οὖν λογικαὶ νοήσεις εἰσίν,<sup>187</sup> αἱ δ' ἄλογοι οὐ τετυχήκασιν ὀνόματος.

Another division of presentations is into rational and irrational, the former being those of rational creatures, the latter those of the irrational. Those which are rational are processes of thought, while those which are irrational have no name. (DL 7.51 = SVF 2.61)

We note that this passage is an important grammatical parallel for our reading of Rom 12.1.<sup>188</sup>

**185** Transl. Behr 2017.

**186** This passage is similar to Plato, *Resp.* 591c. For Epictetus, we adapt the translation of R. Hard (2014), here and below.

**187** Cf. Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 1.48.5: Ἡ γὰρ ἐν λογικῷ ζῳίῳ φαντασία ἐδέδοκτο αὐτοῖς νόησις (“They have determined that impression in a rational creature is a thought” [our translation]). Cf. also the distinctions between reason and speech in the context of a contrast between humans and animals in Sextus Empiricus, *AM* 8.275–276.

**188** See section 6.3.3.4.

#### 2.2.6.2.4 Freedom, responsibility, happiness

Finally, the discourse on human beings as ζῶον λογικόν is also developed in terms of human freedom, responsibility, and happiness. A notable example for freedom can be found in Origen's *De oratione* 6.1–2.<sup>189</sup> In 6.1, Origen describes different forms of motion, beginning from the lowest forms and moving up, along a *scala naturae* to the higher forms.<sup>190</sup> He begins at the first level with things like stones or pieces of wood (which have “lost” their power of motion [τὸ φύειν ἀπολωλεκότα]). If they move, it is only because something else outside of them moves them (τὸ κινοῦν ἔξωθεν ἔχει). At the second level, there are plants,<sup>191</sup> which are themselves moving (i. e. growing), albeit, it is said, only because nature moves them, so they still belong to the first kind of motion, the source being outside of them. At the third level, there are animals, which also move “from out of themselves” (ἐξ αὐτῶν κινεῖσθαι) and thus represent a second kind of motion, as they are moved from their own internal nature or soul (κινούμενα τὰ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνυπαρχούσης φύσεως ἢ ψυχῆς κινούμενα).<sup>192</sup> However, there is a third kind of motion, which applies at the fourth level, to humans as rational beings, who are also moving “through themselves” (δι’ αὐτῶν):

A third kind of motion is that found in living beings (ἡ ἀφ’ αὐτῶν κίνησις), which is called motion “from” themselves (ἡ ἀφ’ αὐτῶν κίνησις). And I believe that the motion of rational beings is motion “through” themselves (ἡ τῶν λογικῶν κίνησις δι’ αὐτῶν ἐστὶ κίνησις). Now if we take motion “from” itself away from a living being (ἀπὸ τοῦ ζώου τὴν ἀφ’ αὐτοῦ κίνησιν), it cannot any longer be supposed to be a living being, but will be like a plant moved only by nature (ὑπὸ φύσεως μόνης κινουμένῳ) or like a stone hurled by something outside itself. But if something follows along by its own motion (παρακολουθῆ τι τῇ ἰδίᾳ κινήσει), since we call this motion “through” itself (δι’ αὐτοῦ κινεῖσθαι), then it must necessarily be rational (τοῦτο εἶναι λογικόν). (Origen, *De oratione* 6.1)<sup>193</sup>

**189** Cf. also Philo, *Conf.* 176–178 quoted above.

**190** This text is very similar to the one we have cited above, Philo, *Leg.* 2.23–24. Cf. also Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.2–3.

**191** Origen also adds the bodies of living beings (τὰ τῶν ζώων σώματα) because when they are moved, they are not moved in the capacity of living beings (οὐχ ἢ ζῶα ... μετατίθεται). These kinds of distinctions bear a remote resemblance, though here in the context of “psychology”, to the kind of “prepositional metaphysics” (cf. Sterling 1997) which one might also detect, *inter alia*, in Rom 11.36; cf. 1 Cor 8.6.

**192** Origen signals the use of technical language here by his reference to the Stoics as those who “who use words in their stricter senses” (παρὰ τοῖς κυριώτερον χρωμένοις τοῖς ὀνόμασι), cf. Inwood and Gerson 1997, 164.

**193** Transl. Greer 1979, here and below.

This hierarchy of natures and movements is the basis for a clear argumentation for human freedom and responsibility, based on an interpretation of the definition of human beings. Here it must be noted that Origen uses a very Epictetean term, namely ἐφ' ἡμῖν, that “which depends on us” or is “in our power” or is “up to us”, which corresponds to a primary distinction of his ethical thought.<sup>194</sup>

Therefore, those who want to say that we have no freedom (μηδὲν εἶναι ἐφ' ἡμῖν) must necessarily admit something extremely foolish – first, that we are not living beings (ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ζῶα) and, second, that we are not rational beings (ὅτι οὐδὲ λογικὰ). On their view, since we are in no way moved by ourselves but by something moving outside ourselves (ὑπὸ ἕξωθεν κινούντος αὐτοὶ οὐδαμῶς κινούμενοι), we may be said to do what we suppose we are doing ourselves only because of that external cause. On the contrary, let anyone pay special attention to his own experiences and see whether he will not say without blushing that it is he who wills, he who eats, he who walks, he who gives his assent and acceptance to certain opinions (συγκατατίθεσθαι καὶ παραδέχεσθαι ὅποια δὴ ποτε τῶν δογμάτων), and he who rejects others as false (ἀνανεύειν πρὸς ἕτερα ὡς ψευδῆ). (Origen, *De oratione* 6.2)

Freedom and responsibility of human beings are discussed in terms of their nature as rational beings.<sup>195</sup> A similar link between the definition of human beings as rational animals and their happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is made by Aspasius, who explains Aristotle's statement at the very beginning of his *Nicomachean ethics* that “the good is what everything aims at” (τάγαθόν, οὐ πάντ' ἐφίεται [Aristotle, EN 1094a 2–3]) as follows:

That is how one must understand “aiming at”, in the sense that everything is equipped by nature for a resemblance to the most perfect and primary cause in the way that it can (παρεσκευασμένου ἐκάστου ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως εἰς τὴν τοῦ τελειοτάτου καὶ πρώτου αἰτίου ἢ δυνατόν ἐξομοίωσιν). For each thing is eagerly drawn by its own nature to its proper perfection (τὴν ἰδίαν τελειότητα). It is drawn to this because it is inclined to that which is most perfect of all. If Aristotle takes “good” (ἀγαθόν) in the sense of “happiness” (ἀντὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας λαμβάνει), then rational animals (λογικὰ ζῶα) only would strictly be meant (ὁρθῶς ἂν λέγοιτο). (Aspasius 4.7–11)

**194** It occurs frequently in Epictetus. Cf. only the first sentence of the *Enchiridion*: Τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, τὰ δὲ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν (“Some things are within our power, while others are not” [*Ench.* 1.1 (transl. R. Hard)]).

**195** Cf. also the statement in Aspasius 671–3, who adds the term λογικόν in the discussion to Aristotle's words on children, animals and the ἐκουσίον (the “voluntary”, though the translation can be misleading). On moral responsibility cf. also the attribution of praise and blame at Origen, *Princ.* 3.1.3, quoted above.

Thus for Aspasius, in the stricter sense of the term, only humans, as rational animals, should be called “happy”.<sup>196</sup> Related to this is the statement in Aspasius that only rational animals have something divine in their pursuit of those activities in which, according to Aristotelian tradition, happiness consists.<sup>197</sup>

This concludes our discussion of how human beings are placed within the cosmos in discourse employing the definition of human beings as rational living beings. We turn to the related notion of the vocation of a rational animal.

### 2.2.6.3 The vocation of rational animals

As our second main theme, we show in this section that the notion of a human vocation is often expressed by drawing on the notion of human beings as rational animals. In a first section, we show this with regards to the language of being “fashioned” for a particular purpose. Here the texts reflect in particular on how the human body and the human mind are made fittingly in order to equip human beings for their role in the cosmos.

In a second section, we show that reflections on the human vocation which use the idea of humans as rational often emphasise a two-part structure to that vocation, consisting of contemplation and corresponding action, to describe which we resort to the language of sign production.

In a third section, we consider how the commentator Aspasius uses the language of λογικός to paraphrase and explain Aristotle’s function (ἔργον) argument in the Nicomachean ethics. This is important because the ἔργον language is one of the ways in which Epictetus expresses the concept of a human vocation (see section 4.2).

#### 2.2.6.3.1 Fashioned for a purpose

In several of the examples we have already surveyed, we find a discursive pattern of λογικὰ ζῶα being “fashioned”, “constituted” or “equipped” (κατασκευάζειν, κατασκευή) for a certain purpose. We have already quoted Marcus Aurelius 3.9 (where right judgments must agree with the constitution of rational animals [τῆ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου κατασκευῆ]), Marcus Aurelius 9.1.1 (where nature has con-

<sup>196</sup> Cf. also Aspasius’ *distinguo* concerning children at 27.11–19 (quoted above).

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Aspasius 153.7–9: ἔστι δὲ θεϊόν τι ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τοῖς λογικοῖς, εἴ τις ἐφίεται τῆς οἰκείας ἐνεργείας καὶ ἀνεμποδίστου καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡδονῆς. “There is something divine in animals and above all in rational ones, if someone aims at his proper and unimpeded activity and therefore at pleasure.” (The pleasure in question here being that which accompanies the rational activities.)

stituted rational creatures for the sake of each other [τῆς γὰρ τῶν ὄλων φύσεως κατεσκευακίας τὰ λογικὰ ζῶα ἔνεκεν ἀλλήλων] and their mutual benefit [ὠφελεῖν μὲν ἀλλήλα κατ' ἀξίαν], Marcus Aurelius 8.39 (where constitution of rationals [ἐν τῇ τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῶου κατασκευῇ] is suitable for justice [δικαιοσύνη]) and, in a Christian key, Athenagoras, *De resurrectione* 13.1 (where God has made “this sort of living being” [τοιοῦτον κατεσκεύασεν ζῶον] with all the things “befitting to a life of understanding and a life of reason” [ἔμφοροι δὲ βίῳ καὶ ζωῇ λογικῇ προσηκόντων]).

This is significant for our purposes because there is a connection between the concept of a human vocation and the notion that human beings are made in a certain way, either by God or nature, specifically suitable to the purpose that accords with the intentions of either God or nature.<sup>198</sup> The passages we have thus combined serve to confirm how this cluster of ideas is associated with discourse involving human beings as rational. As we shall see in the next chapter, there is a broader ancient reflection on humans, in which specifically the bodily makeup of human beings is compared and contrasted with other animals, and correlated with their endowment with reason.<sup>199</sup> Such traditions can condense into formulations such as the definition of human beings as ζῶα λογικά, while other language such as κατασκευάζειν succinctly expresses associated themes.

This nexus of themes and language is important for Epictetus as well, as we shall see in chapter 4, and here already in a passage from a discourse on how to behave towards tyrants (1.19). Having just presented his hearers with a vivid dialogue between a tyrant threatening shackles and a fearless and hence free person (with a self-understanding of having been liberated by Zeus [ἐμὲ ὁ Ζεὺς ἐλεύθερον ἀφῆκεν] and being “his own son” [τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν (1.19.9)]), Epictetus explains that such a person is not paying attention to a tyrant in his presence, but to himself (1.19.10), as it is “in the nature of every living creature that it does everything for its own sake (οὕτως τὸ ζῶον· αὐτοῦ ἔνεκα πάντα ποιεῖ [1.19.11]), and the same applies to the sun and even to Zeus himself (1.19.11). The point here is not of course a universal principle of selfishness. Rather, as Epictetus continues to explain with regard to Zeus, he can only do his own thing as

**198** Cf. section 3.2 on these links.

**199** In this context, a passage such as Galen, *De usu partium* 3.184.16–18 Kühn is noteworthy because, using the language of κατασκευάζειν, it links the notion of humans as ζῶα λογικά expressly with a consideration of the usefulness of the parts of the body, as Galen's aim is to show that “each of the parts of our body are constructed in such a way as to be of most use to the two-footed rational animal” (ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς μορίων οὕτω κατεσκευασμένον, ὡς ἂν μάλιστα χρηστὸν ἔσοιτο δίποδι ζῴῳ λογικῷ).

the “Rain-giver (Υέτιος) and Fruit-bringer (Ἐπικάρπιος) and father of gods and humans (πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε)” by contributing to the “common benefit (εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ὠφέλιμος)” (1.19.12). And given the close link between humans as rational living beings and the gods, this same principle applies to all human beings:

καθόλου τε τοιαύτην <τὴν> φύσιν τοῦ λογικοῦ ζῴου κατεσκεύασεν, ἵνα μηδενὸς τῶν ἰδίων ἀγαθῶν δύνηται τυγχάνειν, <ἀν> μή τι εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ὠφέλιμον προσφέρηται.

And in general he [Zeus] has constituted the rational animal to have such a nature that he cannot attain any of his own particular goods without contributing to the common benefit. (Epictetus 1.19.13)

Thus, these texts show that the idea of a human vocation, the idea of humans as rational animals, and the idea of humans being constructed in a way suited to this purpose can be linked and may extend even into the domain of the social.<sup>200</sup>

### 2.2.6.3.2 Contemplation and action: sign production

The notion of human beings as ζῶα λογικά is also employed in discourse on the human vocation in the cosmos. In some of these texts, we find the idea of humans being able to perceive and understand, based on their endowment with reason, the highest truths about the cosmos, and hence to act in a manner which reflects this vision:

Βίων δὲ τριῶν ὄντων, θεωρητικοῦ καὶ πρακτικοῦ καὶ λογικοῦ, τὸν τρίτον φασὶν αἰρετέον· γεγονέναι γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐπίτηδες τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον πρὸς θεωρίαν καὶ πράξιν.

Of the three kinds of life, the contemplative, the practical, and the rational, they declare that we ought to choose the last, for that a rational being is expressly produced by nature for contemplation and for action. (DL 7.130)

This passage is particularly important in view of Epictetus and Paul because it expresses the vocation of human beings as a λογικὸν ζῶον in terms of a two-part structure: first, contemplation of the cosmos (θεωρία) and, second, a sort of action which is informed by this contemplation (πρᾶξις).<sup>201</sup> In a passage of Cicero’s *De natura deorum*, in which he reports Stoic theology, the purpose of hu-

**200** As Epictetus implies in 1.19.14: the principle of doing “everything for one’s one sake” (πάντα αὐτοῦ ἕνεκα ποιεῖν) is not “anti-social” (ἀκοινωνητον).

**201** In this context our term “sign production” (see section 1.4) would highlight the way in which the praxis reflects and is shaped by the “seeing” of the cosmos. The same point applies to *mundum contemplandum* and *imitandum* (Cicero, ND 2.37).

mans and other beings is related in similar ways, where for human beings the same two-part structure of their vocation is present (*mundum contemplandum* and *imitandum*):

For as Chrysippus cleverly put it, just as a shield-case is made for the sake of a shield and a sheath for the sake of a sword, so everything else except the world was created for the sake of some other thing (*sic praeter mundum cetera omnia aliorum causa esse generata*); thus the corn and fruits produced by the earth were created for the sake of animals (*animantium causa*), and animals for the sake of human beings (*animantes autem hominum*): for example the horse for riding (*ecum vehendi causa*), the ox for ploughing (*arandi bovem*), the dog for hunting and keeping guard (*venandi et custodiendi canem*); humans themselves however came into existence for the purpose of contemplating and imitating the world (*ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum*). (Cicero, ND 2.37)<sup>202</sup>

It is important to note that in the context of this passage, reason language for the world and for human beings is used in a manner very similar to the arguments we have discussed above.<sup>203</sup>

The same two-part structure is also present in Philo's *De praemiis et poenis*. Having extolled the importance of hope<sup>204</sup> for human beings in various occupations (the tradesman, the skipper, the ambitious politician, the athlete), Philo turns to the life of contemplation:

The hope of happiness (ἐλπίς εὐδαιμονίας) incites also the devotees of virtue (τοὺς ἀρετῆς ζηλωτάς) to study wisdom (φιλοσοφεῖν), believing that thus they will be able to discern the nature of all that exists (δυνησομένους καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν ἰδεῖν) and to act in accordance with nature and so bring to their fullness the best types of life, the contemplative and the practical (δρᾶσαι τὰ ἀκόλουθα πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀρίστων βίων θεωρητικοῦ τε καὶ πρακτι-

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**202** Cf. Forschner 2018, 200–201. Note the parallel to Epictetus 1.6.19 (see section 4.5). Note also the discussion of stars in the context of this passage (at ND 2.39). Transl. H. Rackham, here and below, adapted.

**203** For the reason language in the immediate context of this passage: at ND 2.36 Cicero relates Stoic arguments to the effect that the world (*mundum*) has a share in understanding (*intelligentem*) and wisdom (*sapientem*), is a living being (*animantem*), rational and capable of insight (*rationis et consilii compotem*); like humans it shares in reason (*rationis particeps*), but while humans can become wise (*homo ... sapiens fieri potest*), it is wise from the beginning (*a principio sapiens*). Further, in ND 2.38 we find the statement that nothing is better than mind and reason (*nihil autem est mente et ratione melius*).

**204** On the importance of hope (ἐλπίς) in Philo's characterisation of genuine humanness see also the passages discussed below. Note that Philo (*Praem.* 10) mentions hope (ἐλπίς) as the “most vital form of seed (τὴν ἀναγκαιοτάτην σποράν) which the creator (ὁ ποιητής) sowed in the rich soil of the rational soul (λογικῆ ψυχῆ)”.

κοῦ τελείωσιν), which necessarily make their possessor a happy man (ὧν ὁ τυχὼν εὐθύς ἐστιν εὐδαίμων). (Philo, *Praem.* 11)<sup>205</sup>

Philo also makes the link between the notion of humans as rational beings and their vocation as human beings explicit. In a first passage, he explicitly links the idea of a contemplative calling to the notion of a rational being (λογικόν), which from the context clearly includes humans:<sup>206</sup>

θεωρητικοῦ γὰρ τίς ἀμείνων βίος ἢ μᾶλλον οἰκειούμενος<sup>207</sup> λογικῶ;

For what life is better than a contemplative life, or more appropriate to a rational being? (Philo, *Migr.* 47).

In another passage, Philo uses the language of “worship” (θεραπεία) and links it to human beings as ζῶα λογικά:<sup>208</sup>

For, abandoning the foreign alien tongue (γλῶτταν) of Chaldaea, the tongue of sky-prating astrology, he betook him to the language that befits a living creature endowed with reason (τὴν ἀρμόττουσαν [sc. γλῶτταν] λογικῶ ζῳίῳ), even the worship of the First Cause of all things (τὴν τοῦ πάντων αἰτίου θεραπείαν). (Philo, *Somm.* 1.161)

Finally, we add here an example by a Christian author, which expresses the vocation of human beings as rational animals again in terms of contemplation and

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**205** This passage is very similar to Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.9, where Pythagoras is said to have considered, at Olympia, the athletes, the merchants, and the spectators (as in *Praem.* 11) and to have compared the philosopher to the third class of those who are “studying the nature of things zealously” (*rerum naturam studiose intuerentur*), which he calls “zealous for wisdom” (*sapientiae studiosos*, cf. τοὺς ἀρετῆς ζηλωτὰς [*Praem.* 11]).

**206** Though not all: The “seeing” (ἰδεῖν) of “things whose allotted place is nearer to the divine” (τὰ θειοτέρας μοίρας λαχόντα) is reserved to the “most keen-eyed class”, to whom “the Father of all things, by showing them his own works (τὰ ἴδια ἐπιδεικνύμενος ... ἔργα), bestows an all-surpassing gift (μεγίστην πασῶν χαρίζεται δωρεάν)” (*Migr.* 46). Immediately following this reference, the contrast between the word of God and the voice of human beings is made by referring to human beings simply as “mortal beings” (τῆς τῶν θνητῶν ζῳίων φωνῆς), confirming that “rational beings” here includes reference to humans.

**207** The use of the term οἰκειοῦσθαι seems suggestive for Philo’s use of Stoic traditions in this context, cf. e.g. DL 7.85.

**208** This is relevant for our discussion of Paul’s use of λατρεία in Rom 12.1, cf. section 6.3.1.3 (quoting Philo, *Spec.* 1.303, where θεραπεία can be glossed as “service”).

a fitting response in life. The focus is the divine Pedagogue, Christ, who is the image (εἰκών):<sup>209</sup>

For what else shall we say the rational animal (ζῶον τὸ λογικόν), I mean human beings (τὸν ἄνθρωπον λέγω), must do, than to contemplate the divine (ἢ θεάσασθαι τὸ θεῖον δεῖν)? It is necessary, too, I say, that humans contemplate human nature (θεάσασθαι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν) and live in such a manner that truth leads the way (ύψηγεῖται ἢ ἀλήθεια), admiring beyond measure (ἀγαμένους ὑπερφυῶς) the Pedagogue himself and his commandments (τὸν τε παιδαγωγὸν αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ), and how they fittingly correspond (πρέποντα ἀλλήλοις) and harmonise (ἀρμόττοντα), according to which image we must also conform ourselves towards the Pedagogue (καθ' ἣν εἰκόνα καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀρμολογούμενους χρῆ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὸν παιδαγωγόν), making our speech and deeds agree (σύμφωνον τὸν λόγον ποιησαμένους τοῖς ἔργοις), in order truly to live (τῷ ὄντι ζῆν). (Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.12.100.3)<sup>210</sup>

### 2.2.6.3.3 The function (ἔργον) of human beings

The idea of humans as a ζῶον λογικόν is closely connected to the idea of a human vocation (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) in a section of Aspasius' commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics. There Aspasius seeks to explain and paraphrase Aristotle's famous function (ἔργον) argument (at EN, 1097b 22–1098a 20).<sup>211</sup> This passage is full of reason language and connects it to various concepts having to do with the role and purpose of human beings (ἀνθρώπου τὸ τέλος),<sup>212</sup> also in relation to the purposes of other things. In particular it discusses the term ἔργον in a way that is helpful for Epictetus 1.16.19–21, our most important parallel for Rom 12.1. It contains a clear expression of the specific vocation of something being based on what is peculiar to it. It also paraphrases Aristotle's image of the functions of the parts of the body, in a way that is close to our interpretation of Paul's use of the image of the body in Rom 12.3–8. This warrants our extensive quotation of the passage.

Aspasius begins to explain Aristotle's third approach at defining happiness (εὐδαιμονία), namely by considering the function of human beings,<sup>213</sup> as follows:

**209** On the importance of the concept of assimilation for Clement of Alexandria, see van Kooten 2008, 177–180, in particular on Christ as the true εἰκών, 178–179, with a discussion of Clement, *Paed.* 1.12.98–99, immediately preceding the passage quoted here.

**210** Our translation.

**211** Cf. section 4.2.

**212** A passage not discussed by Heinemann 1926 (cf. section 3.2).

**213** Cf. Aristotle, EN 1097b 22–25.

But supposing they would agree that happiness (εὐδαιμονίαν) is the most final good (τέλειον ἀγαθόν) and the best one, one must still grasp clearly what it is. ... For the end of anything (παντός γὰρ τὸ τέλος) ... is believed to reside in its work [or product] (ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ), for example the end of the art of shoemaking (σκυτικῆς τέλος) is in the work [that is the result] of shoemaking (ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τῷ τῆς σκυτικῆς). If, then, the work of the shoemaking art is a sandal, but we are investigating what the end of humans is (ἀνθρώπου δὲ ζητοῦμεν τὸ τέλος τί ποτέ ἐστιν), one would have to grasp the work of humans as humans (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἀνθρωπον). That there is a work of humans as humans (ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἀνθρωπος), he renders plausible first on the grounds that it is unreasonable to agree that there is a product of a builder (τέκτονος) and a shoemaker (σκυτέως)<sup>214</sup> and that there are works [or functions] of the parts of a human being (ἀνθρώπου τῶν μορίων εἶναι ἔργα), for example seeing (τὸ ὄρᾶν) in the case of the eye (ὀφθαλμοῦ), walking in the case of the foot (ποδὸς δὲ τὸ βαδίσειν), grasping and giving in the case of the hand and any other of the things that pertain to a hand (χειρὸς δὲ τὸ λαμβάνειν καὶ δίδοναι καὶ ἄλλο τι τῶν προσηκόντων τῇ χειρὶ). If there is a work pertaining to each of his parts (τῶν μορίων ἐκάστου ἐστὶν ἔργον), there should be one of the human being as well (εἶη ἂν καὶ ἀνθρώπου). (Aspasius 17.18 – 29)<sup>215</sup>

The use of the term τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (“the work of human beings”) is one of the ways to express the idea of a vocation of human beings. Aspasius continues his explanatory paraphrase of Aristotle, turning to the question of what is specific to human nature and hence to the purpose of human beings as such, which is grounded in it. Aspasius explicitly expresses the general notion of a specific work based on peculiar properties (τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐκάστου ἴδιον). Moving from what is shared with plants and animals to what is specifically human, Aspasius focuses on humans being λογικός:

What, then, is this work, qua human being (τί οὖν ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ ἢ ἀνθρωπος)? Would it be to live (τὸ ζῆν)? But this is common even to plants (κοινὸν καὶ τοῖς φυτοῖς), and in any case it is not his work to have a share in life (τὸ μετέχειν ζωῆς): this, rather, belongs to him by nature (ὑπάρχον ἐκ φύσεως). If living then is common not only to animals (τοῖς ζώοις) but also to plants, and the work of each thing is specific (τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐκάστου ἴδιον),<sup>216</sup> one would have to separate out nutritive life (τὴν θρεπτικὴν ζωὴν), on the grounds that the work of a human being does not reside in this (οὐκ ἐν ταύτῃ ὄντος τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου ἔργου). Similarly, neither would it reside in growth-related life (τῇ αὐξητικῇ), for this too is common to plants. But nor again would it reside in perceptive life (τῇ αἰσθητικῇ ζωῇ), for this is common also to non-rational animals (τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις). The productive and rational life, then, is left to be the work of a human being, that is, to live as a rational

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Epictetus 2.9.10 also using the example of a τέκτων (see section 4.2).

<sup>215</sup> For Aspasius, we have adapted the translation of David Konstan (2006), here and below, including his remarks in square brackets.

<sup>216</sup> Compare with Aristotle, EN 1097b 34 (ζητεῖται δὲ τὸ ἴδιον).

being (λείπεται δὲ [τὸ] ἔργον [εἶναι] τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ πρακτικῆ καὶ λογικῆ ζωῆ, τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν). (Aspasius 17.29–18.2)

Thus the “rational life” (λογικὴ ζωή) is explained as one that is lived as a rational being should (τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν).<sup>217</sup>

It is very instructive, too, for our attempts at charting the use of the ζῶν λογικόν, to compare the paraphrase of Aspasius with the original text of Aristotle. For what Aspasius renders as ἡ πρακτικῆ καὶ λογικῆ ζωῆ corresponds in Aristotle’s text to the following passage:

But this too [i.e. sense-perception] appears to be shared (κοινή) by horses (ἵππων), oxen (βοῶ), and animals generally (παντὶ ζῴῳ). There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the *rational* (λείπεται δὴ πρακτικῆ τις [sc. ζωῆ] τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος). (Aristotle, EN 1098a 3–4)<sup>218</sup>

We have rendered the phrase τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος deliberately vague as “*rational*” allowing either the interpretation that Aristotle refers to the rational part in human beings (as τὸ λόγον ἔχων is used for a part of the soul [ψυχῆ] in Aristotle, EN 1102a 27–28), or an understanding in which the word ζῶν would have to be supplied from the preceding context, i.e. τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος (sc. ζῴου) “of the rational being.” The parenthetical remarks which follow the quoted sentence (EN 1098a 4–5) suggest the former, i.e. an interpretation in terms of “rational part.” Yet, due to its irrelevance in context, this sentence has been suspected of being an interpolation (which Aspasius, however, also reads and explains), and then the context of the passage would decisively favour the latter interpretation.<sup>219</sup>

It would then be one of the instances in Aristotle in which the phrase ζῶν λόγον ἔχων (“animal endowed with reason”) could be understood as implicit in the syntax (though it never appears explicitly in this form). It seems likely, then,

**217** Note that this makes it an important parallel to our understanding of the phrase λογικὴ λατρεία in Rom 12.1, in that it relates the λατρεία to its subject (see section 6.3.3). The difference, however, is that whereas we argue that λατρεία should be understood in terms of the concept of a vocation (and hence more like what is expressed here as ἔργον), the ζωῆ here refers to the state in which human beings are when they exercise, to use our term, their vocation as human beings.

**218** Transl. H. Rackham, adapted (indicated by the italics).

**219** On the issue of the interpolation, cf. the note in Rackham’s translation ad loc., which suggests that in this case the translation of the preceding words should be “the practical life of a rational being”.

that Aristotle did not yet use the phrase ζῶον λογικόν,<sup>220</sup> as he appears, on this construal, to have resorted to the longer formulation ζῶον λόγον ἔχων. However, by the time of Aspasius, the formulation ζῶον λογικόν and its related sense of λογικός, have been established, such that Aspasius renders *the latter* understanding of πρακτική τις [ζωή] τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος in the paraphrase ἡ πρακτικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ζωή, as can be seen clearly from his explanatory gloss that immediately adds τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν.

Aspasius then continues to explain the parenthetical remark (EN 1098a 4–5), and hence to discuss the rational part in human beings, which he has no trouble connecting to the preceding statements in Aristotle:

In this resides what is specific to a human being (ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ<sup>221</sup> τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), namely the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς). He calls it “rational” (λογικόν), separating it out in relation to the nutritive (τὸ θρεπτικόν) and perceptive parts (τὸ αἰσθητικόν) and the other capacities that are common to the other animals (τὰς ἄλλας δυνάμεις, ὅσαι κοινὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις). Of this same rational part (τοῦ λογικοῦ), one part is so called as being naturally so constituted as to obey reason (πεφυκὸς πείθεσθαι τῷ λόγῳ), while another part is so naturally constituted as to contain reason in itself (πεφυκὸς ἔχειν ἐν αὐτῷ λόγον). Elsewhere<sup>222</sup> he calls the part that is so constituted as to obey (πεφυκὸς πείθεσθαι) “non-rational” (ἄλογον), because it does not contain its own reason (τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἴδιον λόγον); from this it is clear that this non-rational and emotive part differs from that of animals (διαφέρει τοῦτο τὸ ἄλογον καὶ παθητικὸν τοῦ τῶν ζώων): for the one is obedient to reason (ἐπιπειθεὶς λόγῳ), whereas that of animals (τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων) is not obedient. (Aspasius 18.2–9)

After these statements, which compare human beings with the other animals, Aspasius discusses another distinction made in Aristotle’s text, which we quote here because of its close integration of reason language, including λογικὴ and λογικῶς, with the concept of a function of human beings (ἔργον ἀνθρώπου), such as we argue is important for Epictetus 1.16.19–21 and Rom 12.1:

Since the rational life is spoken of in two senses (διχῶς δὲ λεγομένης τῆς λογικῆς ζωῆς), the one potentially (κατὰ δύναμιν), which we have even when we are sleeping (καθεύδοντες) and, when awake, when we are not acting as rational beings (ἐγρηγορούτες μηδὲν δὲ πράττοντες ὡς λογικοῖ), and the other actively (τῆς δὲ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν), in accord with which,

<sup>220</sup> Though he uses the designation τὰ ἄλογα for “irrational animals” for instance at EN 1111b 12–13 (cf. EN 1111b 9 mentioning “the other animals”).

<sup>221</sup> Note the word τούτῳ here does not refer back to the words of Aristotle, understood in terms of “the rational part”, but forward in the sentence: ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὸ λογικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς. On this use of οὔτος as “proleptic with respect to an exegetical clause” cf. GE, s.v.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. EN 1102b 25–34.

when we are acting consistently with what is rational (ἦν πράττοντες τοῖς λογικοῖς ἀρμοζόντως<sup>223</sup>), we are said to be living rationally (ζῆν λεγόμεθα λογικῶς), he says that the work of a human being (ἔργον ἀνθρώπου) must be posited as being an actively rational life (κατ' ἐνέργειαν λογικὴν ζωὴν). (Aspasius 18.9–13)

Aspasius thus demonstrates that the notion of human beings as a ζῶν λογικόν (we have listed his uses of the phrase above) can be closely connected with a discussion of a human vocation. While Aspasius confirms that there is a Peripatetic tradition on this point, our reading of Epictetus in chapter 4 will explore this in a Stoic thinker.

#### 2.2.6.4 The genuine humanness of rational animals

As our third main theme, we show in this section that discourse on what it means to be genuinely human can also employ the notion of human beings as a ζῶν λογικόν. We will discuss here two examples in Philo of Alexandria, but will see this also in Epictetus, and, as we shall argue, in Paul.

The first passage is from *De Abrahamo*, where Philo interprets the description of Noah in Gen 6.9 LXX (“Noah, a human being just and perfect in his generation, was well-pleasing to God” Νῶε ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος, τέλειος ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ, τῷ θεῷ εὐηρέστησεν) in terms of genuine humanness. Philo gives indirect confirmation that the notion of humans as λογικόν θνητὸν ζῶν has wide currency by noting it as “the common form of speech” (κοινῷ τύπῳ), which he seeks to better, following his interpretation of Moses:

But we must not fail to note that in this passage [i. e. Gen 6.9] he gives the name of human not according to the common form of speech, to the mortal animal endowed with reason (ὅτι νῦν ἄνθρωπον οὐ κοινῷ τύπῳ τὸ λογικόν θνητὸν ζῶν καλεῖ), but to the human who is human pre-eminently (τὸν μέντοι κατ' ἐξοχὴν), who verifies the name (ὅς ἐπαληθεύει τούνομα) by having expelled from the soul the untamed and frantic passions (τὰ ἀτίθασα καὶ λελυτικῶτα πάθη) and the truly beast-like<sup>224</sup> vices (τὰς θηριωδεστάτας κακίας τῆς ψυχῆς). (33) Here is a proof (σημεῖον). After “human” (ἄνθρωπον) he adds “just” (δίκαιον), implying by the combination *just human being* (ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος) that the unjust is no human (ὡς ἀδίκου μὲν οὐδενὸς ὄντος ἀνθρώπου), or more properly speaking a beast in human form (ἀνθρωπομόρφου θηρίου), and that the follower after righteousness alone is (*truly*) human (μόνου δὲ ὃς ἂν ζηλωτῆς ἢ δικαιοσύνης). (Philo, *Abr.* 32–33)

<sup>223</sup> This formulation recalls the Stoic formulation of the τέλος, cf. DL 7.87 (τὸ ὁμολογούμενως τῇ φύσει ζῆν).

<sup>224</sup> Philo seems to draw on Plato's *Respublica* here (δικαιοσύνη, θηριώδης).

In this passage, the definition of human beings is presupposed, but used as the contrast term denoting ordinary humanity. The notion of genuine humanness is developed in terms of expulsion of the passions of the soul and in terms of justice (δικαιοσύνης). The close link between notions of genuine humanness and justice (δικαιοσύνη) is going to be very important for our interpretation of Romans.<sup>225</sup>

In another passage, Philo makes a statement about genuine humanness in terms of hope on the true God. Philo combines the statement made about Enosh in Gen 4.25 LXX (“hoped to call upon the name of the lord” ἤλπισεν ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ) with the Hebrew meaning of his name (“humankind”)<sup>226</sup> and with the statement in Gen 5.1 LXX (ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων), which he seems to interpret in a normative sense of being human (“the book of the creation of true human beings”). This is the occasion to better the usual definition of the composite human being, for which the definition is rational mortal animal (ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν), with Moses’ definition of the genuine human being:

μόνος εὐελπὶς ἄνθρωπος, ὥστε κατὰ τὰ ἐναντία ὁ δύσελπις οὐκ ἄνθρωπος. ὅρος οὖν τοῦ μὲν συγκρίματος ἡμῶν ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν ἐστι, τοῦ δὲ κατὰ Μωυσῆν ἀνθρώπου διάθεσις ψυχῆς ἐπὶ τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεὸν ἐπιζούσης.

*Only the one of good hope is (in the true sense) a human, so that the converse therefore is true, that he that is lacking in hope is not a human (in the full sense). The definition, then, of our complex being is “a living creature endowed with reason subject to death”, but that of humans as Moses portrays them “a soul so constituted as to hope on the God that really IS.” (Philo, Det. 139)<sup>227</sup>*

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**225** Note the use of reason language in the context of this passage, the ruling mind (τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν [Abr. 30]) and of speech (ὁ προφορικὸς λόγος [Abr. 29]). Both the term τέλειος and τῷ θεῷ εὐηρέστησεν used in Gen 6.9, and Philo’s exposition of them in Abr. 34 and 35 are noteworthy parallels to Rom 12.1–2, especially Philo’s link between being well-pleasing (εὐαρεστήσαι) and happiness (εὐδαίμονες) in Abr. 35. On the link between creation theology and Abraham’s discovery of monotheism in *De Abrahamo* see Niehoff 2018, 102–103, which coheres well with our reading of Rom 1.18–21 in section 5.2.

**226** Of which Philo is aware, cf. *Praem.* 14 (making a similar point about being human and hope, so also at Abr. 8). Cf. also *Praem.* 11 quoted above.

**227** We have revised the translation of Whitaker in the first sentence (indicated by italics), whose translation at this point seems not to bring out the nuance of genuine humanness we submit is present in the Greek.

Thus, Philo here shows how discourse on genuine humanness can be linked with the definition of human beings as ζῷα λογικὰ θνητά.<sup>228</sup>

### 2.2.7 Which audiences might have been familiar with the definition?

In this section we argue, through a close analysis of a passage in Dio Chrysostom's *Borysthenitic* speech (*Or.* 36), that it is plausible that both Paul and his hearers would have been familiar with the definition of human beings as rational mortal animals. This passage by a philosopher and orator (c. AD 40–after 112) is instructive for the question of how widely known the definition of human beings as rational beings would have been in the first century precisely because at first sight it might appear to provide evidence against it being widely known.

In his *Borysthenitic* speech Dio Chrysostom relates to his fellow citizens of Prusa a conversation reportedly having taken place at Borysthenes, a Greek settlement at the Black Sea (i.e. close to “barbarian” territory<sup>229</sup>). The noteworthy point is that he directs his speech not to philosophers in particular, but rather to all townspeople of Prusa willing to listen to his exposition. Dio tells us how he ends up in a setting where he is asked to speak about the topic of what a city is before most of the townspeople of Borysthenes, who were present in arms due to a recent raid by “Scythians”.<sup>230</sup> His first point is that one should proceed from the definition of the thing one is going to speak about.<sup>231</sup> He then draws a distinction between the educated, who are able to provide definitions of the things they speak about and the masses, who are not able to do so, and as the example to illustrate the point he speaks about what a human being (ἄνθρωπος) is:

For most men (οἱ ... πολλοί ... ἄνθρωποι), said I, know and employ merely the names of things (τὸ ὄνομα αὐτὸ), but are ignorant of the things themselves (τὸ δὲ πράγμα ἄγνοοῦσιν). On the other hand, men who are educated (οἱ δὲ πεπαιδευμένοι) make it their business to know also the meaning (τὴν δύναμιν) of everything of which they speak. For example, *an-*

**228** Note that Philo, following Plato, sometimes associates the true human being only with the νοῦς, such as in *Conf.* 42, *Congr.* 47, *Fug.* 71, *Plant.* 42, *Somm.* 2.267. Cf. also van Kooten's discussion of the concept of the “inner man” (2008, 358–370). Such links however indirectly confirm how there is a reason discourse that overlaps in several ways with discourse on genuine humanness.

**229** *Or.* 36.7–17. For examples of drawing on stereotypes about Scythians, see *Or.* 36.7 and 36.17.

**230** *Or.* 36.16.

**231** The first order of business is ὅ τι ἐστὶν αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὑπὲρ οὗ ὁ λόγος γινῶναι σαφῶς (*Or.* 38.18).

*thropos* is a term (τὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὄνομα) used by all who speak Greek (οἱ ἐλληνίζοντες), but if you should ask any one of them (ἐάν δὲ πύθη τινὸς αὐτῶν) what *anthropos* really is (ὃ τι ἐστὶ τοῦτο) – I mean what its attributes are and wherein it differs from any other thing (ὁποῖόν τι καὶ καθ’ ὃ μηδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ταύτόν) – he could not say (οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι εἰπεῖν), but could only point to himself or to someone else in true barbarian fashion (δεῖξαι μόνον αὐτὸν ἢ ἄλλον, ὥσπερ οἱ βάρβαροι).<sup>232</sup>

We take note of the following points here. First, Dio, like others we have studied, uses ἄνθρωπος as an example for a definition. And even though at first reading, the passage might seem to indicate that the definition of a human being would not be widely known (ἐάν δὲ πύθη τινὸς αὐτῶν ... οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι εἰπεῖν), we will argue that in fact it must be, for rhetorical effectiveness, one of the stock examples for a definition that everyone knows. Second, knowing definitions is a mark of education, and knowing them distinguishes one from the mass of uneducated people. Third, definitions identify characteristic properties and such as mark out things uniquely (ὁποῖόν τι καὶ καθ’ ὃ μηδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ταύτόν).<sup>233</sup> Fourth, and related to the second point, the uneducated masses may be familiar with a thing and point out that an exemplar is indeed a specimen of the sort required, but they have no conceptual grasp of its nature such as knowing the definition might afford. Fifth, the implicit comparison with the ignorant barbarians (ὥσπερ οἱ βάρβαροι), who are unable to find the right words to say but are reduced to pointing, works rhetorically at two levels. In the literary setting, it puts some distance between the narrated audience of Greek settlers at Borys-thenes, assembled to listen to Dio’s speech, and the surrounding raiding barbarians. But at the same time, it works for the audience of the speech (the inhabitants of Prusa) to flatter them as being among the educated who are in the know when it comes to these matters (*captatio benevolentiae*). Dio of Prusa is far too clever a rhetor to blunder with guessing what his audience will know: and if much of his audience would be ignorant of what the example he provides is about, it would simply not work or might even be implicitly insulting. Not that frank or even insulting harangue is inconceivable for a Cynic, but it would not serve any rhetorical purpose here.

Dio then moves on to the expert, who knows the definition of things, and thus also the definition of human being. But *in this case* at least, we can suppose that most of Dio’s audience would be thoroughly familiar with the definition that follows:

<sup>232</sup> *Or.* 36.18–19. Transl. Lamar Crosby.

<sup>233</sup> Corresponding to the Aristotelian distinctions that have come down in the tradition as definitions indicating the *genus proximum* and the *differentia specifica*.

But the man who has expert knowledge (ὁ δὲ ἔμπειρος), when asked what *anthropos*<sup>234</sup> is (τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος), replies that it is a mortal animal endowed with reason (ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν). For that happens to be true of *anthropos* alone and of nothing else (μόνῳ ἀνθρώπῳ συμβέβηκε καὶ οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ).<sup>235</sup>

Here we have the definition of a human being as ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν, a living being, mortal (to distinguish it from the gods) and, crucially, endowed with λόγος, both reason and speech.<sup>236</sup> The feature picked out, for human beings, is their being the λογικά among the ζῶα. We stress here that for rhetorical purposes Dio must think everyone well acquainted with the content of the definition, even though *prima facie* he attributes this definition to expert level knowledge (ὁ δὲ ἔμπειρος).<sup>237</sup> For while the expert is the one who knows the various definitions in his field of expertise, the definition of human beings is one which Dio can easily draw on as an illustration for his general point about definitions and experts while at the same time remaining understandable to the larger crowd which he addresses. How else could he illustrate the point about expertise and knowledge of definitions than with a definition about which also the non-experts may know enough to count themselves, at least on this occasion, among those flattered as educated?

Having established the point about definitions, he proceeds to the definition of a city,<sup>238</sup> in which, naturally, the human being figures as well:

Well, in that way also the term “city” is said to mean a group of *anthropoi* dwelling in the same place and governed by law (πλήθος ἀνθρώπων ἐν ταύτῳ κατοικούντων ὑπὸ νόμου διοικούμενον).<sup>239</sup>

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**234** In the English translation, the word “*anthropos*” stands out in its linguistic context as being “mentioned” not “used”, in a manner which does not correspond to the Greek.

**235** *Or.* 36.19.

**236** Reason and speech could, obviously, be kept apart conceptually, but were understood to be closely related. The point made in this connection by Forschner 2018 about the term λόγος as used by Stoic philosophers, applies more generally to the use of the word λόγος in the ancient world: “*Logos* als der eine Grundbegriff der stoischen Philosophie bedeutet sowohl Sprache als auch Geist und Vernunft” (32). So also Sorabji 1993, 80.

**237** It seems plausible to suggest that the content of the definition (humans as those living beings endowed with reason) would be familiar even to those who might not be able to answer with the technical term λογικός when asked for it. They might still easily understand the gist of the definition when confronted with it: any speaker of Greek would be able to derive the word λογικός from λόγος. For a detailed investigation of the Greek suffix -ικός see Chantraine 1956.

**238** Cf. a similar progression in Aristotle’s *Politics* (see section 3.1.8).

**239** *Or.* 36.20.

Dio wants to prove that being well-ordered by νόμος is constitutive for the nature of a city and thus part of its definition. And in order to argue his point, he goes back to the comparison with the definition of human beings and the central element of the shared anthropological outlook that undergirds it, the endowment with reason:

For just as that person is not even an *anthropos* who does not also possess the attribute of reason, so that community is not even a city which lacks obedience to law.

ὥσπερ γὰρ οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὃ μὴ πρόσεστι τὸ λογικόν, οὕτως οὐδὲ πόλις, ἢ μὴ συμβέβηκε νομίμῳ εἶναι.<sup>240</sup>

Human beings are those endowed with reason, they have a “rational part” (τὸ λογικόν), one related to reason and its use in reasoning and speaking. This definition of human beings has thus served as an example for philosophical knowledge that is widely known; Dio can use it to establish other points. On the plausible assumption that Paul’s audiences would, on the whole, be comparable in terms of their cultural knowledge to Dio’s target audience in his hometown Prusa in Bithynia, around the turn of the second century,<sup>241</sup> we may infer that many of them would have been familiar with the definition as well.

Hence, our analysis of Dio’s *Borysthenitic* speech confirms that knowledge of the definition of human beings as rational mortal animals was widespread. That Paul himself knew it (on other grounds than based on an inference from his language in Rom 12.1) can be made plausible in terms of his probable rhetorical education, which usually included exposure to philosophical material as well,<sup>242</sup> or as simply because of it being widely known at the time.<sup>243</sup> Thus we conclude that it is probable that Paul knew the definition and could have expected many of his hearers to be familiar with it.

<sup>240</sup> *Or.* 36.20.

<sup>241</sup> For the dating, see Russell 1992.

<sup>242</sup> Tor Vegge (2006) has argued that Paul’s rhetorical education is evident from his composition of 2 Cor 10–13, and further demonstrated how rhetorical education and exposure to the basic tenets of some of the schools would closely together. On Greco-Roman education see also Morgan 1998. Cf. also our remarks in section 4.1.

<sup>243</sup> Such as we have argued with regards to Dio’s *Borysthenitic* speech. Cf. also the statement of Bonhöffer 1911, 159: “Wie sollte z. B. die stoische Definition des Menschen als eines ζῶον λογικόν θνητόν nicht weithin bekannt geworden sein?”

## 2.3 Conclusion

We have thus summarised the main findings of Scott's analysis of the semantics of λογικός, indicated some of the problems of his proposal, and have thus confirmed the need for a broader contextualisation of Paul's reason language. We approach this broader contextualisation in two steps. We have undertaken the first step by a corpus-based discourse analysis of ζῶον λογικόν, by showing that the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα was pre-Pauline, distinctly Stoic, but also more widespread and could be assumed to be known in Paul's time to larger audiences. We have further shown how the notion of human beings as rational beings is used in discourse on the human role in the cosmos, their vocation as human beings and what it means to be genuinely human. In the next chapter, where we take the second step of our approach (mainly from an evaluation of sources discussed in the secondary literature) we will look at the wider ancient discourse on what it means to be human and the role of human reason, including the language used to speak about a human vocation. These two steps complement each other and will set us up for Epictetus and Paul.

### 3 The wider Greco-Roman discourse on being human and the idea of a human role in the cosmos

In this chapter we offer two broader contextualisations for our analysis of Epictetus as a parallel to Romans. The first is a diachronic survey of important texts that reflect on what it means to be human (section 3.1). The result of this will be to show that the human endowment with reason is a prominent part of a wider Greco-Roman discourse on what it means to be human. This is important because it shows that the traditions we see articulated particularly in Epictetus (chapter 4) are more broadly shared. The second contextualisation focuses on the idea of a human role in the cosmos in Greco-Roman sources (section 3.2). This is important because it (a) helps us to define our notion of a human vocation in conversation with ancient texts (and an important study of Heinemann<sup>1</sup>); and it (b) shows the variety of language that is used to express this.

This chapter can be regarded as complementary to our discussion of the definition of human beings as ζῶα λογικά in the previous chapter. Some of the themes which we here encounter as part of our general survey of Greco-Roman reflection on what it means to be human, based mainly on evaluating sources discussed in secondary literature, we have found already in our corpus-based research. This lends support to our claim that broader anthropological reflection is condensed in discourse employing the definition of human beings as rational mortal animals. Most of the passages we discuss in the following contain reason language in a broader sense (for which our list in note 1 of section 1.1 may be consulted), but not yet the term λογικός (though Aristotle uses λόγος). This is because the sources we discuss here are mostly pre-Chrysippean, and as we have shown in section 2.2, the term used in this sense can only reliably be documented since the 3d century BC. But many of the distinctions and ideas, including the contrast with irrational animals (τὰ ἄλογα), are already there.

With a view to Rom 12.1–2, we may also point out that since Rom 12.1b refers to the human body (τὰ σώματα) and Rom 12.1c (λογικός) and Rom 12.2b (νοῦς), as we shall argue, to human reason, we will be particularly interested in the discussion of the relation of the human body and mind in the following texts. Furthermore, because Rom 12.1–2 serves an important transitional function in the letter (as we shall argue in chapter 7), and hence is linked to other themes dis-

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1 Heinemann 1926.

cussed before and after in Romans, we will also be interested in finding resonances between other parts of Romans and the main themes that emerge in ancient reflection on what it means to be human, particularly where they focus on the human endowment with reason, and how it is the basis of what humans can and should be doing in the cosmos.

### 3.1 Greco-Roman anthropological discourse and the role of human reason

In this section, we discuss important contributions to ancient anthropological discourse, adhering mainly to the mostly chronological ordering of the material prevalent in the classical studies that have covered the ground before.<sup>2</sup> This provides the larger context for the prominent role of human reason within discussions of what it means to be human, which is later expressed by the term λογικός (as we have seen in section 2.2). At some points we will directly point out the relevance for our study of Paul.

#### 3.1.1 Early Greek literature: The contrast with the gods

The earliest Greek reflection about humans sees them, as a group, in contrast to the gods:

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<sup>2</sup> An outstanding survey to which many later works refer back is Landmann 1962 (cf. the English translation Landmann 1979), with a comprehensive bibliography of earlier works in philosophical anthropology. Much of the same material, and sometimes more, though with a specific focus on animals and the comparison and contrast between humans and animals, can be found in Dierauer 1977, who critically examines many of the sources from a philological point of view. The work of Sorabji 1993, with a particular interest in ancient precursors to modern ethical stances, offers additional material. For ancient debates on animal rationality cf. also Newmyer 2005, 2011, 2014; for Philo of Alexandria's debate with Tiberius Alexander on animal rationality see Terian 1981 and Niehoff 2018, 70–74, who points out that “the topic of the animals' rationality was hotly debated in Rome” (73). Valuable summaries of Greco-Roman philosophical anthropology with copious references to Greco-Roman sources can be found in Hügli 1980 and in Rapp and Horn 2001 (where the focus is on human reason). The contributions in Moore 2014, inspired by the work of Derrida, seek to problematise the ancient distinctions between animal, divine and human. Insofar as they evaluate them from a modern standpoint (cf. e.g. Buell 2014, 66), they are not directly relevant for our purpose of historical description of ancient thought.

Ἄνθρωποι ist zunächst bloss der Gegenbegriff zu den θεοί, den Göttern. Die Menschen sind jene Wesen, die ihren Wohnsitz nicht im Himmel, sondern ... auf der Erde haben, sie sind die Sterblichen, die Götter dagegen die Unsterblichen.<sup>3</sup>

The contrast with the gods does not leave mortal humans (βροτοί) with a favourable verdict, a point that is aptly reflected in later Greek comedy:

ἄγε δὴ, φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλων γενεᾷ προσόμοιοι,<sup>4</sup>  
ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ,<sup>5</sup> σκιοειδέα φύλ' ἀμενηνά,  
ἀπτήνες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαοὶ βροτοί, ἀνέρες εἰκελόνοιροι,  
προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν<sup>6</sup> τοῖς ἀθανάτοις ἡμῖν, τοῖς αἰὲν ἐοῦσιν,  
τοῖς αἰθερίοις, τοῖσιν ἀγήρωσ, τοῖς ἄφθιτα μηδομένοισιν.

Hark, you whose lives are dark and dank, who fall like leaves in autumn,  
You puny beings, formed from clay, you shadowy, feeble peoples,  
You wingless creatures-of-a-day, pathetic dreamlike humans,  
Pay close attention to our words, for we are true immortals,  
Who live in air and never age, whose thoughts will never wither.  
(Aristophanes, *Av.* 685–689)<sup>7</sup>

Humans are not only short lived ephemerals, shadowy and dream-like, however. In contrast to the blissful gods, they are full of sorrow and suffering (ταλαοί),<sup>8</sup> perhaps even most of all creatures:

οὐ μὲν γάρ τί πού ἐστιν οἰζυρώτερον ἄνδρὸς  
πάντων, ὅσσά τε γαῖαν ἔπι πνεῖει τε καὶ ἔρπει.

For truly there is nothing, I think, more miserable than man among all things that breathe and move on earth. (Homer, *Il.* 17.446–447)<sup>9</sup>

The archaic pessimism is perhaps given its most stark expression in the preference of not being born at all, and if born, to die as early as possible:

<sup>3</sup> Hügli 1980, 1062, with reference to the etymological study of Seiler 1953, 228.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. already Homer, *Il.* 6.146 (οἷη περ φύλλων γενεῇ τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν).

<sup>5</sup> This is the earliest Greek reference to the widespread motif of humans' being formed from clay or earth, on which see Dunbar 1997, 429–430. Cf. Rom 9.21.

<sup>6</sup> On the use of νοῦς in phrases, see Strüder 2005, 197–198.

<sup>7</sup> Transl. Stephen Halliwell. These verses are cited by Plutarch, *Am. prol.* 496B (applied to newborn babies) and *An. Corp.* 500B (human being is the most wretched of animals [ἀθλιώτατον ζῶων]).

<sup>8</sup> The word form ταλαοί is singular in classical Greek (cf. Dunbar 1997, 431). Cf. also the composite word ταλαίπωρος in Rom 7.24.

<sup>9</sup> Transl. A. T. Murray and William F. Wyatt.

Πάντων μὲν μὴ φῦναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον  
 μηδ' ἐσιδεῖν αὐγάς ὀξέος ἡελίου,  
 φύντα δ' ὅπως ὤκιστα πύλας Αἴδαο περῆσαι  
 καὶ κεῖσθαι πολλὴν γῆν ἐπαμησάμενον.

It is best of all for mortals not to be born and not to look upon the rays of the piercing sun, but once born it is best to pass the gates of Hades as quickly as possible and to lie under a large heap of earth. (Theognis, 1.425)<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.2 Hesiod: Justice distinguishes from animals

Once humans are no longer seen primarily in contrast with the gods, however, and begin to be differentiated from the cosmos,<sup>11</sup> their distinctive features come into view, especially in contrast with animals.

The first attestation in Greek literature for a categorial distinction between humans and animals is found in the 8th century poet Hesiod.<sup>12</sup> In an appeal to his brother Perses, with whom he is in a dispute about their inheritance, Hesiod depicts the human sphere as falling in the purview of personified Δίκη (Justice), which distinguishes it from the sphere of animals:<sup>13</sup>

Ὡ Πέρση, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσι  
 καὶ νῦν δίκης ἐπάκουε, βίης δ' ἐπιλήθεο πάμπαν.  
 τόνδε γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων,  
 ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηροῖ καὶ οἰωνοῖς πετεηνοῖς  
 ἔσθθαι ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶ μετ' αὐτοῖς·  
 ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην, ἣ πολλὸν ἀρίστη.

Perses, lay these things in your heart and give heed to Justice, and put violence entirely out of your mind. This is the law that Cronus' son has established for human beings: that fish and beasts and winged birds eat one another, since Justice is not among them; but to human beings he has given Justice, which is the best by far. (Hesiod, *Op.* 274–279)<sup>14</sup>

The difference between humans and animals presupposed here is based not on superficial appearance, but consists in a way of life based on law and justice.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, humankind's association with Justice (Δίκη), as reflected in human

<sup>10</sup> Transl. Douglas E. Gerber.

<sup>11</sup> For the early natural philosophers see Landmann 1979, 17–23.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Dierauer 1977, 15.

<sup>13</sup> The animals are addressed in a summary phrase, as there is not yet a term that takes animals as a category into view, see Dierauer 1977, 6–7.

<sup>14</sup> Transl. Glenn W. Most.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Dierauer 1977, 16.

law-giving, is the ground for an ethical appeal to heed justice and to turn away from violence (βίης).<sup>16</sup>

With a view to Romans, it is noteworthy that justice as a possibility is mentioned in Hesiod as something that marks humanness.

### 3.1.3 Alcmaeon: Humans alone are able to understand

While for Hesiod legal justice was constitutive for the difference between humans and animals, the 5th century BC philosopher Alcmaeon, for the first time in extant Greek literature, claims a unique noetic property for humans, which from that point on becomes part of the descriptive arsenal employed for humans.<sup>17</sup> The contrast with the gods is still in view; they alone can have clarity, while humans must judge from signs:

περὶ τῶν ἀφανέων, περὶ τῶν θνητῶν σαφήνειαν μὲν θεοὶ ἔχοντι, ὡς δ' ἀνθρώποις τεκμαίρεσθαι.

Of things invisible, as of mortal things, only the gods have certain knowledge; but to us, as humans, only inference from evidence is possible.<sup>18</sup>

As reported by Theophrastus, however, Alcmaeon distinguishes humans clearly from the non-human sphere as well, by attributing to them understanding, and not only sense perception:

Ἀλκμαίων μὲν πρῶτον ἀφορίζει τὴν πρὸς τὰ ζῷα διαφορὰν. ἄνθρωπον γὰρ φησι τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρειν ὅτι μόνος ξυνίησι, τὰ δ' ἄλλα αἰσθάνεται μὲν οὐ ξυνίησι δέ, ὡς ἕτερον ὄν τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ αἰσθάνεσθαι.

Alcmaeon begins by determining the difference with regard to animals. For he says that a human being differs from the others because he is the only one that understands, while the others perceive but do not understand, since he considers that thinking and perceiving differ from one another.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Dierauer 1977, 16. For a recent discussion of the protreptic nature of Hesiod's *Opera et dies*, see Clay 2009 (with an interesting focus on ἀρετή and the allegory of the two paths [83], cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 289–292).

<sup>17</sup> Hügli 1980, 1063.

<sup>18</sup> DK 24.B.1 (= DL 8.83). Transl. R. D. Hicks (adapted).

<sup>19</sup> Theophrastus, *Sens.* 25 (cf. DK 24.B.1a). Transl. André Laks and Glenn W. Most.

Alcmaeon is therefore the first to express what it means to be human in terms of what is later associated with human reason, notions that increasingly gain wide currency.

### 3.1.4 Protagoras: Humans as cultural beings

The comparison of humans with certain animals, however, also exposes humans' bodily weakness and inferiority. The problem and a compensating solution can be seen particularly well in the myth put forth by Protagoras in Plato's dialogue under the same name (*Prot.* 320c–322d),<sup>20</sup> which in all probability contains ideas attributable to the 5th century sophist.<sup>21</sup> The brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus are given the task of equipping the mortal creatures with the faculties (δυνάμεις) they need for their survival. Epimetheus requests of his more intelligent brother the opportunity to endow the creatures first and is granted his wish. Some animals are given strength, others speed, yet others become armed or furnished with other devices – all with the aim of a proper balance conducive to the preservation of animalkind. Furthermore, they receive, as means of protection and shelter, thick hair and hides, among other things (320e–321b). There is just one problem with Epimetheus' liberal distribution:

ἄτε δὴ οὖν οὐ πάνυ τι σοφὸς ὢν ὁ Ἐπιμηθεὺς ἔλαθεν αὐτὸν καταναλώσας τὰς δυνάμεις εἰς τὰ ἄλογα· λοιπὸν δὴ ἀκόσμητον ἔτι αὐτῷ ἦν τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος, καὶ ἠπόρει ὅτι χρῆσαιτο. ἀποροῦντι δὲ αὐτῷ ἔρχεται Προμηθεὺς ἐπισκεψόμενος τὴν νομήν, καὶ ὄρᾳ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ζῶα ἐμμελῶς πάντων ἔχοντα, τὸν δὲ ἀνθρώπον γυμνὸν τε καὶ ἀνυπόδητον καὶ ἄστρωτον καὶ ἄοπλον.<sup>22</sup>

But Epimetheus was not very wise, and he absentmindedly used up all the powers and abilities on the nonreasoning animals; he was left with the human race, completely unequipped. While he was floundering about at a loss, Prometheus arrived to inspect the distribution and saw that while the other animals were well provided with everything, the human race was naked, unshod, unbedded, and unarmed. (Plato, *Prot.* 321b–c)<sup>23</sup>

Epimetheus, eponymously lacking foresight, forgot about humans, who are consequently naked, without shoes, without bed, without natural weapons. Prome-

<sup>20</sup> For a recent commentary, see Denyer 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Guthrie 1957, 140 n. 8; Dierauer 1977, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the alliteration that results from the string of adjectives with alpha privativum applied to humans in Rom 1.30–31 (γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας).

<sup>23</sup> Transl. of Plato's *Protagoras* used in this section: Stanley Lombardo and Karen Bell (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997).

theus, in order to save humankind, resorts to stealing both divine technology and – famously – fire, and hands it to humans as a gift:

κλέπτει Ἡφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρὶ ... καὶ οὕτω δὴ δωρεῖται ἀνθρώπῳ.

[Prometheus] stole from Hephaestus and Athena wisdom in the practical arts together with fire ... and gave them outright to the human race. (Plato, *Prot.* 321d)

While he had thereby procured for humans the skills necessary for life (τὴν ... περὶ τὸν βίον σοφίαν), they still lacked the “political wisdom” (τὴν δὲ πολιτικὴν [sc. σοφίαν] οὐκ εἶχεν), which remained with Zeus.<sup>24</sup> But at least humankind acquired the cultural craftiness that compensates for its otherwise scarce endowment with various cultural goods (dwellings, clothes, shoes, agriculture):

καὶ οἰκήσεις καὶ ἐσθῆτας καὶ ὑποδέσεις καὶ στρωμνὰς καὶ τὰς ἐκ γῆς τροφὰς<sup>25</sup> ἤϋρετο (sc. ὁ ἄνθρωπος).

[And they] invented houses, clothes, shoes, and blankets, and were nourished by food from the earth. (Plato, *Prot.* 322a)

Despite their now being able to provide for themselves, humans were still defenceless against wild beasts (πρὸς δὲ τὸν τῶν θηρίων πόλεμον ἐνδεής), as they did not yet live in cities (πόλεις).<sup>26</sup> And when they tried to find protection in cities, they wronged each other (ἠδίκουν ἀλλήλους), because they lacked the necessary skill (πολιτικὴ τέχνη), and were driven apart.<sup>27</sup> Zeus himself, seeing that otherwise humanity would become extinct, finally sends a sense of reticence towards violence and respect for the law (αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην) to humans,<sup>28</sup> as bonds for friendly life in the cities (δεσμοὶ φιλίας συναγωγῆς).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Plato, *Prot.* 321d. The adjective “political” here of course refers to the life in the πόλις.

<sup>25</sup> Strictly speaking, agriculture would be associated with Demeter, cf. Landmann 1979, 41.

<sup>26</sup> Plato, *Prot.* 322b.

<sup>27</sup> Plato, *Prot.* 322c.

<sup>28</sup> To be dispensed in “democratic fashion,” cf. Plato, *Prot.* 322d. This element may be a “polemic against Socrates” (Landmann 1979, 38). Cf. also the paraphrase of αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην by the dialogue’s Socrates in Plato, *Prot.* 329c: Ἐλεγεῖς (sc. Πρωταγόρας) γὰρ ὅτι Ζεὺς τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὴν αἰδῶν πέμψει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, καὶ αὐτὸν πολλαχοῦ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἐλέγετο ὑπὸ σοῦ ἢ δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ ὁσιότης καὶ πάντα ταῦτα ὡς ἓν τι εἶη συλλήβδην, ἀρετή. “You said that Zeus sent justice and a sense of shame to the human race. You also said, at many points in your speech, that justice and temperance and piety and all these things were somehow collectively one thing: virtue”. Apparently the more archaic word δίκη, suitable for the myth, is replaced by δικαιοσύνη (cf. Denyer 2008, 122).

<sup>29</sup> Plato, *Prot.* 322c.

What is set forth in this myth, then, is this view: humans are distinct from all other animals by their cultural goods and their technology that compensate for their relative bodily inferiority. In addition, they can join themselves to live in cities, which requires a sense of justice.

In the myth, the cultural goods originate in the divine sphere and need to be brought to humans. By contrast, for thinkers like Xenophanes, the sharp critic of anthropomorphism of any stripe,<sup>30</sup> humans figure them out gradually for themselves:

οὔτοι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖσ' ὑπέδειξαν,  
ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον.

The gods have not indicated all things to mortals from the beginning,  
But in time, by searching, they find something more that is better.<sup>31</sup>

Up to this point, we have omitted two important characteristics attributed to humans in Protagoras' myth, namely articulate language and recognition of the gods, leading to cultic veneration. These two are much more than mere compensation for bodily inferiority by cultural goods (Protagoras' theme). Rather, they elevate humans above the other creatures and associate them with the divine sphere:

Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος θείας μετέσχε μοίρας, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ συγγένειαν ζῶων μόνον θεοὺς ἐνόμισεν, καὶ ἐπεχειρεῖ βωμούς τε ἰδρύεσθαι καὶ ἀγάλματα θεῶν.

It is because humans had a share of the divine dispensation<sup>32</sup> that they alone among animals worshipped the gods, with whom they had a kind of kinship, and erected altars and sacred images. (Plato, *Prot.* 322a)

Mention of religion as a distinctive cultural good for humans seems to sit oddly with Protagoras, the man famous for his *homo-mensura* statement, which epitomises the turn to human independence from the gods in the realm of knowledge.<sup>33</sup> The fact that in Plato's rendering of the myth both language and religion are mentioned at a point where they seem to cause an "ugly breach of the context", because they do not fit the scenario of humans as "deprived" beings, may

<sup>30</sup> Cf. DK 21.B.11, 12, 14, 15, 16.

<sup>31</sup> DK 21.B.18 (= Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.8.2; *Flor.* 29.41). Transl. André Laks and Glenn W. Most.

<sup>32</sup> Namely, the technology originally reserved for the gods.

<sup>33</sup> For the *homo-mensura* statement, which Plato's Socrates then criticises, see Plato, *Theaet.* 152a; it is often quoted in the form preserved in DL 9.51 (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not" [transl. R. D. Hicks]).

point to the influence of earlier, already established traditions, in which needy humanity receives divine gifts, which had to be included.<sup>34</sup> The elements in Protagoras' myth which do seem to be in line with the Greek sophists' thesis of human self-creation<sup>35</sup> point to the factor of human creativity which shapes their way of being, both in the domains of knowledge and culture, as Landmann observes:

Just as ... man does not accept external nature as a pre-given but shapes it by his own action in knowledge, so ... his own nature is also not finished from the first but is perfected by subsequently added factors, many of which stem from his own mind.<sup>36</sup>

Thus for the sophists what counts as distinctively human is their cultural production, which is based on the human mind.

### 3.1.5 Sophocles: Skilful rule over animals and clever solutions to future problems

The theme of human resourcefulness and skill in contrast to animals was a prominent part of reflections about humans, well beyond the sophists' circles, as evidenced by the traditions poetically cast into a choral song of Sophocles'

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**34** Cf. Landmann 1979, 40–41. Landmann makes reference to Aesop's fable Ἄνθρωποι καὶ Ζεὺς (no. 57 in Chambry 1927, 28). The basic scenario is nearly identical, the gift bestowed is reason: Λέγουσι πρῶτον τὰ ζῶα πλασθῆναι καὶ χαρισθῆναι αὐτοῖς παρὰ θεοῦ, τῷ μὲν ἀλκήν, τῷ δὲ τάχος, τῷ δὲ πτερά, τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον γυμνὸν ἐστῶτα εἰπεῖν· Ἐμὲ μόνον κατέλιπες ἔρημον χάριτος· τὸν δὲ Δία εἰπεῖν· Ἀνεπαίσθητος εἶ τῆς δωρεᾶς, καίτοι τοῦ μεγίστου τετυχηκώς· λόγον γὰρ ἔχεις λαβὼν, ὃς παρὰ θεοῖς δύναται καὶ παρὰ ἀνθρώποις, τῶν δυνατῶν δυνατώτερος καὶ τῶν ταχίστων ταχύτερος. Καὶ τότε ἐπιγνοὺς τὸ δῶρον ὁ ἄνθρωπος προσκυνήσας καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ᾤχετο. "They say that in the beginning, when the animals were being formed, they received their endowments from Zeus. To some he gave strength, and to some speed, and to others wings. Man, however, was still naked so he said to Zeus, 'I am the only one that you have left without a gift.' Zeus replied, 'You are unaware of the gift you have obtained, but it is the greatest gift of all: you have received the gift of speech and the ability to reason, which has power both among the gods and among mortals; it is stronger than the strong and swifter than the swift.' Man then recognized the gift he had been given and bowed down before Zeus, offering him thanks" (transl. Laura Gibbs). The fact that a fable expresses such motif combinations shows that such ideas were widespread.

**35** Hügli 1980, 1063 ("Selbstschöpfung des Menschen").

**36** Landmann 1979, 37–38.

*Antigone*.<sup>37</sup> Humans are characterised from the start by reference to the double-edged word δεινόν, which fluctuates between “terrible” and “awe-inspiring”.<sup>38</sup>

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδὲν ἀν-  
θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·

Many things are formidable, and none more formidable than man!<sup>39</sup>

The theme is developed by enumerating human skills in the domains associated with the gods. Humans navigate the sea, plough the earth (Γαῖα), noted as ranking among the highest of the gods,<sup>40</sup> with the aid of horses.<sup>41</sup> They even reach into the sky to the “light-minded” birds;<sup>42</sup> by their skilful cleverness (περιφραδῆς ἀνήρ, line 347) they can hunt, capture and domesticate the animals in any domain, as they prevail over beasts and rule:<sup>43</sup>

τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν  
πόντου χειμερίῳ νότῳ  
χωρεῖ, περιβρυχίσιον  
περῶν ὑπ’ οἴδμασιν, θεῶν  
τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν  
ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν, ἀποτρέεται,  
ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος,  
ἵππεϊῶ γένοι πολεύων.  
κουφονόων τε φύλον ὀρ-  
νίθων ἀμφιβαλῶν ἄγει  
καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη  
πόντου τ’ εἰναλίαν φύσιν  
σπεύρασι δικτυοκλώστοις,  
περιφραδῆς ἀνήρ· κρατεῖ  
δὲ μηχαναῖς ἀγραύλου  
θηρὸς ὀρεσιβάτα, λασιαύχενά θ’

**37** Sophocles, *Ant.* 332–375, in the following quoted by lines only. For a recent commentary see Griffith 1999. Griffith notes that “this is perhaps the most celebrated song in Greek tragedy (often referred to as the ‘Ode to man’)” (179).

**38** On the deliberate multivalence of δεινόν see Griffith 1999, 185.

**39** 332–333. Transl. Hugh Lloyd-Jones (here and below).

**40** θεῶν τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν (337–338). The high estimation of Γαῖα presumably results from her being the “oldest” (cf. Griffith 1999, 186).

**41** 334–341.

**42** κουφονόων may, however, “apply implicitly to all three classes of creature” (Griffith 1999, 186).

**43** κρατεῖ (347), even though it is not used in an absolute sense here.

ἵππον ὀχμάζεται ἀμφὶ λόφον ζυγῶ  
οὐρειόν τ' ἀκμήτα ταῦρον.

He crosses the gray sea beneath the winter wind, passing beneath the surges that surround him; and he wears away the highest of the gods, Earth, immortal and unwearied, as his ploughs go back and forth from year to year, turning the soil with the aid of the breed of horses. And he captures the tribe of thoughtless birds and the races of wild beasts and the watery brood of the sea, catching them in the woven coils of nets, man the skilful. And he contrives to overcome the beast that roams the mountain, and tames the shaggy-maned horse and the untiring mountain bull, putting a yoke about their necks.<sup>44</sup>

The distinctive features of humanity, by which they dominate the initially seemingly better adapted species, are then elaborated by reference to language and thought, which are presented as something to be learned. In addition, the temperament required for living in cities, and housing technology, are mentioned as acquired skills of humans who always find a way out,<sup>45</sup> as they can come up with solutions to any future problems, with one exception. But while they cannot escape death, they can figure out by their joint thinking<sup>46</sup> cures for sicknesses for which it seems impossible to find a clever solution:

καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους  
ὄργας ἐδιδάξατο καὶ δυσαύλων  
πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ  
δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη  
παντοπόρος· ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται  
τὸ μέλλον· Ἄϊδα μόνον  
φεῦξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται·  
νόσων δ' ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς  
ξυμπέφρασταί.

And he has learned speech and wind-swift thought and the temper that rules cities, and how to escape the exposure of the inhospitable hills and the sharp arrows of the rain, all-resourceful; he meets nothing in the future without resource; only from Hades shall he apply no means of flight; and he has contrived escape from desperate maladies.<sup>47</sup>

The praise of human ingenuity then takes on a more sombre tone, as the ambiguity of human reason (in that it can be used both for good and for evil) comes to the fore, in anticipation of the wider narrative context of the tragedy:<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> 342–352.

<sup>45</sup> παντοπόρος (360).

<sup>46</sup> ξυμπέφρασταί (364).

<sup>47</sup> 355–364.

<sup>48</sup> For a convincing analysis that extends to line 375, see Landmann 1979, 47.

σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει.

Skilful beyond hope is the contrivance of his art, and he advances sometimes to evil, at other times to good.<sup>49</sup>

Common to many of the traditions we have discussed so far is the human bodily inferiority to many animals. This theme was given memorable expression in the topos of stepmother nature, such as it is preserved, for instance, in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* 7.1–5, probably the most complete list of human shortcomings in comparison with animals in antiquity.<sup>50</sup> These shortcomings are the cruel price for nature's gift of all the other benefits which exist for the sake of humans, who are assigned the first place:

*Principium iure tribuetur homini, cuius causa videtur cuncta alia genuisse natura magna, saeva mercede contra tanta sua munera, ut non sit satis aestimare, parens melior homini an tristior noverca fueri.*

The first place will rightly be assigned to humankind, for whose sake great Nature appears to have created all other things – though she asks a cruel price for all her generous gifts, making it hardly possible to judge whether she has been more a kind parent to humankind or more a harsh stepmother. (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 7.1–2)<sup>51</sup>

### 3.1.6 Xenophon's Socrates: The human body and mind excel in their combination

One of the first firmly to resist the view that humans' bodily equipment is to be considered as inferior to that of animals is Xenophon's Socrates in the *Memorabilia*.<sup>52</sup> Before we come to the crucial passage (1.4.11–14), however, it is worth looking at its wider context with its teleological perspective.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 365–366. Cf. similarly Plato, *Leg.* 766a, quoted below.

<sup>50</sup> A concise overview of many human distinctives in contrast to animals in Greco-Roman literature is given in Sorabji 1993, 89–93. Pliny, of course, assembles and collects many earlier traditions in his encyclopaedic efforts. For a recent commentary on book 7, see Beagon 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Transl. H. Rackham (adapted).

<sup>52</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4. For several reasons, this passage has sometimes struck interpreters as un-Socratic, and the 5th century philosopher Diogenes of Apollonia was in turn identified as a source by Dickerman 1909, Theiler 1925 and others. Landmann (1979, 48), Dierauer (1977, 47), and Hügli (1980, 1064) follow this supposition and present the corresponding anthropological material with reference to Diogenes of Apollonia. In more recent contributions, however, the identification is no longer upheld (see e.g. Sorabji 1993, 90; Marciano 2006, 229 n. 68). For a sharp

In Xenophon's presentation of the material, a dialogue between Socrates and a certain Aristodemus is adduced as an example for the beneficial effects of Socrates' talking activities.<sup>54</sup> The dialogue is prompted by Aristodemus' rejection of sacrifice to the gods, prayer, and the use of divination.<sup>55</sup> Socrates asks Aristodemus for humans that he admires for their wisdom (σοφία), and asks again, in response to the list Aristodemus provides (covering literature,<sup>56</sup> sculpture and painting):

Πότερά σοι δοκοῦσιν οἱ ἀπεργαζόμενοι εἴδωλα ἄφρονά τε καὶ ἀκίνητα<sup>57</sup> ἀξιοθαυμαστότεροι εἶναι ἢ οἱ ζῶα ἔμφρονά τε καὶ ἐνεργά;

Which do you think deserve greater admiration, the creators of likenesses thoughtless and motionless or the creators of living beings endowed with thought and action?<sup>58</sup>

Aristodemus grants the point Socrates is after, provided that it is a result of intelligence and not chance:

Πολὺν νῆ Δία οἱ ζῶα, εἴπερ γε μὴ τύχη τινί, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ γνώμης ταῦτα γίνονται.

Living beings by far, provided only they are created by design and not mere chance.<sup>59</sup>

The discussion then turns to the characteristic marks from which intelligence can be inferred with some probability. Aristodemus is willing to accept Socrates' premise that a useful purpose is such a mark:

Πρέπει μὲν τὰ ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ γιγνόμενα γνώμης εἶναι ἔργα.

Presumably the creature that serves some useful end is the work of design.<sup>60</sup>

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criticism of Theiler's identification see Laks 2008, 354. As it is impossible to attain to σαφήνεια in such matters, and, for our purposes, nothing much hinges on the identification, we shall here present the material with reference to Xenophon's Socrates and the traditions he was possibly reworking (cf. the detailed arguments of McPherran 1994, which support such a stance). For a recent discussion of Xenophon's Socrates as completely different from Plato's see Dorion 2013. See also the discussion in Sedley 2007.

**53** This perspective is particularly important in view of Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16 to be discussed in the next chapter.

**54** Cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.1.

**55** Cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.2.

**56** Sophocles is favoured for tragedy.

**57** An obvious reference to the sculptures and paintings at least.

**58** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.4. Transl. E. C. Marchant, O. J. Todd, J. Henderson (here and below, adapted).

**59** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.4.

**60** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.4.

At this point, Socrates can launch into a detailed exposition of the usefulness of the human sense organs,<sup>61</sup> which serves as evidence that humans have been created for some useful purpose.<sup>62</sup> Aristodemus admits that living beings appear to be a product of deliberate planning and care,<sup>63</sup> but goes on to insist that only human artisans and their products can actually be seen:

Μὰ Δί, οὐ γὰρ ὁρῶ τοὺς κυρίου, ὥσπερ τῶν ἐνθάδε γιγνομένων τοὺς δημιουργούς.

Yes I do; for I don't see these masters, whereas I see the makers of things in this world.<sup>64</sup>

Socrates has a clever reply at his disposal,<sup>65</sup> and the debate shifts to Aristodemus' statement that he thinks the δαίμονιον is too great to be in need of human worship (θεραπεία):

Οὔτοι ... ἐγώ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὑπερορῶ τὸ δαίμονιον, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο μεγαλοπρεπέστερον ἡγοῦμαι ἢ ὡς τῆς ἐμῆς θεραπείας προσδεῖσθαι.

Really, Socrates, I don't despise the divinity but think it too great to need extra service from me.<sup>66</sup>

Socrates is allowed to make a fascinating point, to the effect that the greater the being that offers the worship, the greater the recipient divinity:

Οὐκοῦν ... ὅσω μεγαλοπρεπέστερον ὄν ἀξιοῖ σε θεραπεύειν, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον τιμητέον αὐτό.

Then the greater the power that deigns to serve you, the more honor it should have.<sup>67</sup>

In consequence, Aristodemus highlights the central question that Xenophon's Socrates then sets out to address in 1.4.11–14. The crucial question is whether

61 Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.5–6.

62 ὁ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ποιῶν ἀνθρώπους ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ προσθεῖναι αὐτοῖς δι' ὧν αἰσθάνονται ἕκαστα (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.5).

63 πάνν ἔοικε ταῦτα σοφοῦ τινος δημιουργοῦ καὶ φιλοζώου τεχνήμασι (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.7).

64 Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.9.

65 Οὐδὲ γὰρ τὴν σαυτοῦ σύγε ψυχὴν ὄρῃς, ἢ τοῦ σώματος κυρία ἐστίν· ὥστε κατὰ γε τοῦτο ἔξεστί σοι λέγειν, ὅτι οὐδὲν γνώμη, ἀλλὰ τύχη πάντα πράττεις “Neither do you see your own soul, which has mastery of the body; so that, as far as that goes, you may say that you do nothing by design and everything by chance.” (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.9). The noun κυρία, by taking up the κυρίου in the preceding sentence, makes the comparison more forceful.

66 Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.10.

67 Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.10.

the gods are even mindful of human beings (θεοὺς ἀνθρώπων τι φροντίζειν),<sup>68</sup> which Socrates answers by pointing to several human distinctives among all other creatures that indicate divine consideration.<sup>69</sup> The first three ἀνθρώπινα all concern the human body and counter the claims to the effect of its scarce endowment.

First, humans alone were made to stand upright, which gives them a better view of what is ahead and what is above, and protects from some harm:

Ἔπειτ' οὐκ οἶει φροντίζειν (sc. θεοῦς); οἱ πρῶτον μὲν μόνον τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπον ὀρθὸν<sup>70</sup> ἀνέστησαν· ἢ δὲ ὀρθότης καὶ προορᾶν πλέον ποιεῖ δύνασθαι καὶ τὰ ὑπερθεῖν μᾶλλον θεᾶσθαι καὶ ἥττον κακοπαθεῖν·

Then do you really think that [the gods] give no thought? In the first place, the human is the only living creature that they have made to stand upright; and the upright position gives him a wider range of vision in front and a better view of things above, and exposes him less to injury.<sup>71</sup>

Second, humans alone are given hands, with which they create most of the things which make them happier than the other creatures:

ἔπειτα τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις ἐρπετοῖς πόδας ἔδωκαν, οἱ τὸ πορεύεσθαι μόνον παρέχουσιν, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ καὶ χεῖρας προσέθεσαν, αἱ τὰ πλεῖστα, οἷς εὐδαιμονέστεροι ἐκείνων ἐσμέν, ἐξεργάζονται.

Secondly, to other terrestrial creatures they have given feet that afford only the power of moving, whereas they have endowed humans with hands, which accomplish most of the things that make us more fortunate than the others.<sup>72</sup>

Third, humans alone have a tongue that allows for articulate speech,<sup>73</sup> and thus communication is no longer restricted to the immediately present, but freed up to express anything they want:

καὶ μὴν γλώτταν γε πάντων τῶν ζώων ἐχόντων μόνην τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησαν οἷαν ἄλλοτε ἀλλαχῆ ψαύουσιν τοῦ στόματος ἄρθροῦν τε τὴν φωνὴν καὶ σημαίνειν πάντα ἀλλήλοισι, ἃ βουλόμεθα.

<sup>68</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.11.

<sup>69</sup> This question is later associated with an Epicurean position. Cf. our discussion of Epictetus 1.12 in section 4.3.

<sup>70</sup> For what it is worth, the basic meaning of ὀρθοποδεῖν is to walk uprightly, cf. Gal 2.14. Cf. also Acts 14.10 (ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός).

<sup>71</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.11.

<sup>72</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.11.

<sup>73</sup> The word γλώττα already designates speech as well.

Again, though all creatures have a tongue, the tongue of humans alone has been formed by them to be capable of contact with different parts of the mouth, so as to enable us to articulate the voice and express to one another everything we wish.<sup>74</sup>

The next two distinctives, passing over a note concerning human sexuality,<sup>75</sup> then concern the superiority of the human soul:

Οὐ τοίνυν μόνον ἤρκεσε τῷ θεῷ τοῦ σώματος ἐπιμεληθῆναι, ἀλλ' ὅπερ μέγιστόν ἐστι, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κρατίστην τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐνέφυσε.

What is more, the deity was not content to care for the body but, most important, also implanted in the human being the soul and made it dominant.<sup>76</sup>

The first reason for the superiority of the human soul is that it alone leads to recognition and worship of the gods:

τίνος γὰρ ἄλλου ζῴου ψυχὴ πρώτα μὲν θεῶν τῶν τὰ μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα συνταξάντων ἵσθηται ὅτι εἰσί; τί δὲ φύλον ἄλλο ἢ ἀνθρώποι θεοὺς θεραπεύουσι;

For what other creature's soul, in the first place, has apprehended the existence of gods who set in order the vastness and great beauty of the universe? And what race of living things other than humankind worships gods?<sup>77</sup>

Though Xenophon presents worship of the gods as a distinctive excellence of the human soul, it is possible that Xenophon was reworking traditions in which this element was mentioned already in connection with humans' upright posture, which allows humans better to observe the "things-from-above" (τὰ ὕπερθεν μᾶλλον θεᾶσθαι).<sup>78</sup> In any case, the motif combination of humans' upward look and their recognition of the divine becomes part and parcel of the Greco-Roman cultural encyclopaedia,<sup>79</sup> not least in Stoicism.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.12.

<sup>75</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.12.

<sup>76</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.13.

<sup>77</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.13.

<sup>78</sup> For a poetic rendition of the motif of humans looking upward in contrast to the animals bending down, see Ovid, *Metam.* 1.84–86: *pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram, / os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre / iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus* "And, though all other animals are prone, and fix their gaze upon the earth, he gave to humans an uplifted face and bade them stand erect and turn their eyes to heaven." (Transl. Frank Justus Miller, adapted.) Cf. also Aristotle, *Part. An.* 656a 4–14, 686a 25–29 (see section 3.1.8) and Philo, *Det.* 84–85. For a cultural history of the concept up to the present, see Bayertz 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Hügli 1980, 1064.

<sup>80</sup> See for instance Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.17.29 (εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβλέπειν ὡς φίλον τοῦ θεοῦ).

The second reason for the superiority of the human soul is the human mind's ability to procure for human needs, which is explored by listing elements similar to those we have already seen, but adding humans' ability to remember:

ποία δὲ ψυχὴ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἰκανωτέρα προφυλάττεσθαι ἢ λιμὸν ἢ δίψος ἢ ψύχη ἢ θάλαππῃ ἢ νόσοις ἐπικουρῆσαι ἢ ῥώμην ἀσκῆσαι ἢ πρὸς μάθησιν ἐκπονησάσαι, ἢ ὅσα ἀν' ἀκούσῃ ἢ ἴδῃ ἢ μάρτυρα ἰκανωτέρα ἐστὶ διαμνησθαι;

And what soul is more apt than humankind's to make provision against hunger and thirst, cold and heat, to relieve sickness and promote health, to acquire knowledge by toil, and to remember accurately all that is heard, seen, or learned?<sup>81</sup>

The conclusion for Xenophon's Socrates is that humans so far surpass the other creatures both with respect to their body (upright, with hands, articulate tongue), and their soul, as the gods exceed humans:

οὐ γὰρ πάνυ σοι κατάδηλον, ὅτι παρὰ τᾶλλα ζῶα ὡσπερ θεοὶ ἄνθρωποι βιοτεύουσι, φύσει καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ κρατιστεύοντες;

For is it not quite obvious to you that, in comparison with the other animals, humans live like gods, naturally excelling them both in body and in soul?<sup>82</sup>

Moreover, it is the body and the soul's intelligence (γνώμη), working in tandem and uniquely being fitted for each other, which is constitutive for human excellence:

οὔτε γὰρ βοὸς ἂν ἔχων σῶμα, ἀνθρώπου δὲ γνώμην ἐδύνατ' ἂν πράττειν ἃ ἐβούλετο, οὔθ' ὅσα χεῖρας ἔχει, ἄφρονα δ' ἐστὶ, πλέον οὐδὲν ἔχει.

For with a human mind and an ox's body we could not carry out our wishes, nor does the possession of hands without reason provide any advantages.<sup>83</sup>

The human body and mind combining to human excellence is the point at which Xenophon's Socrates concludes his argument for the view that the gods are indeed mindful of human beings:<sup>84</sup>

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**81** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.13.

**82** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.14.

**83** Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.14.

**84** In fact, according to another passage in the *Memorabilia* (4.4.10), the gods do not only supremely care for human beings, but their care for all the other animals is only a function of their care for humans, for whose sake alone the gods provide the other animals with what they need. Exactly this idea recurs in Epictetus 1.16 (see section 4.4).

σὺ δ' ἀμφοτέρων τῶν πλείστου ἀξίων τετυχηκῶς οὐκ οἶε σου θεοὺς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι; ἀλλ' ὅταν τί ποιήσωσι, νομίεις αὐτοῦς σου φροντίζειν;

So do you, having received both these priceless gifts, still not think that the gods care about you? What are they to do, to make you believe that you are in their thoughts?<sup>85</sup>

The themes discussed in this passage are of great importance for Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16, where similarly divine care for human beings is demonstrated by appeal to the make-up of the human mind and body (see sections 4.4 and 4.5). Four points sum up our discussion in this section:

First, the human distinctive characteristics, contrasting humans with the other creatures and addressing the question of what it means to be human, are adduced in order to demonstrate divine providence and concern for humanity, and consequently the meaningfulness of prayer and worship of the gods. Second, the greatness of the worshipped is correlated to the kinds of beings that offer worship. Third, what it means to be human is developed with respect to three bodily aspects, each of which becomes associated in the Greco-Roman encyclopaedia with specifically human functions, such as recognition and corresponding worship of the gods, wise stewardship, production of cultural goods, and language. Fourth, the human body with its unique properties and the human mind with its unique excellencies are presented as integrally linked and fitted to one another, and their combination is highlighted as the distinguishing mark of humanness. The role of human reason, closely associated with the body, comes out more explicitly in Aristotle. But before we turn to Aristotle, we will briefly dwell with Plato.

### 3.1.7 Plato: Minds placed in the cosmos and souls in conflict

Plato's dialogues contain several important and influential anthropological reflections.<sup>86</sup> Among them we find several statements that clearly determine human beings as being different from and preeminent among other animals by virtue of reason.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4.14.

<sup>86</sup> For this section, we are relying heavily on Müller 2009, a brief and excellent treatment of Plato's anthropology. Of course, our discussion of Protagoras gave us very much a *Platonic* portrayal of the sophist. We have quoted *Tim.* 30b already in section 2.2.3. We will simply refer to Plato and his views, bracketing out the differences between the views presented, for instance, by his Socrates and his own.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Müller 2009, 193.

For instance, in the *Menexenus*,<sup>88</sup> which contains an oration celebrating those fallen in battle by Socrates, we find a statement that attributes understanding (σύνεσις) to human beings alone, and links this to recognition of the gods (θεοὺς νομίζειν) and respect for justice (δίκη). The context is a discussion of what makes the Attic land praiseworthy. In contrast to other regions, which have caused “creatures of all kind – wild animals and domestic livestock” (ζῷα παντοδαπά, θηρία τε καὶ βοτᾶ)<sup>89</sup> to arise, the Attic land has been, Socrates informs us, “barren of savage beasts and pure” (θηρίων μὲν ἀγρίων ἄγονος καὶ καθαρὰ), and has chosen the most excellent creature to spring up:

ἐξελέξατο δὲ τῶν ζῶων καὶ ἐγέννησεν [sc. ἡ χώρα] ἄνθρωπον, ὃ συνέσει τε ὑπερέχει τῶν ἄλλων καὶ δίκην καὶ θεοῦς μόνον νομίζει.

Out of all the animals she [i.e. our land] selected and brought forth the human, the one creature that towers over the others in understanding and alone acknowledges justice and the gods. (Plato, *Menex.* 237d)

Humans are also distinguished from other animals by virtue of their endowment with reason in the *Timaeus*. In the final section (90e–92c), the other animals are portrayed as arising from human beings by a gradual descent (μετερροθυμίζετο [92d]), according to their increasing deviation from intelligence (νοῦς). The process is then summarised in the following way:

καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα δὴ πάντα τότε καὶ νῦν διαμείβεται τὰ ζῷα εἰς ἄλληλα, νοῦ καὶ ἀνοίας ἀποβολῆ καὶ κτήσει μεταβαλλόμενα.

These, then, are the conditions that govern, both then and now, how all the animals exchange their forms, one for the other, and in the process lose or gain intelligence or folly. (Plato, *Tim.* 92c)<sup>90</sup>

Thus, the specific place of human beings in the cosmos is assigned on the basis of their reason and intelligence (νοῦς). This also holds true for the other animals. Their various living spaces, from the air, to land, to water correspond with their rank and their share in intelligence.<sup>91</sup> These include birds (τὸ δὲ τῶν ὀρνέων

<sup>88</sup> The authenticity of the work should not be in doubt (cf. the introductory remarks by John Cooper in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997, 950–951).

<sup>89</sup> Transl. of the *Menexenus*, here and below, by Paul Ryan (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997), adapted.

<sup>90</sup> Transl. of the *Timaeus* by Donald J. Zeyl (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997), here and below.

<sup>91</sup> The water inhabiting animals are placed lowest in this *scala naturae* (similar to those encountered in section 2.2) according to share in intelligence, and hence it is seen as appropriate

φύλον [91d]), land animals (τὸ πεζὸν καὶ θηριῶδες [91e], which are said to be four-footed τετράπουον τὸ γένος [or more: πολύπουον] [92a]), crawling animals (ἄποδα and ἰλυσπώμενα ἐπὶ γῆς [92a]) and water inhabiting animals (τὸ γένος ἔνυδρον, including fish and shellfish [ἰχθύων ἔθνος καὶ τὸ τῶν ὀστρέων]) [92b]). These are characterised as increasingly less intelligent or even more stupid (τοῖς μᾶλλον ἄφροσιν [92a]; τοῖς ἀφρονεστάτοις αὐτῶν [92a]; ἀμαθίας ἐσχάτης [92b]), according to their having come to be from increasingly foolish humans (ἐκ τῶν ἀκάκων ἀνδρῶν, κούφων [91d]; ἐκ τῶν μηδὲν προσχρωμένων φιλοσοφία [91e]; ἐκ τῶν μάλιστα ἀνοητοτάτων καὶ ἀμαθεστάτων [92b]).<sup>92</sup>

What is particularly clear in this passage is also the association of the upright posture appropriate for human beings, given their endowment with reason and mind.<sup>93</sup> Because of their endowment with reason and mind, human beings can be characterised by reasoning and close observation, as is suggested by one of the etymological speculations which Plato (in the *Cratylus*) puts in the mouth of Socrates:

The name “human” signifies (σημαίνει τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ὁ ἄνθρωπος) that the other animals (θηρία) do not investigate or reason about anything they see, nor do they observe anything closely (ὡν ὄρα οὐδὲν ἐπισκοπεῖ οὐδὲ ἀναλογίζεται οὐδὲ ἀναθρεῖ). But a human being no sooner sees something (ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἅμα ἐώρακεν) – that is to say, “*orphe*” (τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶ [τὸ] ὄρωπε) – than he observes it closely and reasons about it (ἀναθρεῖ καὶ λογίζεται τοῦτο ὃ ὄρωπε). Hence human beings alone among the animals are correctly named “*anthrōpos*” – one who observes closely what he has seen (ἐντεῦθεν διὴ μόνον τῶν θηρίων ὀρθῶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος ὠνομάσθη, ἀναθρῶν ἃ ὄρωπε). (Plato, *Crat.* 399c)<sup>94</sup>

Plato also explicitly reflects on the ambiguity of the human endowment with reason, in that human beings may turn out both ways. In his *Leges*, humans’ potential to use their reasoning abilities for both good and evil is depicted in drastic terms. Human education<sup>95</sup> is a necessary condition for preventing a lapse into the subhuman sphere:

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that their physical placement is lowest: “Their justly due reward for their extreme stupidity is their extreme dwelling place” (δικίην ἀμαθίας ἐσχάτης ἐσχάτας οἰκήσεις εἰληχότων [92b]).

**92** This passage may fruitfully be compared to Rom 1.23 (see section 5.2) and also to Epictetus 2.9 (see section 4.2).

**93** This is developed with respect to the other animals in *Tim.* 91e and 92a.

**94** Transl. C.D.C. Reeve (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997).

**95** Conceived, admittedly, in the wider context of Plato’s peculiar political project. For a comparison with Plato’s earlier work see Saunders 1992. A recent commentary on the relevant section of Plato’s *Leges* is Schöpsdau 2003.

ἄνθρωπος δέ, ὡς φαμεν, ἡμερον, ὅμως μὴν παιδείας μὲν ὀρθῆς τυχὸν καὶ φύσεως εὐτυχοῦς θεϊότατον ἡμερώτατον τε ζῶον γίνεσθαι φιλεῖ, μὴ ἰκανῶς δὲ ἢ μὴ καλῶς τραφέν ἀγριώτατον ὅποσα φύει γῆ.

Man is a “tame” animal, as we put it, and of course if he enjoys a good education and happens to have the right natural disposition, he’s apt to be a most heavenly and gentle creature; but his upbringing has only to be inadequate or misguided and he’ll become the wildest animal on the face of the earth. (Plato, *Leg.* 766a)<sup>96</sup>

Not least in Plato’s reflections on how it is that human beings may behave unjustly he develops various models of how the human soul and body interact. Jörn Müller helpfully distinguished three main models, which can be associated with different works of Plato. A first model, represented for instance in the *Phaedo*, is that of a “kind of numerical substance-dualism” in which the relation between body and soul is contingent.<sup>97</sup> In such contexts, the body may appear mainly as an obstacle to an unhindered activity of the soul.<sup>98</sup> Humans are here souls fallen into bodies and exiles from heaven in an alien world.<sup>99</sup>

In a second model, which is found for instance in the fourth book of his *Respublica*, the conflict between soul and body is made internal to the soul itself. Plato develops a theory of three parts of the soul in *Resp.* 434d–441c.<sup>100</sup> The “part of the soul” (τῆς ψυχῆς) “with which it calculates” (τὸ μὲν ᾧ λογίζεται) is called the “rational part” (λογιστικόν [439d]), “the part with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites” (ᾧ ἔρα τε καὶ πεινῆ καὶ διψῆ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας ἐπτόηται) is called “the irrational appetitive part” (ἄλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν [439d]), the part “by which we get angry” (ᾧ θυμούμεθα) is called the “spirited part” (τὸ ... τοῦ θυμοῦ [439e]) or (τὸ θυμοειδές [441a]).<sup>101</sup> The discussion establishes that these parts are really distinct from each other, by considering cases where they are working as opposed forces, such as when one’s desire to watch something conflicts with a sense of revulsion (the story of Leontius [439e–440a]). These parts can be opposed to each other (in a state of “civil war” [δυσὸν στασιαζόντων [440b]]) But the “spirited” part can also become the “helper” (ἐπίκουρον) of the rational part, which would be its natural function (441a). In the right state, the rational

<sup>96</sup> Transl. Trevor J. Saunders (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997).

<sup>97</sup> Müller 2009, 191 (“eine Art numerischer Substanzdualismus”).

<sup>98</sup> Famously put in terms of σῶμα (body) and σῆμα (tomb) in the *Gorgias* (493a).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Müller 2009, 192.

<sup>100</sup> On Plato’s psychology, cf. the succinct statements of Görgemanns 1994, 132–139 and the discussion of Sorabji 1993, 65–67.

<sup>101</sup> For the *Respublica* we use the translation of G. M. A. Grube, revised by C. D. C. Reeve (in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997).

part would rule as is befitting (ὦ μὲν λογιστικῷ ἄρχειν προσήκει [441e]), and each of the two allies against the “appetitive part” would contribute in its way, “reason by planning” (τὸ μὲν βουλευόμενον), “spirit by fighting” (τὸ δὲ προπολεμοῦν [442b]).

In the ninth book of the *Respublica* (588b–589d), Plato develops a model of the soul, transparently constructed<sup>102</sup> with three parts, as “an image of the soul in words” (Εἰκόνα πλάσαντες τῆς ψυχῆς λόγῳ [558b]), which allows a visualisation of the good soul and the bad soul, and hence can “show” that injustice is harmful for its perpetrator. The first element of the image is a “multicoloured beast with a ring of many heads that can grow and change at will – some from gentle, some from savage animals” (θηρίου ποικίλου καὶ πολυκεφάλου, ἡμέρων δὲ θηρίων ἔχοντος κεφαλὰς κύκλῳ καὶ ἀγρίων, καὶ δυνατοῦ μεταβάλλειν καὶ φύειν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντα ταῦτα [588c]).<sup>103</sup> This corresponds to the appetitive part (ἐπιθυμητικόν), with its many and various desires. The second element is simply a lion (λέοντος [588d]), which corresponds to the “spirited part” (τὸ θυμοειδές). The third element is a human being (ἀνθρώπου [588d]), which corresponds to the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν). Around these three elements – the monster, the lion, the human – a human being is fashioned (Περίπλασον δὴ αὐτοῖς ἔξωθεν ἐνὸς εἰκόνα, τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [588d–e]) such that the three elements are on the inside (and hence the rational part corresponds to “the man inside”<sup>104</sup>). For an outside observer, it will look like an ordinary, simple being (ἐν ζῶον φαίνεσθαι, ἄνθρωπον [588e]). This perspective is parallel to an onlooker not being able to see the state of the soul of someone committing injustice (ἀδικεῖν [588e]). But having set up this model, its parameters can be modified to depict the state of wicked and the good soul, and to show that injustice is not profitable (588e). Basically doing injustice is feeding the “multiform beast” (ὁ παντοδαπὸν θηρίον) and the “lion” (τὸνλέοντα) well, but “to starve and weaken the human being within” (τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον λιμοκτονεῖν καὶ ποιεῖν ἀσθενῆ [588e–589a]), and leaving the relation of the parts such that they “bite and kill one another” (δάκνεσθαί τε καὶ μαχόμενα ἐσθίειν ἄλληλα) rather than letting them be “friendly” (φίλον) toward each other (589a). By contrast, Plato depicts the good state of the soul as follows:

But, on the other hand, wouldn’t someone who maintains that just things (τὰ δίκαια) are profitable (λυσitteλεῖν) be saying, first, that all our words and deeds (ταῦτα πράττειν καὶ

<sup>102</sup> Plato does not state in our passage the obvious applications of his image.

<sup>103</sup> At 590b, this same part seems to be designated as the “snakelike part” (ὄφεῶδες).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. on this tradition van Kooten 2008, 358–370. This concept is particularly relevant for Rom 7.22.

ταῦτα λέγειν) should insure that the human being within this human being has the most control (ὅθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος ἔσται ἐγκρατέστατος); second, that he should take care of the many-headed beast as a farmer does his animals (τοῦ πολυκεφάλου θρέμματος ἐπιμελήσεται ὡσπερ γεωργός), feeding and domesticating the gentle heads and preventing the savage ones from growing (τὰ μὲν ἡμερα τρέφων καὶ τιθασεύων, τὰ δὲ ἄγρια ἀποκωλύων φύεσθαι); and, third, that he should make the lion's nature his ally (σύμμαχον ποιησάμενος τὴν τοῦ λέοντος φύσιν), care for the community of all his parts (κοινῇ πάντων κηρόμενος), and bring them up in such a way that they will be friends with each other and with himself (φίλα ποιησάμενος ἀλλήλοις τε καὶ αὐτῷ)? (Plato, *Resp.* 589a–b)

In fine, the “human inside” must rule and the good things (τὰ μὲν καλὰ) can be defined as those “that subordinate the beastlike parts of our nature to the human – or better, perhaps to the divine” (τὰ ὑπὸ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, μᾶλλον δὲ ἴσως τὰ ὑπὸ τῷ θείῳ τὰ θηριώδη ποιοῦντα τῆς φύσεως [589d]). The image of the human being inside, identified with the rational part, is one source for an association of genuine humanness with rationality, as one can see in Philo of Alexandria.<sup>105</sup> It is also directly important for Epictetus, who draws on this imagery as well to speak about genuine humanness.<sup>106</sup>

The third model, to which Jörn Müller assigns the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*, is described as a “teleological model of cooperation”,<sup>107</sup> in which the body is constituted in such a way as to facilitate intellect in its exercise of control.<sup>108</sup> These traditions resonate more directly with some of the material we have surveyed in section 2.2.

We bring our all too brief sketch of some elements of Plato's anthropological reflections to a close with a final quotation from the *Respublica*, in which Plato describes what happens to the philosopher who has had “his thoughts truly directed towards the things that are” (τῷ γε ὡς ἀληθῶς πρὸς τοῖς οὕσι τὴν διάνοιαν ἔχοντι [500b]), and becomes

Θεῖω δὴ καὶ κοσμίῳ ὃ γε φιλόσοφος ὁμιλῶν κόσμῶς τε καὶ θεῖος εἰς τὸ δυνατόν ἀνθρώπῳ γίγνεται

**105** Cf. our discussion in 2.2.6.4. Note the reason language (in a broader sense) occurring in the context of our passage, such as λογισμός [586d, 587e], νοῦς [585c, 586d, 591c], ὑπὸ θείου καὶ φρονίμου ἄρχεσθαι [590d], φρόνησις [591b] and ἄλογος [591c].

**106** Cf. our discussion of Epictetus 2.9 in section 4.2. This is important because Epictetus is in many respects a Platonizing Stoic. On the close relation between Platonism and Stoicism from 100 BC to AD 100, cf. the contributions in Engberg-Pedersen 2017 (especially, for an overview, the introductory essay by Engberg-Pedersen).

**107** Müller 2009, 192 (“ein teleologisches Kooperationsmodell”).

**108** Müller 2009, 192 (with reference to Johansen 2000).

by consorting with what is ordered and divine and despite all the slanders around that say otherwise, himself ... as divine and ordered as human beings can. (Plato, *Resp.* 500d)<sup>109</sup>

With this, we turn to Aristotle.

### 3.1.8 Aristotle: All by virtue of reason – humans as supremely “political” beings

For Aristotle, as for Xenophon’s Socrates, the human body and the human soul are “intrinsically interrelated.”<sup>110</sup> The same features (upright posture and hands) that distinguish humans from animals are mentioned again. They are now explicitly associated with thinking and reason, a divine part in humans:

Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἄνθρωπος ἀντὶ σκελῶν καὶ ποδῶν τῶν προσθίων βραχίονας καὶ τὰς καλουμένας ἔχει χεῖρας. Ὅρθον μὲν γὰρ ἔστι μόνον τῶν ζώων διὰ τὸ τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι θείαν· ἔργον<sup>111</sup> δὲ τοῦ θειοτάτου τὸ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν.

In humans the forelegs and forefeet are replaced by arms and by what we call hands. For of all animals humankind alone stands erect, in accordance with its god-like nature and substance. For it is the function of the god-like to think and to be wise. (Aristotle, *Part. An.* 686a 25–29)<sup>112</sup>

The emphasis on the human’s rational nature comes out even stronger in Aristotle’s discussion of the human hand. While for Anaxagoras human beings were the most intelligent because of their hands<sup>113</sup> (a fit of mind to body), Aristotle has it exactly the other way round (a fit of body to mind), on the grounds that nature would not waste a gift on someone who has no use for it:

εὐλογον δὲ διὰ τὸ φρονιμώτατον εἶναι χεῖρας λαμβάνειν (sc. ἄνθρωπον). Αἱ μὲν γὰρ χεῖρες ὄργανόν εἰσιν, ἡ δὲ φύσις αἰεὶ διανέμει, καθάπερ ἄνθρωπος φρόνιμος, ἕκαστον τῶν δυναμένων χρησθῆναι.

**109** Cf. for the theme of assimilation to God also *Theaet.* 176b. For a discussion of the tradition, see van Kooten 2008, 124–199.

**110** Landmann 1979, 70.

**111** The term ἔργον is important to our discussion of Epictetus 1.6 and 1.6 (see chapter 4).

**112** Transl. W. Ogle (in Barnes 1995), here and below, adapted. For the divine part in humans see also *Part. An.* 656a 4–14 and the discussion in Flashar 2014, 325.

**113** διὰ τὸ χεῖρας ἔχειν φρονιμώτατον εἶναι τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπον “the possession of these hands is the cause of humans being of all animals the most intelligent” (Aristotle, *Part. An.* 687a 8–9).

But it is more rational to suppose that humans have hands because of their superior intelligence. For the hands are instruments, and the invariable plan of nature in distributing the organs is to give each to such animal as can make use of it. (Aristotle, *Part. An.* 687a 9–12)

The same tendency to emphasise reason can be observed with regards to Xenophon's Socrates' third distinctive, namely human language.<sup>114</sup> In Aristotle's *Politica*, humans alone are ascribed possession of λόγος:

λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων

humans alone of the animals possess reason-and-speech.<sup>115</sup>

Here Aristotle means both the endowment with reason and the capacity for language.<sup>116</sup> Once more, the wider context of Aristotle's statement and the issues he engages are worth exploring with a view to Paul. Not only can one observe in Aristotle an increasing tendency to link the distinctively human traits to reason,<sup>117</sup> a tendency which some Stoic thinkers will reinforce, but the important social dimension to human existence is given sustained reflection.

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114 Cf. Landmann 1979, 71.

115 Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253a 9–10 (our translation). We have used the cumbersome expression “reason-and-speech” to render the close links between these aspects in the Greek word λόγος. We are thus following a similar strategy as that adopted by Cicero, *Off.* 1.50, who renders the distinctive human endowment with a similar circumlocution as “reason and speech” (*oratio et ratio*). Cf. for this point Inwood 2007, 374 who refers to the “close connection of speech and reason” as a “commonplace”, both in Greek and in Latin. The context of *Off.* 1.50 is also similar, as human sociability and potential for justice mediated by the common endowment with reason and speech is discussed (as in Aristotle's *Politica*).

116 Cf. Rapp and Horn 2001, 754 (“Vernunftbesitz” and “Sprachfähigkeit”). The deliberative aspect is also stressed by Saunders 1995, 70. Even though Flashar 2014, 109 emphasises speech (“Sprache”), his further statements imply that argumentation and discernment is also in view. Pertinent here are also the arguments adduced by Horn 2005, 332, who points to *Rhet.* 1355a28–b2 for a passage in which Aristotle uses λόγος in the sense of a capacity for reason, which a rendering with “speech” would not capture (for the same characteristic capacity [ἴδιόν] that is addressed as λόγος at *Rhet.* 1355b 1 [note the contrast to defence by means of the body (τῷ σώματι)], is also referred to as a δυνάμι[ς] τῶν λόγων at *Rhet.* 1355b 3–4). Note also our remarks below, where we come back to this passage.

117 Aristotle sometimes uses λόγος or its cognates in these contexts, but as with other ancient Greco-Roman writers, there is a certain fluidity in the use of expressions that address aspects of human thinking abilities (cf. also Rapp and Horn 2001, 748). He might, for example, refer to humankind as φρονιμός (as in *Part. An.* 687a 9–12, quoted above) or as being unique among animals for having intellect (διανοία), as in *Part. An.* 641b 7–8 (ὑπάρχει γὰρ ἡ φορά καὶ ἐν ἑτέροις τῶν ζώων, διάνοια δ' οὐδενί “For other animals than humans have the power of locomotion, but

In the first book of his *Politica*, Aristotle describes a πόλις as a kind of κοινωνία between humans; whenever humans enter into such κοινωνία, they do it in order to realise some apparent good (ἀγαθοῦ τινος ἕνεκεν) which cannot be otherwise obtained. The πόλις is in fact just the endpoint of a series of such κοινωνία and comprises the former; the good it realises is accordingly the highest good.<sup>118</sup> Aristotle construes an idealised sequence of κοινωνία, beginning with the smallest building blocks out of which his πόλις is constructed.<sup>119</sup> The first unit is the relationship between female and male (θῆλυ μὲν καὶ ἄρρεν), which is not unique to humans, but also exists among plants and animals; it aims at generation (τῆς γεννήσεως ἕνεκεν). The second unit is the relationship between what Aristotle calls a ruler by nature and correspondingly a ruled subject (ἄρχον δὲ φύσει καὶ ἀρχόμενον), for the sake of preservation (διὰ τὴν σωτηρίαν). The difference between the “natural” ruler and its subject, even between master and slave, is that the former has the mind to plan for the future and the latter has the body to carry out what is required, so that what is good for both (συμφέρει) aligns:

τὸ μὲν γὰρ δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν ἄρχον φύσει καὶ δεσπότην φύσει,  
τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον ταῦτα τῷ σώματι πονεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δούλον·  
διὸ δεσπότη καὶ δούλῳ ταῦτόν συμφέρεται.

For one that can foresee with his mind is naturally ruler and naturally master, and one that can do these things with his body is subject and naturally a slave; so that master and slave have the same interest.<sup>120</sup> (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252a 31–34)

After a curious sidenote to the effect that “barbarians” are by nature slaves,<sup>121</sup> and that there are no “natural” rulers among them,<sup>122</sup> Aristotle sums up the

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in none other is there intellect”). Cf. e.g. τὸ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν in Aristotle, *De an.* 686a 29, quoted above. See also below.

**118** Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252a 1–7.

**119** Cf. *Pol.* 1252a 26–1252b 28.

**120** Transl. H. Rackham, here and below, adapted.

**121** Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 9 (ταῦτό φύσει βάρβαρον καὶ δούλον). For a discussion of Aristotle’s “theory of natural slavery”, see Smith 1991, who links Aristotle’s views to his accounts of the “relationship of reason to emotion” and “man to beast” (142). Garnsey 1999, 107–127 analyses in critical detail the various analogies Aristotle draws on to construct his theory of the “natural slave” (a “battered shipwreck of a theory” [107]). DuBois 2003, 189–205, problematises the modern philosophical reception of Aristotle’s account of slavery and criticises how the “focus on the issue of natural slavery in ... modern readings of Aristotle occludes and misrepresents the ways in which slavery was taken for granted in ancient societies, anachronistically overlaying the racialization of slavery onto the institution in antiquity” (204–205).

**122** Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 6–7 (τὸ φύσει ἄρχον οὐκ ἔχουσιν [sc. βάρβαροι]).

first two κοινώνια in the οἶκος, which covers everyday needs; several οἶκοι together in turn join themselves to a κώμη, which satisfies what goes beyond the everyday needs.<sup>123</sup> Aristotle associates kingly rule primarily with the structure of the κώμη and even explains the conception of the gods being ruled by a king as an anthropomorphic projection from the rule of a κώμη.<sup>124</sup>

Finally, he arrives at the πόλις, which is composed of several κῶμαι, attains to αὐταρκεία and exists ultimately for the sake of the good life:

ἢ δ' ἐκ πλειόνων κωμῶν κοινωνία τέλειος πόλις, ἥδη πάσης ἔχουσα πέρας τῆς αὐταρκειᾶς ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, γινομένη μὲν τοῦ ζῆν ἔνεκεν, οὔσα δὲ τοῦ εὖ ζῆν.

The partnership finally composed of several villages is the city-state; it has at last attained the limit of virtually complete self-sufficiency, and thus, while it comes into existence for the sake of life, it exists for the good life. (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 27–30.)

As a consequence of his teleological conception of φύσις,<sup>125</sup> the πόλις is said to exist by nature, and by implication humans are defined as “political”<sup>126</sup> beings, so much so, that those beings for whom this does not hold true must either be less than fully or far more than human:

ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερόν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶν, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἦτοι φαῦλός ἐστιν, ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος.

From these things therefore it is clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and that humans are by nature a political animal, and someone who is by nature and not merely by fortune citiless is either low in the scale of humanity or above it.

(Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253a 1–4)

Aristotle is willing to grant some form of πόλις also to bees and some other animals, but humans are “political” in a higher degree, and it is at this point that Aristotle introduces the human possession of λόγος, which he has indicated already above. We now quote the passage in full, as not only humans’ political nature but also, relatedly, their potential for justice and perception of good and evil are linked to λόγος, both speech and reason:

<sup>123</sup> Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 9–16.

<sup>124</sup> Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 19–26. Note in particular 25–26: ὡσπερ δὲ καὶ τὰ εἶδη ἑαυτοῖς ἀφομοιοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν θεῶν “as humans imagine the gods in human form, so also they suppose their manner of life to be like their own”.

<sup>125</sup> Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b 32–33 (οἶον γὰρ ἕκαστόν ἐστι τῆς γενέσεως τελεσθείσης, ταύτην φαρμέν τὴν φύσιν εἶναι ἐκάστου).

<sup>126</sup> That is, they are related to and disposed to build the πόλις (cf. also Saunders 1995, 69).

διότι δὲ πολιτικὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῶν πάσης μελίττης καὶ παντὸς ἀγελαίου ζώου μᾶλλον, δηλόν. οὐθὲν γάρ, ὡς φαμέν, μάτην ἢ φύσις ποιεῖ· λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων· ἢ μὲν οὖν φωνὴ τοῦ λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος ἐστὶ σημεῖον, διὸ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει ζῶοις (μέχρι γάρ τούτου ἢ φύσις αὐτῶν ἐλήλυθε, τοῦ ἔχειν αἴσθησιν λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος καὶ ταῦτα σημαίνειν ἀλλήλοισι), ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστὶ τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερόν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον, τὸ μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἴσθησιν ἔχειν· ἢ δὲ τούτων κοινωνία ποιεῖ οἰκίαν καὶ πόλιν.

And why humans are a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and humans alone of the animals possess reason-and-speech (λόγος).<sup>127</sup> The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is painful and pleasant and to signify those sensations to one another), but rational speech (λόγος) is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of humans in distinction from the other animals that they alone have perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state. (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253a 7–18)

Animals have perception of pain and pleasure (αἴσθησιν λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος), and have voice (φωνή) to communicate with respect to these sensations. They do not need more, and nature does not waste its gifts. Humans, however, do need more, not least for the life in the πόλις, and are therefore endowed with reason and articulate language. They need to be able to communicate about what is useful (τὸ συμφέρον) and harmful, about what is just and unjust (τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον), and they also possess, accordingly, the perception<sup>128</sup> of good and evil (ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ), just and unjust, among others qualities.

We see then in Aristotle's *Politica* a tendency to attribute many of the specifically human characteristics that pertain to the social sphere to their being endowed with reason (λόγος), just as we noted above with regards to the bodily characteristics.<sup>129</sup> The wider context of the statement which links humans'

**127** We have adapted H. Rackham's translation, rendering λόγος not merely as "speech" but as "reason-and-speech", where it indicates the special capacity of human beings, and as "rational speech", where the utterances of humans are contrasted with the uses of voice in the case of animals. Cf. for the latter development of such distinctions Sextus Empiricus, AM 7.275–276 (λόγος προφορικός [also for e.g. parrots] and ἐνδιάθητος [humans]).

**128** For an interpretation of "perception" as a shorthand for "a capacity to acquire that perception," see Saunders 1995, 70.

**129** As already noted, Aristotle does not always use the lexeme λόγος to make this point (other lexemes he uses include λογισμός [*Metaph.* 980b 25–28], νοῦς and τὸ διανοητικόν [*De an.* 414b 16–19], νόησις [*EN* 1770a 15–16]).

λόγος with their potential for justice (τὸ δίκαιον) is Aristotle's argument for the priority – τῆ φύσει – of the πόλις over the preceding κοινωνία and especially the individual.

Only within the πόλις can the individual Aristotle envisages reach the goal of αὐτάρκεια; any being that cannot be part of the πόλις, or does not need to be part of it for the sake of αὐτάρκεια, is either a “beast” or divine (ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός).<sup>130</sup> The πόλις then is the context within which humans as political beings become fully human, and can embrace justice (δικαιοσύνη), because they are endowed with λόγος. Yet Aristotle is also well aware of the ambiguity of human reason: it can be oriented towards both good and evil, and accordingly humans may turn out to be the best or the worst of animals. Without virtue (ἀρετή), humans ultimately descend to the level of animals,<sup>131</sup> which operate for Aristotle, as we have seen, on the level of pain and pleasure:

ὡσπερ γὰρ καὶ τελεωθεὶς βέλτιστον τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ χωρισθεὶς νόμου καὶ δίκης<sup>132</sup> χείριστον πάντων. χαλεπωτάτη γὰρ ἀδικία ἔχουσα ὄπλα· ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ὄπλα<sup>133</sup> ἔχων φύεται φρονήσει καὶ ἀρετῇ, οἷς ἐπὶ τάναντία ἔστι χρῆσθαι μάλιστα. διὸ ἀνοσιώτατον καὶ ἀγριώτατον ἄνευ ἀρετῆς, καὶ πρὸς ἀφροδίσια καὶ ἐδωδῆν χείριστον. ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη πολιτικόν· ἡ γὰρ δίκη πολιτικῆς κοινωνίας τάξις ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ δικαίου κρίσις.

For as humans are the best of the animals when perfected, so they are the worst of all when sundered from law and justice. For unrighteousness is most pernicious when possessed of weapons, and humanity is born possessing weapons for the use of wisdom and virtue, which it is possible to employ entirely for the opposite ends. Hence when devoid of virtue humans are the most unscrupulous and savage of animals, and the worst in regard to sexual indulgence and gluttony. Justice on the other hand is an element of the state; for judicial procedure, which means the decision of what is just, is the regulation of the political partnership. (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253a 32–39)

On the other hand, in his *Ethica Nicomachea*, Aristotle can associate the life according to the νοῦς with the divine sphere:

**130** Aristotle, *Pol.* 1253a 26–28.

**131** Cf. also e.g. Aristotle, *EN* 1145a 17, which assigns the label θηριότης to one of the traits that are to be avoided.

**132** This phrase is noted as a parallel to *Rom* 3.21 (χωρὶς νόμου) in Jewett 2007, 274.

**133** The ὄπλα in this passage are especially interesting with regards to *Rom* 6.13, a textual link that BDAG, s.v. ὄπλον, notes explicitly. Our discussion of the traditions contained in the myth of Protagoras, where some animals are “armed” for survival (τοὺς δὲ ὤπλιζε [Plato, *Prot.* 320e]), while humans are without natural (i.e. bodily) weapons (ἀοπλον [Plato, *Prot.* 321c]), may suggest further resonances.

εἰ δὴ θεῖον ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὁ κατὰ τοῦτον βίος θεῖος πρὸς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον.

If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with human being, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life. (Aristotle, EN 1177b 30–31)<sup>134</sup>

The human mind is in any case for Aristotle the central defining property for what is distinctively human, both directly, and also in terms of the characteristic human marks that he associates with humans' endowment with reason. He is thus a pivotal figure in the larger story about how accounts of what it means to be human in ancient discourse increasingly revolve around human reason. For our purposes, another aspect is also crucial: Aristotle's emphasis on the necessary and constitutive social context of what it means to be human finds an obvious counterpart in the communities that Paul addresses with his communication.

### 3.1.9 Stoic thinkers: Human reason as the basis for piety, freedom and justice

In Stoic anthropology the difference between humans and animals is greatly emphasised. The crucial difference that elevates humans above animals is once more reason (λόγος), which is vehemently denied to all other animals. The Stoic emphasis on this difference may be partly attributed to an ethical-protreptic concern that links humans' rational nature with the unique responsibility for an appropriate behaviour, and partly to their pronounced doctrine of providence, which assigns humans the first place with reason as the highest gift.<sup>135</sup>

What we noted already for Aristotle holds true for the Stoics as well, only more so: all the other human distinctives become associated with the central defining characteristic – the fact that humans are λογικοί. Because of our detailed investigation of the Stoic material associated with the definition of human beings as rational animals in the previous chapter, and our detailed study of the Stoic Epictetus in the next chapter, we will not elaborate these points with reference to further Stoic texts here, but merely note central features associated with their being endowed with reason: (1) humans' relation to and knowledge of the

<sup>134</sup> Translation H. Rackham, adapted. Cf. also EN 1177a 12–18. For the separation of the soul into a part that is ἄλογον and a part that is described as λόγον ἔχον, see EN 1102a 7–8.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Dierauer 1977, 225. Dierauer's analysis is confirmed by the picture that has emerged in our investigation in the previous chapter, which has, as it to be expected, discussed some of the same texts.

divine; (2) human creativity and freedom; (3) the human potential for justice and injustice, good and evil.<sup>136</sup>

The broader anthropological discourse we have charted in this chapter and the role of reason for being human is condensed in the Stoic definition of human beings as ζῶα λογικὰ θνήττα, as emerges from a synoptic perspective of sections 3.1 and 2.2. In the broader context of an increasing tendency in important segments of the Greco-Roman cultural encyclopaedia to associate specific religious, ethical and cultural marks of humanness with humans' endowment with reason, the pragmatic function of addressing humans as λογικοί stands to gain more precise contours: by calling humans λογικοί, the contexts of worship, justice, and cultural practice may be activated. Humans are thus addressed by that which makes them specifically human, distinguishes them from the other creatures, and unites them with the divine sphere, in order to summon them to what may be called the specifically human vocation.

### 3.1.10 Conclusion

We have put the Stoic definition of human beings as an endpoint of a development, in which increasingly what it means to be human is associated with their central distinguishing capacity, their endowment with reason. Though we cannot develop this here further, similar points could be made about later Platonic tradition,<sup>137</sup> or with regards to Jewish-Hellenistic writings. However, as a fitting coda illustrating the broader relevance of the association of the definition of human beings with central distinguishing marks of genuine humanness, we will quote a short remark made by Plutarch, in which many of the themes we have seen associated with reason here in section 3.1 are connected to the definition of human beings which we have studied in section 2.2 (where we have not quoted this passage).<sup>138</sup>

In his treatise, Plutarch tells us that nature has implanted only a rudimentary form of love of offspring into the irrational animal, which is insufficient for justice (δικαιοσύνη). However, in the case of human beings, their love for

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**136** We may refer to the discussion in Dierauer 1977, 224–238, who elaborates this tendency with regard to six areas, noting important primary sources: (1) “Gotteserkenntnis und Gottesverwandschaft”; (2) “Verhältnis zur Zeit”; (3) “Freiheit des Urteilens und Handelns”; (4) “Tugend und Schlechtigkeit”; (5) “Affekte”; (6) “Sprache”.

**137** See for instance, on Philo and the *Timaeus* the excellent treatment of Runia 1986. For the Platonic anthropology cf. van Kooten 2008.

**138** Cf. however, Arius Didymus 2.76, which is similar.

their children contains as seeds what she has introduced to human beings in view of their nature:

ἄνθρωπον δέ, λογικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν ζῶον, ἐπὶ δίκην καὶ νόμον εἰσάγουσα [sc. ἡ φύσις] καὶ θεῶν τιμὰς καὶ πόλεων ἰδρύσεις καὶ φιλοφροσύνην, γενναῖα καὶ καλὰ καὶ φερέκαρπα τούτων σπέρματα παρέσχε τὴν πρὸς τὰ ἔγγονα χάριν καὶ ἀγάπησιν

But in the case of humans, a rational and social animal, Nature, by introducing them to a conception of justice and law and to the worship of the gods and to the founding of cities and to human kindness, has furnished noble and beautiful and fruitful seeds of all these in the joy we have in our children and our love of them. (Plutarch, *De amore prolis* 495C)<sup>139</sup>

Thus, in a short remark, Plutarch associates with human beings, the λογικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν ζῶον, their being introduced to justice, the law, the veneration of the gods, the building of cities, and kindness. With this we conclude our exploration into the centrality of the concept of reason for a discussion of what it means to be genuinely human in Greco-Roman tradition. We now turn to the idea of a human purpose in the cosmos and the language used for this.

### 3.2 Language for a role of human beings in the cosmos

Some ancient philosophers assume that human beings have a role to play in the cosmos. The conceptions differ in detail and the language varies, but there are general assumptions that many philosophers shared. And while explicit and thematic discussion is found mostly in philosophical texts, the idea belongs to Greco-Roman culture more broadly. We will see how Epictetus deploys this concept in chapter 4 and will argue that it is important for Paul in chapters 5–6.

An important early study of the topic of a human purpose in Greco-Roman context is Heinemann's *Die Lehre von der Zweckbestimmung des Menschen*.<sup>140</sup> Since this topic has not enjoyed much scholarly attention, it will be useful to first develop the notion in dialogue with Heinemann's exposition. Our notion of a "human vocation" is developed from some of the same source texts that Hei-

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<sup>139</sup> Transl. W. C. Helmbold, adapted.

<sup>140</sup> Heinemann 1926. He traced this idea even through Islamic and Jewish thinkers up to the medieval age. We are indebted to his work for several of the source texts we discuss or cite in this section.

nemann discussed, though there is an important difference in our use of the term (see below).<sup>141</sup>

The question about the purpose of a particular being could be raised about any being (e. g. a pruning-knife<sup>142</sup>). But it is only in the case of a being capable of action that we could define its purpose to consist in some kind of action. Thus Heinemann first distinguishes between a passive destiny and an active purpose of a being.<sup>143</sup> The idea of a human purpose in the active sense is thus the idea that there is some kind of action which is given as the goal of human striving.<sup>144</sup> It implies that there is something that all humans beings should do,<sup>145</sup> a task to be fulfilled, or as we will say a “vocation”. This idea can be given as an answer to the question “what are we here for” or “to what purpose have we been made”. As the latter formulation indicates, the idea of a human vocation presupposes that there is a power, someone or something which is responsible for the fact that human beings exist, that they are made the way they are and that the highest goal of human action accords with the goals or intention of this power.<sup>146</sup> Clearly for monotheistic thinkers this is God, the creator. But these goals must also be such that human beings can know about them and understand them.<sup>147</sup> Taken in this way these three conditions – belief in an ultimate “ought” for human beings, the intentionality of a metaphysical source, the recognisability of this intentionality<sup>148</sup> – also correspond to three conditions that our heuristic notion of a “human vocation” must fulfil. But we differ in our application of a “human calling” from his notion of a “Zweckbestimmung des Menschen” insofar as we do *not* demand that the way in which the purposes of the power responsible for

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**141** Heinemann 1926 does not discuss Epictetus 1.16, which is a very clear example in which the idea of a human vocation is presupposed, used and presented.

**142** Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 353a.

**143** “Bestimmung ... im passiven Sinne” and “im aktiven Sinne” (Heinemann 1926, 4–5).

**144** Heinemann defines the belief in a “Bestimmung des Menschen im aktiven ... Sinne” as “Der Glaube ..., dass ein bestimmtes – theoretisches oder praktisches – Verhalten uns als letztes Ziel unseres Strebens aufgegeben ist” (1926, 5).

**145** It accepts that there is “ein Sollen, und zwar ein allgemein menschliches Sollen” (Heinemann 1926, 5).

**146** The idea presupposes that what humans ought to do (“dies Sollen”) is such that “es den Zielen derjenigen Macht entspricht, der wir unser Dasein und namentlich unsere eigentümliche Beschaffenheit verdanken” (Heinemann 1926, 5). Heinemann speaks of a “zielstrebig vorgestellte[r] Urgrun[d] für das Dasein und Sosein des Menschen”.

**147** “Die Ziele dieses metaphysischen Urgrundes [müssen] uns Menschen durchsichtig und verständlich sein” (Heinemann 1926, 5).

**148** Heinemann 1926, 5: “de[r] Glaub[e] an ein letztes Sollen, an einen metaphysischen Weltgrund, und an die Erkennbarkeit seiner Ziele”.

human existence become known can in no way take recourse to “revelation.”<sup>149</sup> Paul’s presentation of the idea of a human vocation is inflected by his eschatology and this leads to important differences from the philosophers. This does not, however, preclude Paul from interacting with the idea and the traditions in which it plays a role.

But this discussion does point to a major difference between Paul and some of these philosophical texts. While in the relevant philosophical texts, the task of human beings is based simply on the human inborn capacities (or the potential to develop them) and on the unchanging state of the cosmos, for Paul, due to his conception of eschatology, what he has come to see as the human task is shaped by an event within history, and the capacities on which the task is based are those of liberated human beings within a cosmos marked by a change brought about in the Christ event.

And yet this difference does not take away a fundamental similarity, if human beings are understood as beings endowed with reason. And if this is how they are made by the creator and if based on this there is a general shape of their vocation, then the *new* task for human beings in the inaugurated *new* age does not abolish the shape of their vocation, but fulfils it, given the new conditions.

We now look at several texts in which the idea can be found.

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**149** As Heinemann does when he qualifies the just quoted point about the transparency of the divine goals by excluding, by implication, the writings of the New Testament: “wenn es nicht nur, wie in der Bibel, zur Anerkennung einer offenbarten Aufgabe, sondern auch zu einer wissenschaftlich erörterten Lehre von unserer Bestimmung kommen soll” (Heinemann 1926, 5). Similarly, he stipulates that the content of the human task should be determined by reflection and not based on “naïve” reliance on authority (“[ein Sollen] dessen Inhalt – im Gegensatz zum naiven Autoritätsglauben – durch Reflexion ermittelt wird” [Heinemann 1926, 4]). When it comes to the Old Testament, Heinemann is willing to speak of a “Berufungslehre” but not of a “Zweckbestimmungslehre” (Heinemann 1926, 29), because for the sharper notion of Heinemann’s “Zweckbestimmung” he requires that there be a step in which “aus dem Sein des Menschen auf sein Sollen [geschl[o]ßen [werden] muß” (29). Heinemann adds that this cannot and does not happen in Israel’s scripture, because they suppose that our inborn inclinations may lead us away from God’s will. Paul too describes human beings as *de facto* sinners, but the crucial point is that what humans should do does not derive from what they in fact do but what given how they are made (or redeemed) they could do. And if Paul shares the common view that human beings are endowed with reason, then it is possible that he builds on this an idea of a human calling. Heinemann (1926, 9) seems to distinguish a doctrine of a human task (“eine Lehre von der Aufgabe des Menschen”) too sharply from a doctrine of human purpose (“Zweckbestimmungslehre”).

### 3.2.1 Aristotle's *Protrepticus* apud Iamblichus

The idea of a human calling is clearly expressed in Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, which was famous in the ancient world, but which has been lost and has to be reconstructed based on fragments.<sup>150</sup> Many scholars have recognised that Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* (in chapters 5–12)<sup>151</sup> makes use of Aristotle's lost works, including the *Protrepticus*.<sup>152</sup> The details of the ascription to Aristotle are not decisive for our purposes, however, because we are not constructing a derivational argument. We are illustrating the constellation of ideas on which Paul *could* draw, as part of the Greco-Roman cultural encyclopedia.

In chapter 9 of Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* we find a clear expression of one version of the idea of a human vocation.<sup>153</sup> Like the preceding chapters (5–8), chapter 9 is once more an exhortation to philosophy (ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν προτροπὴν προχωροῦμεν [49.2]), but this time the argument proceeds from the “intention of nature” (ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς φύσεως βουλήματος [49.1–2]). This exhortation begins by dividing all things and beings subject to change (τῶν γινομένων) into three classes:<sup>154</sup> things produced by human art and ingenuity (ἀπὸ τινος διανοίας καὶ τέχνης [49.3–4]), such as a house or a ship, things produced by nature (διὰ φύσιν [49.6]), such as animals and plants, and finally some things come about “randomly”, by fortune (διὰ τύχην [46.8]). To these three classes correspond three different kinds of purpose (or lack thereof). Things produced by accident do not come to be for a purpose (τῶν μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ τύχης γινομένων οὐδὲν ἔνεκά του γίνεται) nor do they have a goal or end (οὐδ' ἔστι τι τέλος αὐτοῖς).<sup>155</sup> Things produced by art come to be for a purpose or function (about which their maker would inform you<sup>156</sup>) and they have a goal.<sup>157</sup> In connection with products of art, the principle is stated that the end intended is always better than the product itself (49.15–16) because, for example, the goal of the art of medicine is health for the patient, while the outcome of a treatment often is not health.

**150** Heinemann 1926, 7–10 discusses this passage as Aristotelian and as the earliest example.

**151** For the Greek text we will use the edition of Pistelli, unless we indicate with a D that we cite the edition of Des Places. We will refer to the passages in Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* simply by page and line.

**152** For a recent and brief overview on the reconstructions, see Brüllmann 2011.

**153** Cf. also the summary of this chapter at 4.9–14, especially the question τίς ἐστι καὶ τίνοσ ἔνεκα γέγονε.

**154** That these three categories are not exhaustive is indicated by 49.9–11.

**155** 49.11–12.

**156** Cf. 49.14–15.

**157** 49.13–14 and 49.20–21.

Finally, things produced by nature also come to be for a purpose (τό γε κατὰ φύσιν ἔνεκά του γίγνεται [49.26]) and their purpose is always even better than that of a product of art (49.25–27). The purposes for which products of nature come to be are superior to those of art (49.26–28), because art imitates (μιμείται) nature and not vice versa (49.27–50.1). In fact, art exists only to support and complete what is lacking in nature (ἔστιν ἐπὶ τῷ βοηθεῖν καὶ τὰ παραλειπόμενα τῆς φύσεως ἀναπληροῦν [50.1–2]). And with this the text already moves to one particular kind of being produced by nature, namely humans. Just like some seeds grow in any soil while others require the care of the farmer,<sup>158</sup> so too human beings are, unlike other animals, not fully furnished by nature, but require the arts for their preservation.<sup>159</sup> In any case, from the fact that art imitates nature, it follows that if products of art already come to be for a purpose, then a fortiori will the products of nature (50.12–14).

Now, in the case of humans, already their bodily parts have a function and purpose, for instance the eye-lid, which is not there in vain but so as to help the eye (οὐ μάτην ἀλλὰ βοηθείας χάριν τῶν ὀμμάτων γέγονεν [50.21–22]), notably by keeping stuff away that might otherwise fall into it. After a further distinction and a hint that animals that harm do not impede the overall argument, we finally arrive at the best of all earthly living beings, namely humans, which clearly are created according to nature:

τιμώτατον δέ γε τῶν ἐνταῦθα<sup>160</sup> ζώων ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν, ὥστε δηλον ὅτι φύσει τε καὶ κατὰ φύσιν γέγονε.

The worthiest of the beings living here below are humans, so that it is clear that they have come to be through nature and according to nature. (51.4–6)<sup>161</sup>

As product of nature, humans were brought about for a purpose. What is it? Thus the question about the human vocation is raised explicitly:

Τί δὴ τοῦτό ἐστι τῶν ὄντων οὗ χάριν ἢ φύσις ἡμᾶς ἐγέννησε καὶ ὁ θεός;

What then is it for the sake of which nature and God have brought us forth among the things that are?<sup>162</sup> (81.11–12 D)<sup>163</sup>

**158** Cf. our discussion Epictetus 1.16 in section 4.4.

**159** 50.8–12.

**160** The addition is necessary, because for a Neoplatonist higher spirits are also living beings (ζῶα).

**161** Our translation.

**162** Our translation.

**163** Here we follow the text of Des Places, who follows a conjecture by Zuntz, which inserts τί δὴ in this sentence and removes it (and an ἐστι) in the following sentence, such that a question

We have here all the elements for the notion of a human vocation: God or nature, a purpose for which humans are created, and some way, to be discussed shortly, in which this purpose, which consists in a certain behaviour, is based on how human beings are made.

The text lets Pythagoras answer the question:<sup>164</sup> humans were made for the contemplation of the heavens (τὸ θεάσασθαι ... τὸν οὐρανόν [51.8–9]). Pythagoras identifies himself as a spectator of nature (θεωρὸν ... τῆς φύσεως) and calls this the purpose of his life (τούτου ἔνεκα παρεληλυθέναι εἰς τὸν βίον [51.9–10]).

The reasons for the correctness of Pythagoras' answer are then given based on the principle that whatever is created last in a continuous development of a product of nature is its purpose (τέλος δὲ κατὰ φύσιν τοῦτό ἐστιν ὃ κατὰ τὴν γένεσιν πέφυκεν ὕστατον ἐπιτελεῖσθαι [51.18–19]).<sup>165</sup> Since the human body is completed before the soul, and, within the soul, it is thinking which comes last (οὐκοῦν ψυχὴ σώματος ὕστερον [sc. λαμβάνει τέλος], καὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς τελευταῖον ἢ φρόνησις [51.22, 24–25]), this must be what human beings are made for. Thus our purpose (τέλος) is a kind of φρόνησις (51.2–3). If we have come to be (εἰ γεγόναμεν), then it must be for the purpose of understanding and learning (ἔσμεν ἔνεκα τοῦ φρονῆσαι τι καὶ μαθεῖν [52.4–5]). The text concludes that Pythagoras was right with his statement that every human being was made by God for the purpose of knowledge and contemplation (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ γινῶναι τε καὶ θεωρῆσαι πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ συνέστηκεν [52.7–8]).

We have discussed this first example in detail, because it is a deliberate reflection on the human role within the cosmos. It shows the language used to speak about the human purpose within the cosmos and how that purpose is recognised in how human beings are made. While the language used here for the distinct capacity of human beings is not λογικός, the idea is nevertheless substantially the same (thinking [φρονεῖν] as the specific capacity on which the human purpose is based). This makes it possible to detect the language used to speak about a human vocation even where the discussion is not as elaborate and explicit. It is also significant that such a discussion about the human role in the cosmos occurs in protreptic speech (here an exhortation to philosophy). Once it is noted that Rom 12.1–2 also functions protreptically, this will support our reading that it is about the human vocation.

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results, while Pistelli follows the manuscripts, even as the text remains slightly awkward without these changes.

<sup>164</sup> And Anaxagoras follows suit.

<sup>165</sup> Different senses of τέλος (termination, purpose) are at play here.

### 3.2.2 Seneca: What you owe your nature

We consider another example by the Roman Stoic Seneca. In one of his philosophical letters to Lucilius<sup>166</sup> he writes:

For how will you know what behaviour should be cultivated unless you have discovered what is best for a human being, unless you have scrutinized his nature? You will only understand what you must do and what you must avoid when you have learned what you owe to your nature (*quid naturae tuae debeas*). (Seneca, *Ep.* 123.3)<sup>167</sup>

The *natura* in question is of course the specifically human rational nature,<sup>168</sup> as we see in another letter:

For as man is a reasoning creature (*rationale enim animal est homo*), so his goodness is complete if it has fulfilled the purpose for which he was born (*bonum eius, si id inplevit cui nascitur*). And what is it that reason (*ratio*) demands from him? A very easy thing: to live according to his nature (*secundum naturam suam vivere*). (Seneca, *Ep.* 41.8)

As for Epictetus, so also for Seneca the human endowment with reason is what marks out what is truly human (in the context the opinion is presented as from a diatribal interlocutor, but the relevant premise is shared also by Seneca):

You are saying that every animal is first adjusted to its own composition, but that the composition of a human is rational (*hominis autem constitutionem rationalem esse*), and so a person is adjusted to himself as a rational being (*tamquam rationali*) and not like an animal; for a person is dear to himself in that part which makes him human (*ea enim parte sibi carus est homo qua homo est*). (Seneca, *Ep.* 121.14)

Here reason is what makes humans human and that is why their human vocation is based on it. Thus here the idea is that a being's purpose is founded upon that which makes it distinct (where in the *Protrepticus* it was that which was completed last).

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<sup>166</sup> For a recent commentary see Inwood 2007.

<sup>167</sup> The translations in this section follow Fantham 2010.

<sup>168</sup> λόγος is rendered by *ratio*, λογικός by *rationalis* in Latin texts. For the definition of human beings cf. e.g. Quintillian, *Institutio oratoria* 5.6.56.

### 3.2.3 Other examples

Having discussed two examples in detail, it will suffice to catalogue further examples briefly.<sup>169</sup> These examples illustrate some of the language that is used to speak about a human role in the cosmos and that this idea is widespread among ancient thinkers (even if there is no mention of λογικός). In a first class of cases, a term like goal (τέλος) or work (ἔργον) can indicate that it is about the purpose of human beings. Thus, for instance:

And the end (τέλος) for rational creatures (λογικῶν ζώων) is to follow (τὸ ἔπεσθαι) the reason (λόγῳ) and the rule of that most venerable archetype of a governing state – the Universe. (Marcus Aurelius 2.16.1)<sup>170</sup>

The second class consists in variations of “being born for something”. The third class adopts the perspective of God or nature bringing human beings into the cosmos. All three of these are present in the following passage of Marcus Aurelius:

At break of day, when you are reluctant to get up, have this thought ready to mind: “I am getting up for the work of a human being (ἐπὶ ἀνθρώπου ἔργον).<sup>171</sup> Do I still then resent it, if I am going out to do what I was born for (ἐπὶ τὸ ποιεῖν ὃν ἔνεκεν γέγονα), the purpose for which I was brought into the world (ὣν χάριν προήγμαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον)? Or was I created (ἐπὶ τοῦτο κατεσκευάσμαι) to wrap myself in blankets and keep warm?” “But this is more pleasant.” Were you born then for pleasure (πρὸς τὸ ἡδεσθαι οὖν γέγονας) – all for feeling (πρὸς πείσιν), not for action (πρὸς ἐνέργειαν)? Can you not see plants, birds, ants, spiders, bees, all doing their own work (τὸ ἴδιον ποιούσας), each helping in their own way to order the world (τὸ καθ’ αὐτὰς συγκοσμούσας κόσμον)? And then you do not want to do the work of a human being (ἔπειτα σὺ οὐ θέλεις τὰ ἀνθρωπικὰ ποιεῖν) – you do not hurry to the demands of your own nature (τρέχεις ἐπὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν σὴν φύσιν). (Marcus Aurelius 5.1.1.)

We note here that the term ἔργον ἀνθρώπου (the function of human beings) recalls Aristotle’s function argument in the Nicomachean Ethics, in which the specific capacity of a being is what determines its purpose.<sup>172</sup> This is why it also features in the following passage by the philosopher Aspasius (1st half of the 2nd

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**169** Many of these examples (and more) are discussed in Heinemann 1926. We are less focused on establishing chronology or ascriptions to earlier Stoics and simply seek to document the variety of language used to describe that human beings have a purpose and in what it consists.  
**170** Transl. M. Hammond for Marcus Aurelius, adapted. (We have quoted this passage already in section 2.2.)

**171** The term ἔργον is important for Epictetus 1.16 (see section 4.4.2).

**172** EN 1097b 22–1098a 20. See also section 4.2.

century AD), which comments upon that passage of Aristotle, and explains it by means of the term λογικός (as referring to human beings as endowed with reason), which was not yet used in this sense by Aristotle.<sup>173</sup>

What, then, is this work, qua human being (τί οὖν ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ ἢ ἀνθρώπου<sup>174</sup>)? Would it be to live (τὸ ζῆν)? But this is common even to plants (κοινὸν καὶ τοῖς φυτοῖς), and in any case it is not his work to have a share in life: this, rather, belongs to him by nature. If living then is common not only to animals (ζῴοις) but also to plants, and the work of each thing is specific (τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐκάστου ἴδιον [17.32]), one would have to separate out nutritive life (τὴν θρεπτικὴν ζωὴν), on the grounds that the work of a human being (τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου ἔργου) does not reside in this. Similarly, neither would it reside in growth-related life (τῆ ἀξητικῆ), for this too is common to plants. But nor again would it reside in perceptive life (ἐν τῆ αἰσθητικῆ ζωῆ), for this is common also to non-rational animals (τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζῴοις). The productive and rational life, then, is left to be the work of a human being (λείπεται δὲ [τὸ] ἔργον [εἶναι] τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ πρακτικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ζωὴ), that is, to live as a rational being (τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν). In this resides what is specific to a human being (ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), namely the rational part of the soul (τὸ λογικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς). (Aspasius, *In ethica Nicomachea commentaria* 17.29–18.2)<sup>175</sup>

The next examples are variations of “being born for something”, the second class, which appears in such formulations as *ortus est ad contemplantum, hominum causa esse generatos, ad quae nati sumus, in hoc natum hominem*, πρὸς ἃ γεγόναμεν, ἐπὶ γὰρ κοινωνία γεγόναμεν, *quidnam victuri gignimur*:

Humans themselves however came into existence for the purpose of contemplating and imitating the world (*ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplantum et imitandum*). (Cicero, ND 2.37)<sup>176</sup>

*Sed quoniam, ut praeclare scriptum est a Platone, non nobis solum nati sumus ortusque nostri partem patria vindicat, partem amici, atque, ut placet Stoicis, quae in terris gignantur, ad usum hominum omnia creari, homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se aliis alii prodesse possent,*<sup>177</sup> *in hoc naturam debemus ducem sequi,*<sup>178</sup> *communes utilitates in medium afferre mutatione officiorum, dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus devincere hominum inter homines societatem.*

173 As we have seen in section 2.2.6.3.3.

174 ἔργον is to be supplied from context.

175 This passage is not discussed by Heinemann, but it is important for our reading of Epictetus. We already quoted this passage in section 2.2.6.3.3, but it is worth recalling here in the context of other vocational language. Transl. Konstan 2006.

176 Transl. H. Rackham. We have quoted this passage already and pointed out the two-part structure of the human role in the cosmos.

177 Cf. the similar point Cicero makes (using the language of *natos ad*) at *Tusc.* 1.32.

178 Cf. the language of ἐπεσθαι in Marcus Aurelius 2.16 quoted above.

But since, as Plato has admirably expressed it, we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country claims a share of our being, and our friends a share; and since, as the Stoics hold, everything that the earth produces is created for humans' use; and as humans, too, are born for the sake of humans, that they may be able mutually to help one another; in this direction we ought to follow Nature as our guide, to contribute to the general good by an interchange of acts of kindness, by giving and receiving, and thus by our skill, our industry, and our talents to cement human society more closely together, human to human. (Cicero, *Off.* 1.22)<sup>179</sup>

*Prima illa commendatio, quae a natura nostri facta est nobis, incerta et obscura est, primusque appetitus ille animi tantum agit, ut salvi atque integri esse possimus. Cum autem dispicere coepimus et sentire quid simus et quid <ab> animantibus ceteris differamus, tum ea sequi incipimus, ad quae nati sumus.*

The earliest feeling of attraction which nature has created in us towards ourselves is vague and obscure, and the earliest instinct of appetite only strives to secure our safety and freedom from injury. When, however, we begin to look about us and to perceive what we are and how we differ from the rest of living creatures, we then commence to pursue the objects for which we are intended by nature. (Cicero, *Fin.* 5.41)<sup>180</sup>

*Habebat perfectum animum et ad summam sui adductum, supra quam nihil est nisi mens dei, ex quo pars et in hoc pectus mortale defluxit; quod nunquam magis divinum est quam ubi mortalitatem suam cogitat et scit in hoc natum hominem, ut vita defungeretur, nec domum esse hoc corpus sed hospitium, et quidem breve hospitium, quod relinquendum est ubi te gravem esse hospiti videas.*

He possessed perfection of soul, developed to its highest capabilities, inferior only to the mind of God – from whom a part flows down even into this heart of a mortal. But this heart is never more divine than when it reflects upon its mortality, and understands that man was born for the purpose of fulfilling his life, and that the body is not a permanent dwelling, but a sort of inn (with a brief sojourn at that) which is to be left behind when one perceives that one is a burden to the host. (Seneca, *Ep.* 120.14)<sup>181</sup>

τῆ θεωρίας καὶ διανοίας τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπιβολῆ οὐδ' ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἀρκεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τοῦ περιέχοντος πολλάκις ὄρους ἐκβαίνουσιν αἱ ἐπίνοιαι, καὶ εἴ τις περιβλέψαιτο ἐν κύκλῳ τὸν βίον, ὅσῳ πλέον ἔχει τὸ περιττὸν ἐν πᾶσι καὶ μέγα καὶ καλόν, ταχέως εἴσεται πρὸς ἃ γεγόναμεν.

The whole universe is not enough to satisfy the speculative intelligence of human thought; our ideas often pass beyond the limits that confine us. Look at life from all sides and see how in all things the extraordinary, the great, the beautiful stand supreme, and you will soon realize what we were born for.

(Pseudo-Longinus [1st half of the 1st century AD], *De sublimitate* 35.3)<sup>182</sup>

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**179** Transl. Walter Miller, adapted.

**180** Transl. H. Rackham.

**181** Cf. Heinemann 1926, 19. Note that *defungi* refers to more than simply death. Transl. Richard M. Gummere.

**182** Transl. W. Hamilton Fyfe and Donald Russell.

ἐπὶ γὰρ κοινωνία γεγόναμεν καὶ ταύτην ὁ προτιμῶν τοῦ καθ' αὐτὸν ἰδίου μάλιστα θεῶν κεχαρισμένος.

For we are born for fellowship, and he who sets its claims above his private interests is specially acceptable to God. (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.195)<sup>183</sup>

The next passage, from the Satirical poet Persius Flaccus, who lived in the Neronic period, still features language of “being born for something” (*quid sumus et quidnam victuri gignimur*), but also already features language of the third class *quem te deus esse iussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re*.

Is there something you're heading for, a target for your bow (*est aliquid quo tendis et in quod derigis arcum*)? Or are you taking pot shots at crows with bricks and clods of mud, not caring where your feet take you? Is your life an improvisation? ... Learn, you idiotic creatures, discover the rationale of existence (*discite et, o miseri, causas cognoscite rerum*): What are we and what sort of life are we born for (*quid sumus et quidnam victuri gignimur*)? ... What role is assigned (*ordo quis datus*) you by God and where in the human world have you been stationed (*quem te deus esse iussit et humana qua parte locatus es in re*)? (Persius Flaccus 3.60–62, 66–68, 71–72)<sup>184</sup>

Further examples speak of human beings introduced into the world in a certain role (ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰσάγεται διὰ τῆς γενέσεως ... θεατῆς, *hominemque ipsum quasi contemplatorem caeli*) or being created for something:

For the universe is a most holy temple and most worthy of a god (ἱερὸν μὲν γὰρ ἀγιώτατον ὁ κόσμος ἐστὶ καὶ θεοπρεπέστατον); into it humans are introduced through birth as spectators (εἰς δὲ τοῦτον ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰσάγεται διὰ τῆς γενέσεως ... θεατῆς), not of hand-made or immovable images (χειροκμήτων οὐδ' ἀκινήτων ἀγαλμάτων), but of those sensible representations of knowable things that the divine mind, says Plato, has revealed (οἷα νοῦς θεῖος αἰσθητὰ μιμήματα νοητῶν) (Plutarch, *Tranq. an.* 477C)<sup>185</sup>

... and humanity itself formed as it were to observe the heavens and worship the gods<sup>186</sup> (*hominemque ipsum quasi contemplatorem caeli ac deorum cultorem*), and lastly all fields and seas made subject to the service of human beings – when then we behold all these things and countless others, can we doubt that some being is over them, or some author, (*praesit aliquis vel effector*) ... some governor of so stupendous a work of construction (*moderator tanti operis et muneris*)? (Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.69)<sup>187</sup>

183 Transl. H. St. J. Thackeray. Cf. also Epictetus, frag. 1 (Schenkl).

184 Transl. Susanna Morton Braund, adapted.

185 Transl. W. C. Helmbold. Note the formulation in Epictetus 1.6.19 (section 4.5).

186 Against J. E. King's translation we have kept *deorum* with the manuscript evidence (against the conjecture *terrarum*).

187 Transl. J. E. King, adapted (with a different reading). Note also the “natural theology” passage that follows in context *ut deum agnoscis ex operibus eius* “that you recognise God from his

God created humans for incorruption (ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ’ ἀφθαρσίᾳ). (Wis 2.23)

εἰ τοίνυν ὁ τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς δημιουργὸς ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ τῷ ζωῆς ἔμφρονος μετασχεῖν καὶ γενόμενον θεωρὸν τῆς τε μεγαλοπρεπείας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ πᾶσι σοφίας τῇ τούτων θεωρίᾳ συνδιαμένειν ἀεὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκείνου γνώμην καὶ καθ’ ἣν εἴληχεν φύσιν, ἡ μὲν τῆς γενέσεως αἰτία πιστοῦται τὴν εἰς ἀεὶ διαμονήν, ἡ δὲ διαμονὴ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, ἥς χωρὶς οὐκ ἂν διαμείνειεν ἄνθρωπος.

So if the creator of the universe has made humans for sharing in a life of understanding, and having become spectators of his grandeur and wisdom in all things by their contemplation, to remain with him for ever, according to his intention, in view of which he had allotted (their) nature, then the cause for which they were made proves their perdurance for ever, and their perdurance their resurrection, without which human beings would probably not endure. (Athenagoras, *De resurrectione* 13.2)<sup>188</sup>

This list shows the variety of language than can be used to describe the purpose of human beings and in what it consists. Many of the descriptions of the human vocation feature contemplation and action which corresponds to it, which will be important in Epictetus and Paul, as we shall see.

### 3.3 Conclusion

We have thus offered a broader contextualisation for the role of reason in Greco-Roman reflections on what it means to be human. The Stoic definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα marks an endpoint of a development, in which what it means to be human is increasingly associated with their central distinguishing capacity, their endowment with reason.

We have further developed the notion of a human vocation in conversation with Heinemann and illustrated the language that is used in ancient sources to speak about a human role in the cosmos, which is based on their distinct capacity, namely their being endowed with reason.

This sets us up for our discussion of Epictetus in the next chapter, where we will find a clear articulation of a human vocation based on their being λογικός and where many of the themes, motifs and language we surveyed in this chapter will reappear.

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works". This passage is cited by Käsemann 1980, 36, but he does not consider the parallel in a vocational context.

**188** Our translation. Cf. also, for language of purpose, Athenagoras, *De resurrectione* 12.

## 4 Epictetus and the idea of a human calling based on human reason

In this chapter, we seek to demonstrate that and how key passages in Epictetus offer the best parallel for understanding Paul's use of reason language in Rom 12.1. We will show that Epictetus 1.16 offers one of the clearest instances of the notion of a human vocation and how it is linked to reason language (λογικός).<sup>1</sup> Usually only Epictetus 1.16.20 is quoted as a parallel,<sup>2</sup> but we argue that Epictetus 1.16.20 – 21 should be considered to be the parallel. And this passage should not be considered in isolation, but as the climax of the entire preceding *Discourse*. For this reason, we offer an exegesis of the entire *Discourse* to show how the themes discussed by Epictetus build up towards that climax. This will also allow us to draw out the ways in which Epictetus retrieves themes from the broader ancient discourse on what it means to be human.

In this chapter we will also discuss Epictetus 2.9 and Epictetus 1.6 in detail. This is because Epictetus 2.9 is an excellent example of how the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα can be employed in exhortation to genuine humanness. Epictetus 1.6 is another instance in which λογικός language is used. Once more the idea of a human vocation is key to the *Discourse*. Already in Epictetus 1.16 one can detect that there is a certain structure to the human vocation, but Epictetus 1.6 makes this structure explicit and shows that it is a sign production based on insight into God's relation to the world.

The main topic of Epictetus 1.6 and Epictetus 1.16 is divine providence, how humans can recognise it and what they should do based on this recognition.<sup>3</sup> Because divine providence, as insight into God's relation to the world, is central to Epictetus' view of the human vocation, we will analyse two passages (Epictetus 1.12 and 4.7) in which divine providence figures prominently before we come to the discussions of Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. We will begin by contextualising Epictetus, discussing the manner in which we are comparing Paul and Epictetus (section 4.1); our main point is that Epictetus, even though later than Paul, offers

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1 As in previous chapters, except where it could be misleading, we refer to his *Discourses* (*Diatribai* or *Dissertationes*) simply by the numbering following the text of Schenkl 1916 (thus Epictetus 1.16 stands for Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.16). The Greek text cited is Schenkl 1916.

2 Byrne 1996, 366 is an exception.

3 On the importance of the topic of divine providence in philosophical discussion at Rome see Niehoff 2018, 75, who shows that Philo's stay in Rome moved him towards a more Stoic philosophical position (74), not least on the issue of divine providence (74–77).

the best articulation of a broader ancient tradition with which Paul is familiar and with which he interacts. Then we will discuss the first part of Epictetus 2.9 to show how he talks about genuine humanness based on the definition of human beings (section 4.2). Next, we will establish the importance of divine providence for Epictetus' conception of the human calling (section 4.3), as a preparation for the exegesis of Epictetus 1.16 (section 4.4) and the exegesis of the first part of Epictetus 1.6 (section 4.5).

## 4.1 Epictetus in his context and in comparisons with Paul

In this section, we provide some historical context for Epictetus and establish how we are comparing Paul to Epictetus.<sup>4</sup> Epictetus is the most important ancient dialogue partner for Paul when it comes to the connection between the human endowment with reason and the calling of human beings in the world in which they are placed. He is our most important source for an explicit connection between reason language (λογικός) and the idea of a human vocation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A very useful discussion of various models for ways in which Paul and Epictetus have been compared is provided by Vollenweider 2013, section 2.

<sup>5</sup> Epictetus – like Socrates – has left nothing in writing, but in Arrian's recordings of his teaching scholars see an accurate and faithful rendering of the dialogues and teaching conversations of Epictetus himself. This is because when Arrian writes in his own voice (for instance on Alexander's conquest) he uses a completely different style looking back to Attica, while in the *Discourses* we find a language so strikingly reminiscent of the Pauline koine, that scholars could not fail to detect in both the common features of the diatribe style. In the *Discourses*, Arrian seems to record actual teaching discourses of Epictetus; in the *Enchiridion*, Arrian summarises the contents of the *Discourses*. Because of this, one of the leading current scholars on Epictetus, A.A. Long, attributes more source value to the *Discourses* than to the *Enchiridion*, valuable though both are (cf. Long 2002). C.K. Rowe disagrees (2016) but his reasons are unconvincing: the fact that both are written down by Arrian does not make them equal. Though only four of probably eight books of the *Discourses* have been preserved, we can be confident that the missing texts would not substantially alter the picture we get of Epictetus' philosophy. This is because of his repetitive style, which makes him repeat important points in different metaphorical garb. That such repetitions serve a psychagogic function is missed already by ancient critics (e.g. Quintilian on Seneca).

The term diatribe is problematic. As a genre designation it is not useful. Bultmann 1910 has been influential. On the topic see Stowers 1981 and Schmeller 1987 (cf. also his article in the EBR); cf. also Wright 2013, 224. Long objects to the use of "diatribe" to designate a genre and would prefer an approach to the "so-called diatribe tradition" that would recognise it as a "practice, both oral and written, of ethical training to which professional teachers and didactic writers contributed in ways that were both generic and individual" (2002, 49).

There is no question of literary dependence between Epictetus and Paul:<sup>6</sup> rather Epictetus brings to clearest and explicit expression ideas with a wider currency in the ancient cultural encyclopedia.<sup>7</sup> Above all, it is the content of Epictetus' teaching which has impressed the readers of the *Discourses* with its ethical vision and this has always invited comparison with Paul.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most important texts of Epictetus for this study, *Discourse* 1.16, is both among the purple passages of Epictetus scholars,<sup>9</sup> or of Greek philology in general,<sup>10</sup> and one of the most frequently cited parallels for Rom 12.1.<sup>11</sup> But these comparisons centred on the shared use of the language of λογικός and have mostly seen the topic of worship in both Rom 12.1 and Epictetus 1.16. They have not considered the parallel with a view to the connection, among the philosophers, between the human endowment with reason and the human vocation. Thus they have missed the fuller pragmatic import of both passages: there is a protreptic or exhortative function not just in Epictetus but also in Paul. They have also missed the larger cultural, philosophical, and anthropological background in which the language of λογικός functions: the discourse on what it means to be human. Ancient discussions about the nature of human beings embedded in a cosmos of meaning always raise normative claims as well as they seek to describe what human beings are (in their cultural encyclopedia). Because of this normative dimension, such statements are particularly suitable for protreptic discourse<sup>12</sup> and thus precisely for what Paul is doing in Rom 12.1–2:

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**6** Epictetus is born sometime around AD 50 in Hierapolis in Phrygia, peaked with his philosophical teaching in the time of Trajan, and died around AD 125, so Paul cannot have known his teaching. While Zahn 1895 had attempted to show that Epictetus was dependent on Christian tradition, scholars since Bonhöffer 1911 are agreed that Epictetus was not directly influenced by early Christian views (cf. Long 2002, 35).

**7** As can be seen from the material we have presented in section 2.2 and chapter 3.

**8** For Bonhöffer, for instance, Epictetus, among ancient writers, is the one who is closest to early Christianity in terms of the ethical and religious content of his philosophy (1911, 2). For a recent comparison of Paul and Epictetus with regards to ethics cf. Schnelle 2009. Other thematic comparisons focus on the concept of law (so Huttunen 2009) or the notion of person (so Eastman 2017, 29–62).

**9** Cf. the quotation of Epictetus 1.16.20–21 at the beginning of the first chapter in Long 2002.

**10** Cf. its inclusion in the anthology of Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1902, 1.236–7 and 2.202–3.

**11** E.g. Lietzmann, Cranfield, Dunn, Wright, Thorsteinsson, Wolter.

**12** Such as we find in Aristotle's *Protrepticus* (as we can reconstruct it from Iamblichus among others, see section 3.2.1). Sorabji (1993, 15 n. 46) doubts the ascription. A useful definition is "Protreptics ... refers to a literary genre which attempts to persuade the reader of the value of a subject of study and seeks to enthuse him and convince him to 'turn' to it" (DNP, s.v. "Protreptik"), if we broaden it to be a textual function (not just a genre) and if it can refer to the adoption of a way of life, and not merely the study of a subject. Cf. also Berger 1984, 1138–1145.

framing in an inviting manner his own vision of the integrated existence of Jesus-followers. Paul does this in ways that resonate with the ancient anthropological discourse. This contextualisation is needed for a full explanation of Paul's use of reason language.

Epictetus is an important parallel, because he brings to a particularly clear expression anthropological views that many philosophers and indeed much of Greco-Roman culture would have shared. Much of it belongs to the then current Greco-Roman cultural encyclopedia and forms a common stock of ideas and images. As such it would have been familiar to both Paul and his readers.<sup>13</sup> But just as Epictetus is both an exponent of established Stoic doctrine, expressive of wider cultural currents, interacting with other schools,<sup>14</sup> and original,<sup>15</sup> so also Paul, we argue, has drawn on cultural and philosophical discussions about genuine humanness and the human calling, and yet has said something decidedly new. But to understand him at this point, the modern interpreter needs to be attuned to this common stock of anthropological assumptions.

The following points can be cited as support for the claim that ancient philosophy also held views that enjoyed wider cultural acceptance. First, because

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13 Cf. Schnelle 2016, 45: "Fast allen Mitgliedern frühchristlicher Gemeinden in Städten wie Ephesus, Korinth, Philippi, Athen, Rom dürften die philosophischen Hauptströmungen der Zeit (zumindest in rudimentärer Form) bekannt gewesen sein".

14 Epictetus interacts with the Platonic tradition, less with Aristotle's writings, is sympathetic to but not part of Cynicism (cf. Epictetus 3.22), and outrightly rejects Epicureanism. Epictetus responds and relates to other philosophical currents of his day. A. A. Long has renewed scholarly attention to the importance of the Socratic tradition for Epictetus, whose favourite among Plato's early dialogues seems to have been the *Gorgias* (see Long 2002, ch. 3). On the debate about philosophical "eclecticism", reinvigorated with Dillon and Long 1988, see especially ch. 1 on the history of the concept. In any case: the schools had their notable differences, but should not be seen as living in closed compartments. It seems probable that they would have been known for certain distinctive viewpoints by a general audience (an example would be the link between Epicurus and ἡδονή). In some contexts, the differences between the schools would not matter and they might well be put together as just the philosophers. Engberg-Pedersen 2017 seeks to forge ahead with a useful classification of the complex relations among philosophical strands around from 100 BC to AD 100.

15 Bonhöffer (1890; 1894) has treated the question of Epictetus' relation to earlier Stoicism extensively. He argues (1890, v) that Epictetus is an excellent source for early Stoicism on all topics of interest to him. Later scholars find Bonhöffer putting too much emphasis on continuity and downplaying originality (e.g. Long 2002, 66, 93; cf. the criticism of Jagu 1946, 120–122). Current scholarship sees him as being close to early Stoic views in many points, yet innovative in others: the doctrine of the three *topoi* (cf. Epictetus 1.4, 3.2) is new, for example. It is his answer to the question in which sequence the three parts of philosophy – logic, physics, and ethics – should be taught (cf. DL 7.40). An important development is his notion of προαίρεσις. For a characterisation of Epictetus as a "more independent thinker and educator" see Long 2002, 92.

ancient philosophy had cultural prestige, their views would have been of interest to many people.<sup>16</sup> Second, the philosophical schools were ways of life<sup>17</sup> and their topics such as any person with basic education could engage with;<sup>18</sup> and though they held positions that are counterintuitive, they also appealed to common views and gave argumentative weight to common conceptions (ἐννοιαί), as for instance the Stoics in Cicero's *De natura deorum*.<sup>19</sup> Thus, straying too far from common sense on some points would have made little sense for them. They also appealed to general experience, on which they sometimes based their proreptic appeals. Philosophers did hold counter-intuitive positions.<sup>20</sup> In such cases, they might explain the deviation from common sense with an appeal to the befuddlement of the masses that made them miss the truth. But in large measure their basic assumptions about human beings would be broadly shared by wider Hellenistic tradition.

In order to bring out this broader discursive context, our method aims to attend to the larger discursive frame of those texts that are used as parallels. In comparative studies, it is a common place to emphasise that the relata are both to be treated with sensitivity to their own context, setting, genre, pragmatic situation and so on. But attention to wider discourses is sometimes required, and the following readings of Epictetus attempt to do this with regard to the traditions we have already outlined in chapter 3.

To serve this aim, we have chosen the form of something like a running commentary.<sup>21</sup> When we quote texts in extenso it is for the purpose of close comparison. For the quotations we have used Robin Hard's excellent translation.<sup>22</sup> We seek to note thematic overlaps which gain importance through the interconnections they establish among the particular comparanda, which is often missed by those comparisons for which Sandmel's charge of "parallelomania" may be justified.<sup>23</sup>

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16 The relatively meagre impact of institutional philosophy today on how people live might offer a misleading parallel, on which see Schnelle 2016, 21 and Wright 2013, 204.

17 On this theme, see especially Hadot 1995. Rowe (2016) bases much of his argument upon the work of Hadot, but seems to overemphasise the incommensurability between different ways of life and the radical non-intelligibility supposedly bound up with "rival traditions". In critical interaction with Hadot, while still granting the overall point, are Horn 2014 and Cooper 2012.

18 Cf. Wright 2013, ch. 3.

19 Cf. also Epictetus on preconceptions which assure good choice in ethics.

20 Not least in the famous Stoic paradoxes: only the wise man is rich and so on.

21 For an actual commentary, see Dobbin 1998.

22 Hard 2014. It is slightly paraphrastic, but often in a manner that brings out contextual nuances. At some points, we point out more literal renderings.

23 Sandmel 1962.

With these remarks, we turn to the first text analysis.

## 4.2 The definition of human beings and genuine humanness in Epictetus 2.9

In this section we show that the definition of human beings as *θητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα* can be used to speak about being human in a normative sense, to develop an appeal to genuine humanness.<sup>24</sup> In Epictetus 2.9, the fulfilment of the ethical aspiration that goes with human being in the normative sense is discussed and derived from the very definition of human beings. Robin Hard's translation of the title of the *Discourse* is suggestive for our terminology of human vocation or calling: "That although we are unable to fulfil our human calling (*τὴν ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελίαν πληρῶσαι*), we adopt that of a philosopher".

The idea of genuine humanness (or of a human vocation) is expressed in different language in the source texts.<sup>25</sup> Here the word *ἐπαγγελία* has interesting resonances with both genuine humanness and a human vocation. The word *ἐπαγγελία*<sup>26</sup> may simply mean a summons or command.<sup>27</sup> It may be an announcement of an event (such as of a sporting competition) or a "summons to attend" at an assembly. It can also be used more broadly for an "offer" or "promise" of something,<sup>28</sup> possibly as the reason which might attract people to follow the "summons". At this point, the promise verges closely on the language of advertisement (when professionals speak about what they can offer<sup>29</sup>). It appears in inscriptions (e.g. at Priene *ἔβεβαίωσεν δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παραστή[σ]ας μὲν τοῖς ἐντεμενίοις θεοῖς τὴν θυσίαν [IPriene 123]*), where it seems to refer to a promise made to the gods of the shrine, which were fulfilled by offering sacrifices.<sup>30</sup> But it

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. also section 2.2.6.

<sup>25</sup> As we have seen in section 3.2.

<sup>26</sup> We here summarise LSJ's examples.

<sup>27</sup> Somebody sends a messenger with a request for something to someone else, e.g. at Polybius 9.38.2, when the Persian great king Xerxes demands "water" and "earth" (i.e. complete submission on both land and sea) from the Spartans and they "heroically" appeal to Greek liberty and reply with a mock performance based on a literal interpretation of the demand.

<sup>28</sup> Epictetus 1.4.3 uses it in this sense for instance for the "promise of virtue". Paul uses the term *ἐπαγγελία* in the sense of promise (e.g. Rom 4.20; 9.8), but never in the sense of "human vocation" as Epictetus does in 2.9. This is not a problem for our interpretation, however, as we noted in section 1.4. There are different linguistic resources to speak about the human role in the cosmos (see section 3.2).

<sup>29</sup> E.g. in discussion of the advance payment of Sophistic teachers at Aristotle, EN 1164a 29.

<sup>30</sup> Using, we note, the phrase *παρίσταναι θυσίαν τοῖς θεοῖς* as technical term (cf. Rom 12.1).

can also mean “profession” or “undertaking”, either for a concrete job to perform, or more generally, as that which one might reasonably expect the cobbler to achieve as a matter of his professional occupation. It can also be used for political canvassing, or, in medical contexts, to express the curative properties claimed for the drugs. Thus, the ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελία is the positive promise that comes with a human being (in case the person lives up to genuine humanness).<sup>31</sup> It is that which one should be able to expect from a human being one encounters. But it has a nuance of the human “profession” (as a metaphor), or the human role or calling.<sup>32</sup> Having said this, we may now consider the first part of Epictetus 2.9:

(1) Merely to fulfil the role of a human being (ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελίαν πληρῶσαι) is no simple matter. (2) For what is a human being? (τί γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος); “A rational and mortal creature”, someone says (Ζῶον, φησί, λογικὸν θνητόν). First of all, what does the rational element serve to distinguish us from (ἐν τῷ λογικῷ τίνων χωριζόμεθα)? “From wild beasts (θηρίων).” And from what else? “From sheep (προβάτων) and the like.” (3) Take care, then, never to be like a wild beast (μὴ τί πως ὡς θηρίον ποιήσης); otherwise you will have destroyed what is human in you (ἀπώλεσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον), and will have failed to fulfil your part as a human being (οὐκ ἐπλήρωσας τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν). Take care that you never act like a sheep (μήτι ὡς πρόβατον); or else in that way, too, you will have destroyed what is human in you (ἀπώλετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος). (Epictetus 2.9.1–3)

This is a clear expression of a genuine humanness, which is based on the definition of human beings and especially the distinctive feature, the endowment with reason (ἐν τῷ λογικῷ ... χωριζόμεθα). The Stoic definition of a human being can simply be presupposed here (“someone says” – Epictetus and his “diatribal” interlocutor can proceed from this shared base). The definition is then explicated with a view to its ethical import (which is not, for the ancients generally, a projection upon nature, but a raising to explicit awareness of what is “there”). Being λογικός is the specific human capacity which determines their particular purpose and determines what genuine humanness means. The contrast is provided by animals which lack reason and the types of behaviour which are associated with them. What seems to be in view here is the employ-

31 Cf. similarly, Epictetus 2.10.4 speaks of the “calling of a citizen” (ἐπαγγελία πολίτου).

32 Note Hard’s excellent translation at this point. Very relevant here is also the use of ἐπαγγελία in Epictetus 4.8, where the topic is the “profession of a philosopher” (ἡ τοῦ φιλοσόφου ... ἐπαγγελία [4.8.6]; cf. “the requirements of the profession” τὸ ἐπάγγελμα τὸ τοῦ φιλοσόφου [4.8.9]), contrasted with the carpenter and the musician (4.8.4), and that it should not be evaluated by outward appearance (using a carpenter’s axe, singing, long hair and a cloak as indicators [4.8.4]), but with reference to right reason (τὸ ὀρθὸν ἔχειν τὸν λόγον [4.8.12]).

ment of reason to exercise control over the emotions.<sup>33</sup> If you behave like a beast – as, say, tyrants are wont to do<sup>34</sup> – you destroy what is human in you and you do not fulfil the promise or calling of your human nature.<sup>35</sup> The term “human” is here used in an axiologically charged or ethically normative sense. As such it admits of degrees: humans can behave more, or indeed less, in accordance with the promise of their nature, and perhaps even lose their humanness in this ethical sense. By contrast, in the sense of belonging to a class, the term “human” does not admit of degrees.<sup>36</sup> The definition of what humans are with reference to reason serves to support an ethical point, or rather one of “vocation”. While the examples that follow do focus on morality, they are nevertheless conceived as something that is appropriate for the being that one is and as a condition for the fulfilment of one’s purpose within a larger cosmos. And because of this, it is appropriate to identify them as being about genuine humanness.

Epictetus goes on to develop the theme of genuine humanness by explaining what he means with these contrasts to animals:

“When is it, then, that we act like sheep (ὡς πρόβατα)?” When we act for the sake of our belly (τῆς γαστρὸς ἕνεκα) or genitals (αἰδοίων), when we act at random (εἰκῆ), or in a filthy manner (ῥυπαρῶς), or without proper care (ἀνεπιστρέπτως), to what level have we sunk (ποῦ ἀπεκλίναμεν)? To that of sheep (ἐπὶ τὰ πρόβατα). What have we destroyed? What is rational in us (τί ἀπωλέσαμεν; τὸ λογικόν) (Epictetus 2.9.4)

The first example is sheep-like behaviour. Comparisons with animals for ethical discourse are nothing surprising.<sup>37</sup> Epictetus can also use sheep in positive comparisons,<sup>38</sup> but here they are used stereotypically to characterise “sub-human” behaviour. Epictetus presumably thinks of excessive behaviour and does not mean to imply criticism of the behaviour of Cynic philosophers, who might have been more comfortable with following the immediate promptings of the

**33** Cf. the self-mastery reading of Romans by Stowers 1994, who rightly recognises this theme in ancient ethical discourse, but probably overestimates its centrality to the argument of Romans. Cf. also 4 Maccabees’ exposition on that theme applied to Jewish heroes such as Eleazar.

**34** Cf. for instance Plato, *Resp.* 566a.

**35** Cf. also the Latin development in which *humanitas* is becoming a synonym for *clementia* (e.g. Seneca, *Ira* 1).

**36** For this sense, which remains the same for human beings, see for instance Aristotle, *Categoriae* 3b 39 (οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἕτερος ἐτέρου μᾶλλον ἄνθρωπος) where human being is among the main examples for substance (οὐσία) and this point is made as explication of the principle expressed at *Cat.* 3b 34 (οὐσία οὐσίας οὐκ ἐστὶ μᾶλλον οὐσία).

**37** On animals in ethical comparisons see Dierauer 1977. The narrative traditions associated with Aesop furnish many examples.

**38** E.g. Epictetus 1.23.7.

body than polite custom would have thought proper.<sup>39</sup> We note in passing that the first two brush-strokes of his portrait of what he sees as “sub-human” behaviour (τῆς γαστρὸς ἔνεκα, ὅταν τῶν αἰδοίων) seems very similar to Phil 3.19 (ὁ θεὸς ἢ κοιλία καὶ ἢ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν) and might imply there that Paul characterises his “opponents” as failing precisely in the genuine humanness which Paul claims as aspiration for his communities. Implicit in this list, however, is not just a control of the “baser instincts”, but also something like “table-manners” and purposeful living (not “just so” [εἰκῆ]). And we note in particular that the reply to the question of what has been destroyed (τί ἀπωλέσαμεν) is now the rational part of humans (τὸ λογικόν).<sup>40</sup> Thus the rational part can here stand in the same place as human being as the object that is “destroyed” in bad behaviour.<sup>41</sup> This shows that the word λογικός can stand in for “human” in the normative sense.<sup>42</sup> Thus this passage confirms that the language of λογικός can be used in a sense that does not merely classify human beings or reduce them to their distinctive rationality; rather it serves to describe here, not least in a context where the audience is “exhorted” (protreptic discourse, broadly understood), what genuine humanness entails and how it is tied to an idea of human vocation. More than semantic analysis is needed to pick up on these connections. For the second example, Epictetus moves up from what Plato might have characterised as ἐπιθυμία to the θυμός:

And when we behave aggressively (μαχίμως), and harmfully (βλαβερῶς), and angrily (θυμικῶς), and forcefully (ώστικῶς), to what level have we sunk (ποῦ ἀπεκλίναμεν);? To that of wild beasts (ἐπὶ τὰ θηρία). (6) There are, besides, some among us who are large ferocious beasts (μεγάλα θηρία), while others are little ones, small and evil-natured (θηρίδια κακοήθη), which prompt us to say, “I’d rather be eaten by a lion (λέων)!” (7) By all such behaviour, the human calling is destroyed (διὰ πάντων δὲ τούτων ἀπόλλυται ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελία). (Epictetus 2.9.5–7)

The wild beasts, both the lion and other smaller animals of the ferocious kind, serve to illustrate aggression and anger. There are many ways in which one can

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Epictetus 3.22 on the ideal Cynic.

<sup>40</sup> This is another feature that seems to indicate that Epictetus is here close to Plato’s ideas in the *Respublica* or the traditions associated with it.

<sup>41</sup> Compare ἀπώλετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος in 2.9.3 with (ἀπωλέσαμεν) τὸ λογικόν in 2.9.3. The link between genuine humanness associated with the language of ἄνθρωπος in a normative sense and the human vocation becomes apparent when the third object of what is destroyed in bad behaviour is considered: ἀπόλλυται ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελία (2.9.8).

<sup>42</sup> Against Scott 2018, 505–506, who only considers the classificatory sense of being human.

fail to live up to the human calling (2.9.7), as the differences between the large beasts and the little ill-“charactered” (κακοήθη) creatures indicate.

The passage also strongly resonates with Platonic tradition, especially *Resp.* 588b–589d (which we have discussed in section 3.1.7), where the appetitive part was likened to a “beast” (θηρίον), the spirited part to a “lion” (λέων), while the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν) was mapped to an inner human being (ἄνθρωπος). Here in Epictetus 2.9, we likewise have a comparison in which appetitive behaviour (2.9.4) is lined up with “beasts” (θηρία) and “spirited” behaviour (2.9.5), with a lion (λέων). Furthermore, the rational part (τὸ λογικόν) is implicitly likened to “the human”, given that having destroyed “what is human in you” (ἄνθρωπος [2.9.3]) is made parallel to having destroyed “what is rational in us” (τὸ λογικόν [2.9.4]). This confirms that Epictetus is drawing on Platonic as well as Stoic tradition.

Epictetus goes on to explicate the human calling (ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελία) by broadening the discussion to other beings and their “promised” function. In this he is a clear exponent of the kind of wider tradition that one finds in the ἔργον or “function argument” in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>43</sup> The functions are not only assigned to humans, animals, material objects, but even to “logical entities”<sup>44</sup>:

(8) When is a complex proposition preserved as valid (σώζεται συμπεπλεγμένον)? When it fulfils its function (ὅταν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν πληρώσῃ), so that its validity is founded on the truth of the propositions of which it is composed (σωτηρία συμπεπλεγμένου ἐστὶ τὸ ἐξ ἀληθῶν συμπεπλέχθαι). And a disjunctive proposition (διεzeugμένον)? When it fulfils its function. And when are flutes (αὐλοὶ), a lyre (λύρα), a horse (ἵππος), a dog (κύων) preserved? (9) Is it surprising, then, that a human being, too, should be preserved in the same way, and destroyed in the same way (καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὡσαύτως μὲν σώζεται, ὡσαύτως δ’ ἀπόλλυται)? (Epictetus 2.9.8–9)

What Epictetus here calls ἐπαγγελία is what Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7.9–16 calls ἔργον, that is the task, function, or role of a being based on its spe-

<sup>43</sup> At EN 1.7.9–16 (1097b 22–1098a 20), cf. especially the phrase τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (1097b 25–26). The paragraph number 1.7 refers to the Loeb volume; German editions differ, assigning the number 1.6 to this passage (e.g. Dirlmeier 1960). On the function (ἔργον) argument see Lawrence 2001; Lawrence 2006. A precursor to the argument in Plato is *Resp.* 352d–354a (cf. Dirlmeier 1960, 277). Cf. our discussion, in section 2.2.6.3, of Aspasius, who clearly expresses that the calling is based on the peculiar capacity (τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐκάστου ἴδιον [17.32]) and identifies that capacity as humans’ being endowed with reason (λείπεται δὲ [τὸ] ἔργον εἶναι) τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ πρακτικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ζωὴ, τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν [18.1–2]).

<sup>44</sup> On logical entities in Stoicism see Forschner 2018, 31–92, in particular 51–55 (on the συμπεπλεγμένον: 55).

cific capacity. Crucially, as we shall see, Epictetus himself uses ἔργον in this sense in the passage we have claimed to be the best parallel for Rom 12.1, in Epictetus 1.16.20–21. That Epictetus here draws on such a tradition is also clear from the fact that his examples are similar.<sup>45</sup> Epictetus' language of an ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελία reflects the same broad tradition as Aristotle's τὸ ἔργον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. While in the case of Aristotle the notion of a calling is less appropriate, because there the function is not obviously related to a divine intentionality, in the case of Epictetus it clearly is (as we will see in Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16). We further note that the language of preserving (σώζεται) is notable in a connection with what it means to be genuinely human.<sup>46</sup>

Epictetus then goes on to discuss, in terms that resonate closely with the model of the Nicomachean ethics, that human beings strengthen their function precisely by the right actions that correspond to these functions (2.9.19). The examples used are a carpenter and a grammarian; both are also favourite examples of Aristotle.<sup>47</sup> And just as the carpenter stays a carpenter by performing his job,<sup>48</sup> so also with ethical attitudes or comportment, which are thus explications (in rather conventional terms) of what properly is the human calling, as projected on to the ethical plane:

(11) A modest character is preserved likewise by modest actions (τὸν μὲν αἰδήμονα σώζει τὰ αἰδήμονα ἔργα), while shameless actions will destroy it (ἀπολλύει δὲ τὰ ἀναιδῆ); and a faithful character is preserved by acts of fidelity, while acts of a contrary nature will destroy it (τὸν δὲ πιστὸν τὰ πιστὰ καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἀπολλύει). (12) And the opposing characters are destroyed in turn by behaviour of the opposite kind, the shameless (τὸν ἀναίσχυντον) by shamelessness, the disloyal (τὸν ἄπιστον) by disloyalty, the slanderous (λοιδόρον) by slanders, the irascible (ὀργίλον) by anger, and the miser (φιλάργυρον) by the disproportion between what he takes in and what he gives out. (2.9.11–12)

Epictetus makes here a link between actions (ἔργα) and the genuine humanness which they preserve (σώζει), between the character of the human beings and their function. The phrase τὸν δὲ πιστὸν τὰ πιστὰ (sc. σώζει) sounds like a very interesting parallel to Paul's letter to the Romans, when read, as we

<sup>45</sup> Aristotle mentions the flute-player (αὐλητής), and the harper (κιθαριστής), Epictetus flutes and a lyre. In Plato, *Resp.* 352d–354a, the question of the function of a horse (ἵππου ἔργον [352d]) is raised; other examples include the function of a pruning-knife (δρέπανον) or of an eye (so also in Aristotle, *EN* 1097b 31).

<sup>46</sup> This is suggestive in view of Phil 2.12 (τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε) when read with reference to the calling of those in Christ. See also our argument in chapter 5.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the carpenter (τέκτων) at *EN* 1.7.11 with Epictetus 2.9.10 (τέκτων).

<sup>48</sup> Epictetus does not seem to make use here of the distinction Aristotle makes between playing the lyre and playing the lyre well (*EN* 1.7.14).

argue, as being about genuine humanness. Epictetus lists negative characters and their vices in which genuine humanness is lost (ἀπολλύει). As we shall argue, the function of the vice list in Rom 1.29–31 is very similar.

Epictetus goes on to discuss the importance of practice (μελέτην, ἄσκησιν). He illustrates the difference between living and practicing the Stoic doctrine on the goods from merely paying lip service<sup>49</sup> with a good bottle of wine, which can be kept unopened in the cellar to impress the guests every so often, but which truly benefits only the one who actually drinks it. As a further illustration, interestingly, he makes a point about the difference between merely posing as a Jew and actually, through baptism, having become committed to this way of life.<sup>50</sup> Towards the end of the *Discourse*, Epictetus distinguishes between the human calling and that of a philosopher, which seems like a specialisation at a higher level:

And so it is, that when we're not even able to fulfil the function of a human being (οὐδὲ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαγγελίαν πληρῶσαι δυνάμενοι), we want to assume that of a philosopher too (προσλαμβάνομεν τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου), massive burden though that is. It is as though a man who is incapable of lifting ten pounds wanted to lift up the rock of Ajax! (Epictetus 2.9.22)

Epictetus here criticises the pretensions of those who aspire to be philosophers, while they have not even reached what would be appropriate for them as human beings. In another *Discourse*, Epictetus lists being a philosopher among the “specialisations” of the general standard, genuine humanness:

(4) There is, besides, a particular end (ιδία) and a general end (κοινή ἀναφορά). First of all, I must act as a human being (ἴν' ὡς ἄνθρωπος). What does that involve? That one shouldn't act like a sheep, even if one is gentle in one's behaviour, and one shouldn't act injuriously like a wild beast. (5) The particular end relates to each person's specific occupation and moral choice (ἢ δ' ἰδία πρὸς τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα ἐκάστου καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν). The lyre-player (κιθαρῳδός) must act as a lyre-player, the carpenter (τέκτων) as a carpenter, the philosopher as a philosopher (ὁ φιλόσοφος ὡς φιλόσοφος), the orator (ρήτωρ) as an orator. (Epictetus 3.23.4–5)

This passage, which shares much with what we have just seen in Epictetus 2.9, shows that there are different ways of being genuinely human, at the concrete

<sup>49</sup> 2.19.17 (πόθεν αὐτὰ προφερόμενος ἔλεγε; ἀπὸ τῶν χειλῶν αὐτόθεν).

<sup>50</sup> Epictetus 2.9.13–21. This seems like an interesting parallel to Rom 2.25–29, especially 2.9.21 (λόγῳ μὲν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἔργῳ δ' ἄλλο τι), and, in view of the reference to baptism, to Rom 6. Gath-ercole 2017, 282 n. 13 compares the passage to Gal 2.11–14. See Huttunen 2017, 314–319 for a de-tailed argument that the reference in this passage is to Christians.

level where there are occupations.<sup>51</sup> In many ways, Epictetus 2.10 goes over similar ground as Epictetus 2.9, and, like the passage just quoted, distinguishes further roles.<sup>52</sup> In the next section, we will look at the importance of divine providence for the human vocation in Epictetus. We will quote Epictetus 2.10.1–4 as a fitting conclusion to this section and as a transition to the next one. For it combines the emphasis on genuine humanness we have seen in Epictetus 2.9 with the articulations of the human vocation we will find in Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16. Furthermore, it mentions the divine ordering of the world as something that can be discerned by means of the specific human capacity. Finally, it shows how Epictetus can use various metaphors to speak about the human role in the cosmos and how self-knowledge with regards to one’s identity is a basis for the exercise of one’s vocation:

(1) Consider who you are (Σκέψαι τίς εἶ). First of all, a human being (ἄνθρωπος), that is to say, one who has no faculty more authoritative than choice (οὐδέν ἔχων κυριώτερον προαρέσεως), but subordinates everything else to that, keeping choice itself free from enslavement and subjection. (2) Consider, then, what you’re distinguished from through the possession of reason (τίνων κεχώρισαι κατὰ λόγον): you’re distinguished from wild beasts (θηρίων); you’re distinguished from sheep (προβάτων). (3) What is more, you’re a citizen of the world and a part of it (πολίτης εἶ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ μέρος αὐτοῦ), and moreover no subordinate part (τῶν ὑπηρετικῶν), but one of the leading parts (τῶν προηγουμένων) in so far as you’re capable of understanding the divine governing order of the world (παρακολουθητικός γὰρ εἶ τῇ θεῖᾳ διοικήσει), and of reflecting about all that follows from it (τοῦ ἐξῆς ἐπιλογιστικός). (4) Now what is the calling of a citizen (ἐπαγγελία πολίτου)? Never to approach anything with a view to personal advantage, never to deliberate about anything as though detached from the whole, but to act as one’s hand or foot would act if it had the power of reason (ἢ χεὶρ ἢ ὁ πούς λογισμὸν εἶχον) and could understand the order of nature (παρηκολούθουν τῇ φυσικῇ κατασκευῇ), and so would never exercise any desire or motive other than by reference to the whole (ἐπανευγκόντες ἐπὶ τὸ ὅλον). (Epictetus 2.10.1–4)<sup>53</sup>

51 For a similar distinction, cf. the four personae doctrine of Panaetius related at Cicero, *Off.* 1.107–116.

52 E.g. not only one’s role as a human being (ἄνθρωπος), but also as a “son” (υἱός), “brother” (ἀδελφός), “councillor” (βουλευτής) etc.

53 Note that Epictetus 2.10.4 is also an interesting parallel to Rom 12.3–8 (see section 7.3.1). Further, it uses λογισμός for the distinct capacity of human beings. We have already noted its use of ἐπαγγελία. Cf. also our remarks on “sign production” in section 1.4.

## 4.3 Divine providence and the human vocation in Epictetus 1.12 and 4.7

In this section we show how Epictetus thinks about divine providence and why the human role in the cosmos involves recognising it, based on a reading of Epictetus 1.12 and 4.7.

Epictetus 1.12.1–6 makes a clear connection between the belief in providence and the human vocation. Epictetus first lays out the basic questions of Stoic theology, starting with the existence of gods<sup>54</sup> and moving on to special and even individual providence:<sup>55</sup>

(1) With regard to the gods (θεῶν), there are some who say that the divine doesn't even exist (μηδ' εἶναι τὸ θεῖον), while others say that it does exist, but that it is inactive and indifferent, and exercises no providential care (εἶναι μὲν, ἀργὸν δὲ καὶ ἀμελεῖς καὶ μὴ προνοεῖν μηδενός); (2) while a third set of people maintain that it both exists and exercises providential care, but only with regard to important matters relating to the heavens, and in no way to affairs on earth (εἶναι καὶ προνοεῖν, ἀλλὰ τῶν μεγάλων καὶ οὐρανίων, τῶν δὲ ἐπὶ γῆς μηδενός); a fourth set declare that it does take thought for earthly and human affairs, but only in a general fashion, without showing concern for each particular individual (τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, εἰς κοινὸν δὲ μόνον καὶ οὐχὶ δὲ καὶ κατ' ἰδίαν ἑκάστου); (3) while a fifth set, to which both Odysseus and Socrates belonged, say, "Not a movement of mine escapes you".<sup>56</sup> (Epictetus 1.12.1–3)

Epictetus is giving an overview of possible positions, not listing the opinions of the philosophical schools. Nevertheless, the ideas align with the schools as follows:<sup>57</sup> The first group are atheists, which were rare in antiquity. The second group in view are the Epicureans who are the main foil when it comes to discourse on providence.<sup>58</sup> The third group holds a view like Aristotle, where the first intellect does not think about other beings, at least not directly. There is design in the world, arrangement for the preservation of human beings as species,

<sup>54</sup> Like Sedley 2007, xvii n. 4, we will, in our discussion of pagan philosophers, vary between the term "gods" or "God", without implication of monotheism. Despite the word's history and usage, no negative valuation is implied in our use of "pagan".

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Cicero ND 2.3 which contains a division of Stoic theology into four parts: existence (*esse deos*), nature (*quales sint*), administration of the world (*mundum ab his [sc. deis] administrari*), providence (*consulere eos [sc. deos] rebus humanis*), though providence for individuals is not mentioned there.

<sup>56</sup> Quoting the *Illiad*, 10.279–280 (οὐδέ σε λήθω κινύμενος [Odysseus to Athena]).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Gill's note in Hard 2014, 311.

<sup>58</sup> Though the sceptic arguments put forth by the (sceptic) Academic Carneades were influential, the target of this remark is Epicureanism (cf. Long 2002, 186). Cf. Cicero's *De natura deorum* in which book 3 contains a critique of the Stoic position put in the mouth of Balbus.

but not for individuals. The last two positions are Stoic.<sup>59</sup> For Epictetus, human beings are objects of divine solicitude even as individuals. At any rate, finding the right answer to these questions is vital (ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι [1.12.4]) for Epictetus, who urges his readers to examine the soundness of these propositions (ἐπεσκέφθαι, πότερα ὑγιῶς ἢ οὐχ ὑγιῶς λεγόμενόν ἐστιν [1.12.4]). For with these views stands and falls the possibility of exercising a meaningful human function, for which Epictetus here uses the language of “following the gods”:<sup>60</sup>

(5) For if the gods don't exist, how can it be our goal in life to follow the gods (εἰ γὰρ μὴ εἰσὶν θεοί, πῶς ἐστι τέλος ἔπεσθαι θεοῖς)? And if they do exist, but show concern for nothing whatever<sup>61</sup> (εἰσὶν μὲν, μηδενὸς δ' ἐπιμελούμενοι), how again can [that be our goal]<sup>62</sup> (οὕτως πῶς ὑγιῶς ἔσται)? (6) If, on the other hand, they both exist (ὄντων) and exercise care (ἐπιμελομένων), but there is no communication between them and human beings (εἰ μηδεμία διάδοσις εἰς ἀνθρώπους), and indeed, by Zeus, between them and me specifically (εἰς ἐμέ), how even in that case can this idea still be sound (πῶς ἔτι καὶ οὕτως ὑγιῶς ἐστιν)? (Epictetus 1.12.5–6)

Epictetus makes the point that without a belief in divine providence, it does not make sense to speak of a human vocation. The language of “following the gods” is often taken in Greek philosophy as a formula for the goal of human life”.<sup>63</sup> The concrete behaviour which Epictetus commends in this *Discourse* itself is to be able to accept the things that one cannot change and in this to find freedom.<sup>64</sup> In order to fulfil that part of one's vocation, it is necessary, Epictetus thinks, to internalise precisely the right answers to the fundamental theological questions, whether one has (theoretically) achieved sage status, or is still being educated towards the goal:

(7) One who has achieved virtue and excellence (ὁ καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός), after having examined [all these questions]<sup>65</sup> (ἐπεσκεμμένος τὴν αὐτοῦ γνώμην), submits his will to the one

<sup>59</sup> Cf. also the intermediate position expressed in Iamblichus' *Protrepticus*.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Long 2002, 186. For a discussion of similar motif (ἔπεσθαι θεῶ) in Philo, *Decal.* 97–101, see van Kooten 2008, 190–191.

<sup>61</sup> The Greek μηδενὸς might also just refer to human beings, and be translated as “no one”. Hard's translation presupposes the general Stoic tenet that no detail escapes divine administration, even beyond the human sphere.

<sup>62</sup> A translation closer to the Greek wording would be: how will it be a sound [proposition] (namely that the goal is to follow the gods).

<sup>63</sup> As Gill notes in Hard 2014, 311. Cf. Epictetus 1.20.15.

<sup>64</sup> The prime example is Socrates when he faces death, and yet is not in “prison” because he is there willingly (1.12.23).

<sup>65</sup> A more verbal translation would be after having examined one's judgment or opinion (γνώμη) (on these matters).

who governs the universe (ὕποτέταχεν τῷ διοικοῦντι τὰ ὅλα) just as good citizens submit to the law of their city. (8) And one who is still being educated (παιδευόμενος) should approach his education (ἐπὶ τὸ παιδεύεσθαι) with this aim in view (τὴν ἐπιβολὴν ἔχων): “How may I follow the gods in everything (πῶς ἂν ἐπιόμην ἐγὼ ἐν παντί τοῖς θεοῖς), and how can I act in a way that is acceptable to the divine administration (εὐαρεστοίην τῆ εἰαῖ διοικήσει), and how may I become free (ἐλεύθερος)?” (Epictetus 1.12.7–8)

Epictetus here acknowledges a difference between those who have achieved it, and those who are still on their way towards the goal. But for both the insight into the “divine administration”, into the providential arrangement of the cosmos, is the basis of their human vocation. This insight is to be pursued in every aspect of daily life. For Epictetus, the scope of one’s vocation is comprehensive. It can be described as submitting to the whole and being well-pleasing (εὐαρεστοίην)<sup>66</sup> to the “divine administration”.

The following points summarise our discussion of Epictetus 1.12: First, Epictetus connects a theological frame of providence with the idea of a human vocation. Second, Epictetus uses different language and imagery to express the idea of a human vocation. Third, Epictetus may concretise the idea of a human vocation to certain behaviour in particular situations (in 1.12, accepting what cannot be changed). Fourth, in order to be able to live (or to learn to live) one’s calling, it is essential to have insight into God’s relation to the world, namely to understand that there is divine providence for human beings and that they correspondingly have a role in the cosmos.

These conclusions are underwritten by the second passage we consider for the connection between cosmic order and human purpose. In Epictetus 4.7, human beings are described as being able to see that there is providence in the way the world is “governed” and to respond appropriately (in their disposition). Having discussed the “madness” of the so-called Galileans<sup>67</sup> who are thereby driven to react indifferently to the things (guards, swords etc.) that usually strike fear in the heart of those under some powerful person, Epictetus makes the point that it should be possible to arrive at such a fearless attitude by a rational insight:

Well then, if madness can cause people to adopt such an attitude (οὕτως διατεθῆναι) towards these things, and habit too, as in the case of the Galileans (οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι), can’t reason

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Rom 12.1–2 (εὐάρεστος).

<sup>67</sup> Hengel 1961, 60–61 argued that in Epictetus 4.7.6 the designation οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι is used for Zealots; Stern 1974–1984, 1.541 expresses doubt about this view. More recent scholarship (Voltenweider 2013, 125; Gill in Hard 2014, 341; Gathercole 2017, 280–282; Huttunen 2017, 310–314) sees here a reference to Christians, which in our view is the most likely option.

and demonstration (ὑπὸ λόγου δὲ καὶ ἀποδείξεως) teach (μαθεῖν) people that God has made all that is in the universe (ὁ θεὸς πάντα πεποίηκεν τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ), and the universe itself as a whole (αὐτὸν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον), to be free from hindrance, and self-sufficient (ἀκώλυτον καὶ αὐτοτελεῖ), and has made all the parts of it to serve the needs of the whole (τὰ ἐν μέρει δ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς χρεῖαν τῶν ὅλων)? (Epictetus 4.7.6)

For Epictetus, it is possible by reason to learn that God is the creator of the world, which is ordered and a whole, and as such has a purpose (to be free and self-sufficient). Furthermore, all the parts within that larger cosmos are “made” for a purpose within the larger whole (ὁ θεὸς πάντα πεποίηκεν ... πρὸς χρεῖαν τῶν ὅλων).<sup>68</sup> This includes all the animals in the cosmos: non-human animals are made for humans, but human beings are unique in not only having a purpose within and for the larger whole, but in that they are both able and “called” to understand the “divine governing order”:

Now, all other animals have been excluded from being able to understand the divine governing order (τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα πάντα ἀπήλλακται τοῦ δύνασθαι παρακολουθεῖν τῇ διοικήσει αὐτοῦ), but the rational animal (τὸ δὲ λογικὸν ζῷον) possesses resources that enable him to reflect on all these things (ἀφορμὰς ἔχει πρὸς ἀναλογισμὸν τούτων ἀπάντων), and know that he is a part of them, and what kind of part, and that it is well for the parts to yield to the whole (ὄτι τε μέρος ἐστὶ καὶ ποῖόν τι μέρος καὶ ὅτι τὰ μέρη τοῖς ὅλοις εἴκειν ἔχει καλῶς). (Epictetus 4.7.7)

For Epictetus, all parts of the universe have a role to play in virtue of the kind of beings they are. A human being is a rational animal (λογικὸν ζῷον) and as such can gain rational insight (ἀναλογισμὸν) into the “governing order” (διοίκησις) of the larger whole of which it is a part. For Epictetus, human beings as a rational animals have the capacity to develop the insight into the order of the whole and the ability to act on the basis of this insight. But it is still something that needs to be realised, a vocation to which one has to aspire. Being human implies having the starting point (ἀφορμὰς πρὸς) towards this.<sup>69</sup>

To conclude: Epictetus 1.12 and 4.7 show how the recognition of divine providence is possible on the basis of the kinds of beings humans are as ζῶα λογικά

<sup>68</sup> This is of course bed-rock Stoicism, as one can see, for instance, in Marcus Aurelius 8.19: “Ἐκαστον πρὸς τι γέγονεν, ἵππος, ἄμπελος. τί θαυμάζεις; καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐρεῖ: πρὸς τι ἔργον γέγονα, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ θεοί. σὺ οὖν πρὸς τί; (“Everything has come into being for a purpose – a horse, say, a vine. Does this surprise you? Even the sun will say, ‘I came into being for a purpose’: likewise the other gods. For what purpose, then, were you created?” [transl. M. Hammond]).

<sup>69</sup> For Paul, as we will see in the next chapter, the transformation brought about in the Christ event and appropriated in baptism amounts to a change of conditions in which the human calling can finally be realised.

and that it is necessary to recognise it in order to be able to fulfil the human calling. Divine providence for human beings is a key aspect of Epictetus' theology and it is central to his account of the human calling. At this point, we can embark on our reading of Epictetus 1.16, where divine providence is a crucial aspect of how Epictetus describes the human vocation.

#### 4.4 Being λογικός and the human vocation: A close reading of Epictetus 1.16

In this section we provide a full exegesis of Epictetus' *Discourse* 1.16.<sup>70</sup> We show that the use of λογικός in 1.16.19–21, an oft cited parallel for λογικός in Rom 12.1, should be understood as the distinctly human capacity on which a human vocation is based. Such an exegetical approach is necessary for two reasons. First, since Epictetus 1.16.19–21 is the climax of the entire *Discourse*, and thus its meaning is charged by the themes developed in the preceding text (1.16.1–18), it is necessary to attend to these themes in the order of the text. Second, we are only able to show how Epictetus' discussion is rooted in the larger tradition on what it means to be human and the human role in the cosmos, if we can point out for individual themes how they belong to this wider ancient discourse. In this way we can show that and how Epictetus is also a spokesman of wider traditions on which Paul could draw and, as we shall argue, does draw as he wrestles with the implications of the Christ event and what it implies for fulfilling the human vocation within the inaugurated new creation.

##### 4.4.1 Epictetus 1.16.1–18

The *Discourse* is entitled “On Providence” (Περὶ προνοίας).<sup>71</sup> This gives an important clue to several of the topics which appear in the discourse. We have seen in the last section that the recognition of divine providence is particularly important for Stoic accounts of the human vocation.<sup>72</sup> Clearly, if no purpose and design

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<sup>70</sup> Readers of Epictetus may be grateful that there exists a commentary on the first book of the *Discourses* (Dobbin 1998). We have benefitted from its learnedness and, where this is needed for our argument, have expanded some of its densely stated points. We disagree with the view Dobbin seems to favour in his reading of 1.16.20.

<sup>71</sup> The titles were probably given by Arrian (cf. Dobbin 1998, 65).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. also Epictetus 2.14.11, where existence and providence are the first things to be learned for philosophers, i.e. Stoics (cf. Long 2002, 186).

is to be found in the institution of the larger cosmos, then there is also no place for a human purpose within such a larger cosmos, based on that order.

Epictetus starts with a common observation in ancient anthropological discourse,<sup>73</sup> namely that animals come to the world readily equipped with bodies that keep them warm, armed and that allow them to nourish themselves from early age, while humans need all these things (1.16.1). But these features of design among non-human animals,<sup>74</sup> Epictetus argues in common with Stoic tradition,<sup>75</sup> are to be evaluated as signs of providence for humans, as they exist and were created for the sake of humans and for their service (τὰ γὰρ οὐκ αὐτῶν ἔνεκα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν γεγονότα [1.16.2]). It would be cumbersome, if humans would have to provide clothing and food for their sheep and donkeys (1.16.3). Epictetus then illustrates the way in which nature has equipped the animals for our service with an image from the domain of military service:

But as with soldiers (στρατιῶται) who report to their generals ready [for service]<sup>76</sup> (ἔτοιμοί εἰσι τῷ στρατηγῷ), already equipped with shoes, clothes, and armour (ὑποδεδεμένοι ἐνδεδυμένοι ὀπλισμένοι) – for it would be a sorry state of affairs if the commander (χιλίαρχον) had to go around seeing to the clothes and shoes of all the troops of his regiment – so nature likewise has created the animals, which are born for service, (ἡ φύσις πεποίηκε τὰ πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν γεγονότα) ready prepared (ἔτοιμα) and ready equipped, so that they require no further care (παρεσκευασμένα μηδεμιᾶς ἐπιμελείας ἔτι προσδεόμενα). (Epictetus 1.16.4)

Even the livestock has come into being for a certain service (πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν).<sup>77</sup> In the bodily features and equipment that can be seen in animals humans could once more learn, Epictetus tells us, what they could have learned in many other places as well: things have been providentially and divinely arranged for our benefit. The ease of husbandry given that no further care is required (μηδεμιᾶς ἐπιμελείας ἔτι προσδεόμενα) is explicated with a brief comparison: see how a small boy with a stick can keep control of an entire flock of sheep (1.16.5).

This is the objective situation as it presents itself to the Stoic vision. It would be toilsome if we had to care for the sheep and donkeys and so we could be

<sup>73</sup> Cf. section 3.1.4.

<sup>74</sup> In view are especially animals used for husbandry. On ancient teleological arguments see the rich material collected in Pease 1941. An excellent description of ancient arguments from design is Sedley 2007.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Cicero, ND 2.64, 2.160; for further texts, see SVF 2.1152–1167.

<sup>76</sup> Hard's translation is paraphrastic but gets the sense right. We sometimes indicate with square brackets the words supplied in the translation which do not correspond directly to Greek words but seek to clarify contextual or co-textual information.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Epictetus 2.10.3 quoted above.

grateful for the way in which things have been arranged for our benefit. There is a certain order of things, we can discern it, and we should be grateful for how it is beneficial to us humans.

The world may exhibit features of design that benefit all species alike, such as the regularity of the seasons or the general habitability of the earth. But the examples Epictetus chooses deliberately focus on humans and what is beneficial for them.<sup>78</sup> While the claim that the other animals are made for the use of humans invites the label of “anthropocentrism”<sup>79</sup>, the agricultural usefulness of animals is here a basis from which Epictetus argues that the world was made with the benefit of humans in mind. The animals that serve for human sustenance have a purpose, for which they have been made even though they may never be aware of it. But human beings have the capacity to recognise, with the example to which Epictetus draws our attention, that there has been an arrangement on the part of the whole and that a specific part of the whole, the animals, have a purpose<sup>80</sup> and that this purpose relates to humans, enabling them in turn to live and do what they are called to do within the cosmos. While animals, for the Stoics, behave directly as nature has seen fit to instruct them,<sup>81</sup> and for which purpose she has accordingly equipped them, the human capacity and purpose includes a qualitatively novel element: the possibility of variety in behaviour, of (seemingly<sup>82</sup>) unpredictable behaviour, of choice. And with choice comes the possibility of error and wrongdoing. They can choose not to exercise their capacities or exercise them in the wrong ways. Based on their recognising and understanding a certain feature about the world,<sup>83</sup> they should be moved to an appro-

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**78** Cf. Dobbin 1998, who briefly comments on Epictetus’ choice of examples in 1.16 that they “have the advantage of touching mankind more nearly” in that they argue not just “from design”, but “from god’s solicitude for mankind specifically” (159–160). Dobbin draws attention to several texts we have already discussed in section 4.3 (see also Long 2002, 186).

**79** Cf. Sorabji 1993 for the ancient debates and modern viewpoints.

**80** Here humans look at a part of the world that does not include them and find a certain purpose. When they look towards themselves, they are able to gauge an altogether higher purpose. This self-knowledge or self-awareness, is one of the fundamental points for Epictetus, in keeping with the famous γνώθι σαυτὸν (on which see Betz 1990).

**81** The concept of “instinct” has Stoic precursors, cf. Dierauer 1977, 217.

**82** We cannot enter here the discussion of Stoic determinism (cf. the excellent discussion by Bobzien 1998). The basic idea seems to be that “Zeus” already calculates in his world plan that the irrationally driven human fool will deviate from what proper reason would dictate, such that the fool acts according to the divine plan precisely by deviating from proper reason, being at the same time unfree and yet fulfilling the higher purpose, while the wise man follows his own reasonable choice freely, and Zeus can let him do his own thing, because, being wise, he does the one thing that proper reason would have mandated anyway.

**83** Here the utility of the “ready-made” livestock.

ropriate response: the proper human response to the recognition of such a feature would be gratitude specifically for this feature. And they should then exercise their gifts to express that understanding in an act of gratitude, for which speech or even song is a possible realisation.<sup>84</sup> But most often humans do not react in this manner:

(6) But as it is, instead of giving thanks (εὐχαριστεῖν ἐπὶ τούτοις) for this [order of things],<sup>85</sup> which saves us from having to take as much care (ἐπιμέλειαν ἐπιμελούμεθα) of our animals as we do of ourselves, we go so far as to complain to God about our own lot (ἐφ' αὐτοῖς ἐγκαλοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ)! (7) And yet, by Zeus and all the gods, a single one of these [blessings] of nature (ἐν τῶν γεγονότων) would suffice (ἀπὴρκει) to make anyone recognize (πρὸς τὸ αἰσθῆσθαι) that there is a divine providence (τῆς προνοίας), if he were duly reverent and grateful (τῷ γε αἰδήμονι καὶ εὐχαρίστῳ). (Epictetus 1.16.6–7)

The proper response in this case would be to give thanks (εὐχαριστεῖν ἐπὶ τούτοις) for the particular arrangement of self-care among animals that is the immediate topic.<sup>86</sup> And though Epictetus has, so he might say, given a clear example as evidence of the benevolent arrangement for humans, they do not merely fail to be duly grateful, but even blame God, and precisely on account of how things have been set up for them. (The nexus between εὐχαριστεῖν ἐπὶ τούτοις and ἐφ' αὐτοῖς ἐγκαλοῦμεν<sup>87</sup> is tighter and more concrete than the translation can suggest.) And since it is clear that the given example was just one among many, and any other thing might have told the same story, Epictetus then recasts the point in more general language: any one thing that has come to be (ἐν τῶν γεγονότων)<sup>88</sup> should furnish sufficient proof for the perception of divine providence, i.e. of an arrangement beneficial to humans, taking care of them. Human beings, Epictetus seems to suggest, could look at any particular part of the universe, grasp the way in which it has been planned and designed, the rationality which has been operative in it, and then articulate this appropriately. And not just in an intelligent and accurate manner, as “neutral” statement about

<sup>84</sup> On gratitude in Epictetus see Klauck 1989.

<sup>85</sup> We have indicated paraphrastic elements in Hard's translation in square brackets.

<sup>86</sup> The translation of Robin Hard expands some of the brief and elliptic phrases of Epictetus in a helpful way, generally. In this case, the change between the particular feature discussed and the more general and abstract proposition which would include the particular case is slightly blurred by these explanatory additions. The immediate generalisation follows in the next paragraph of Epictetus.

<sup>87</sup> The word could be as strong as charging and blaming in a court setting: “prosecute”, “take proceedings against” (LSJ).

<sup>88</sup> Here again the addition “blessings” in Hard's translation is useful and correct, but the Greek seems to be stronger and wider in scope: any created thing could be consciously focused on.

it, but in gratitude, that is, in an ethically relevant manner, given the close nexus between being and meaning, that which is true and that which is good in much ancient thought.<sup>89</sup> The appended qualifier τῷ γε αἰδήμονι καὶ εὐχαρίστῳ wards off the reply that many may fail to see it or fail to be grateful, explaining that this is because they are often not behaving as they should given who they are as human beings.

Further expanding upon the point that almost everything could point to providence<sup>90</sup>, Epictetus branches out to further yet related examples of providence, explicitly mentioning that it is in small matters that one can recognise design:

And I'm not thinking for the moment of anything grand (τὰ μεγάλα), but the mere fact that milk is produced from grass, and cheese from milk, and wool (ἔρια) from an animal's hide; who brought these things to be, who conceived the idea of them? (τίς ἐστὶν ὁ πεποιηκὼς ταῦτα ἢ ἐπινενοηκὼς) "No one", someone says. Oh what amazing imperceptiveness, what impudence (ὡ μεγάλη ἀναισθησίας καὶ ἀναισχυντίας)! (Epictetus 1.16.8)

It is not that the great things (τὰ μεγάλα)<sup>91</sup> could not be praised, but they are not what is here illustrated. Epictetus focuses on the marvels of the food chain, by which ingeniously things are transformed into each other, in a way apt, ultimately, for human consumption, and crafted precisely to fit the bodily needs of human beings, which are implicitly mentioned earlier in the discourse ("our own needs" [1.16.3]). It is in this way that the whole is shown to be arranged such that the part is cared for, enabled for its own proper task. By speaking of wool (ἔρια), and hence clothing, Epictetus revisits the theme of the "poor" human bodily equipment we have seen several times already as a fixed topic of the wider discourse on what it means to be human. Such thematic overlap strengthens our confidence that 1.16 indeed firmly belongs to that discourse.<sup>92</sup> Again, as above, the language of "creator" is used (ὁ πεποιηκὼς) and the language related to the stem νοεῖν (ἐπινενοηκὼς). While one does not want to

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**89** Cf. what we have noted already about how the so called normative fallacy put forward by Hume, Kant and others in their wake, while true for many particular cases, fails as a general rule precisely because it begs the relevant metaphysical question (*petitio principii*): that things are neutral before humans project significance is precisely the modern view which many ancients did not share.

**90** Cf. the ἐν τῶν γεγονότων above (1.16.7).

**91** Dobbin (1998, 159) takes Epictetus to have in mind here "cosmic phenomena, such as the interchange of the elements fire, air, earth, and water". Epictetus' example of cheesemaking involved a humbler sort of transformation.

**92** That humans are bodily weak (relative to other animals) may also relate to the discussion, below, of the reference to Epictetus' lameness (1.16.20).

enter the business of philological stamp-collecting<sup>93</sup>, the *voûç* lexeme family is significant here, especially in view of the parallels in Romans.<sup>94</sup> Something like an Epicurean “diatribal” interlocutor answers the rhetorical question of who made this or who came up with this in the negative (“no one”).

Epictetus chooses his examples carefully. The example of the food chain here offers more than first meets the eye:<sup>95</sup> For the livestock, willy-nilly and un-awares, are involved in the first step of turning grass into milk (they need to chew to begin with) and for the second step it requires a human cheesemaker. But for both humans and sheep the world needs to exhibit the structure and features which are the conditions of possibility for both of these processes (grass to milk, and milk to cheese). In both the “earthly” agents (sheep or humans) cooperate with the overall designer “Zeus”. The sheep do what they do and eat the grass and never once are aware of what they are doing reflexively. But they fulfil their role and in this way enable humans to benefit from the process. The human farmer or cheesemaker is needed in the second process, milk to cheese. At times, the farmer will be aware of what he is doing (after all, he *can* talk about it) and how he uses the tricks of his trade. But he might usually be so absorbed in the activity that he fails to notice, or he might be occupied about other things. Similarly, the cheesemaker, as a craftsman, employs a sort of “technical reason”<sup>96</sup> and he uses language to communicate about it. And he might even, from time to time, turn to think about why it is that the world is such that his activity of cheese making, which he mostly takes for granted, is even possible, something the sheep never will. All this is to point out, that while on one level, obviously

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**93** The term has been coined by Osborn. Osborn 1993, 19 criticises Norden’s argument (1913, 33) for the need to assume oriental origins for the idea of “knowledge of God” based on the observation that the words *αγνώστος* or *γνώσις* never occur linked to *θεός* in Plato as “a splendid example of philological stamp-collecting, which ignores the central principle that different words can mean the same thing and that the same words can mean different things” (19 n. 65). Edwards 2002, 7 glosses Osborn’s point as the “compilation of parallel vocabularies”.

**94** Rom 1.19–20. In Epictetus 1.16.8, the subject of the activity of *ἐπινοεῖν* is the “creator”, while humans are the subject of *νοούμενα καθορᾶται* in Rom 1.20. However, the purposeful action of the “creator” is a condition for the possibility of humans discerning such purposes in what has been made.

**95** Here we draw out the way these examples work in more depth than explored by Dobbin’s commentary. The images Epictetus uses express his point clearly and accessibly for broader audiences. Hence they can more plausibly be taken to express a broadly shared stock of ideas than similar thoughts presented in more technical language.

**96** Cf. the same distinction in Epictetus 1.16.18.

God is in view in the “Epicurean” question who made this (τίς ἐστὶν ὁ πεποιηκὼς ταῦτα), clearly, the human or farm animal factor belongs into the equation.<sup>97</sup>

The reply to the challenge is an exclamation, which centres on two faults, the first being the lack of (proper) perception (ἀναισθησία), recalling the perception (αἰσθέσθαι) mentioned just before.<sup>98</sup> The second is the shamelessness (ἀναισχυντία) involved in making the assertion “no one”.<sup>99</sup> Such language draws attention, explicitly, to the normative dimension of this discourse, which is implicitly there even without such language.

While the benefit to humans in the case of cheese is obvious, there are other little things in the universe which seem completely useless:<sup>100</sup>

Well now, let’s put aside (ἀφῶμεν) the main works of nature (τὰ ἔργα τῆς φύσεως), and consider those of a more incidental character (τὰ πάρεργα αὐτῆς θεασώμεθα). (Epictetus 1.16.9)

As Epictetus has not discussed the main works of nature earlier in this *Discourse*, ἀφῶμεν seems to signal to the “diatribal” interlocutor: the preposterousness of the claim that “no one made this” could easily be seen by looking at the main works, but we will even be able to show it by looking at the bywork.<sup>101</sup> We further note here two points. First, the phrase works of nature (τὰ ἔργα τῆς φύσεως) is significant. φύσις here could be taken in the everyday sense of nature (or slightly personified “Nature”), but for the Stoics it can stand for God, the master craftsman.<sup>102</sup> Just as every other being so God, too, has his ἔργον, and it goes without saying that he is eminently rational. Second, while there is an unemphatic use of θεασώμεθα in the sense of merely considering the next topic, the language of “seeing” should here perhaps be taken in a more weighty sense, as one of the characteristic tasks of humans.<sup>103</sup> With this we turn to the examples, which start with the male beard:<sup>104</sup>

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**97** This also has to do with the way immanent world rationality is bound up with human rational agents in the Stoic world picture.

**98** 1.16.7.

**99** We note that we are here in similar territory to the one Paul explores increasingly in Rom 1.18–32.

**100** The really challenging question for Stoics to explain is the problem of things that are bad, harmful or evil (cf. SVF 2.1168–1186). On evil within Stoicism see Long 1968.

**101** For examples cf. Dobbin 1998, 160.

**102** Cf. the phrase ἔργα ἐφ’ ἡμῶν τῆς προνοίας (1.16.15).

**103** As we have seen in chapter 3 and 2.2.6.3. Cf. also our discussion of Epictetus 1.6 in section 4.5.

**104** On the beard in antiquity cf. DNP, s.v. “Bart”.

Could anything be more useless (ἀχρηστότερον) than the hairs on one's chin? And yet, hasn't nature put these, too, to the most appropriate use that she could (συνεχρήσατο καὶ ταύταις ὡς μάλιστα πρεπόντως ἐδύνατο)? Hasn't she distinguished (διέκρινεν) the male from the female (τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ) by this means? (11) With regard to each of us, doesn't nature cry out aloud from afar, "I'm a man (άνήρ), and it's [with that in mind that you should approach me]<sup>105</sup> (οὕτω μοι προσέρχου, οὕτω μοι λάλει) – no need to enquire any further (ἄλλο μηδὲν ζήτει), the signs are plain to see (ἰδοὺ τὰ σύμβολα)". (Epictetus 1.16.10–11)

While anyone is familiar with the warming benefits of fur, facial hair seems to be useless (and thus a waste). But here, too, Epictetus finds something that has been made fittingly (πρεπόντως) by nature, and which in turn, as will become apparent shortly, is the basis for a human response. In what may be admission of partial uselessness, the words as best she could (ὡς ... ἐδύνατο) point to the common topic of nature doing the best with limited resources: just as the demiurge had to work with limited material in the *Timaeus*, so, for the Stoics, did nature on the grand and the small scale. The differential hair growth will have appeared obvious and given the strong insistence upon the roles of male and female in Greco-Roman ethos, but in particular among the philosophers,<sup>106</sup> anything that contributes to the maintenance of that difference will seem to serve a useful function. But the distinction between male and female as a topic is noticeable especially with a view to Rom 1.26–27. There is a semiotic function of the beard: at once it tells something about the nature of the thing, here the man, which in turn implies for those who see the sign both how to approach (οὕτω μοι προσέρχου, οὕτω μοι λάλει) and how not to (ἄλλο μηδὲν ζήτει).<sup>107</sup> The sign in question, the growing of a beard, is natural in a sense in which knowing how to sing Greek epos is not – one does not have to learn to do it. But interestingly one does have a choice: one could shave the beard or not, and further could keep it in different ways.<sup>108</sup> Given the cultural assumptions in Greco-

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**105** "In this way approach me, in this way talk to me."

**106** Though cf. the views of Epictetus' teacher Musonius Rufus (lecture 4), who argues that their virtue and education should be the same. For a critical discussion of Musonius' views see Nussbaum 2013.

**107** We are not sure whether this remark alludes to ancient Greek sexual practice where the "loved" boy, as soon as he grows hair should be "off limits" (cf. Halperin 2012, 701: "males were customarily supposed to be sexually desirable to other males mostly in the period of life that extended from around the start of puberty to the arrival of the full beard"). If so, such an allusion to same-sex sexual relations would be an oblique parallel to Rom 1.26–27. On same-sex sexual relations cf. the literature cited in Halperin 2012 (and cf. Verstraete and Provençal 2005).

**108** On the beard as note of the philosophers, see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 72.2.

Roman tradition the beard perfectly illustrates what Epictetus wants to say: the cock cannot choose not to sport his comb, but a man could shave away his beard permanently, even though that would seem “unnatural”. The example, however, also already prepares for what is to come, because just as one might cut off one’s beard, against “nature”, human beings could choose not to do what would (or at least should) come naturally: to recognise the works of providence and to be moved to praise. And as he comes to the female examples, Epictetus is sure to tell us explicitly about these ethical implications:

And again, in the case of women (γυναικῶν), just as nature has mixed a gentler note into their voices (ὥσπερ ἐν φωνῇ τι ἐγκατέμιξεν ἀπαλώτερον), she has likewise deprived them of [facial]<sup>109</sup> hair (τὰς τρίχας ἀφεῖλεν). Oh no, the human animal should rather have been left without any distinguishing signs (ἀδιάκριτον ἔδει τὸ ζῶον ἀπολειφθῆναι), so that each of us would have had to proclaim, “I’m a man!” (κηρύσσειν ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ὅτι ἀνὴρ εἰμι) (13) But what a fine sign this is, how fitting and how distinguished (πῶς δὲ καλὸν τὸ σύμβολον καὶ εὐπρεπὲς καὶ σεμνόν)! How much finer than a cock’s comb, and more majestic than a lion’s mane! (14) It is thus only right to preserve the signs that have been conferred on us by God (διὰ τοῦτο ἔδει σῶζειν τὰ σύμβολα τοῦ θεοῦ); we should neither cast them aside nor, so far as possible, confuse the sexes that he has distinguished (μὴ συγχεῖν ὅσον ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς τὰ γένη τὰ διηρημένα). (Epictetus 1.16.12–14)

For women the absence of the beard is the sign. And the function is to signal (“herald”) from afar something about the identity of the concerned person. It relieves of the communicative need to declare one’s sex so humans can speak about other matters. The example thus parallels the livestock fending for itself.

Epictetus goes on to laud the aesthetic merits of the beard, adding further evaluatively charged terms (εὐπρεπὲς καὶ σεμνόν) which, again, raise to explicit awareness the ethical context present throughout. He even takes a stand on the question of the relative beauty of the male markers of identity across species. Both the cock and the lion are perhaps notable for their virility and both show clear markers of their sexual identity. Both presumably would not dream about removing them. And with an implicit *a fortiori*, Epictetus seems to say, so also humans must keep (σῶζειν) the natural signs of God (τὰ σύμβολα τοῦ θεοῦ), both the particular markers of sex, and as an immediate generalisation which Epictetus does not here spell out, in general the things God has assigned. The sexual distinction must be maintained as conforming to nature and divine design.

To summarise what Epictetus does with this example of the beard: first, he discusses a feature of the world in which divine providence for human beings

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109 Added from context by Hard.

can be discerned; second, he draws out implications for human behaviour which must appropriately respond to the features as so discerned. With a view Rom 1.26–27 (see chapter 5) it is significant that Epictetus chooses an example which emphasises a certain distinction between male and female to make his point.

Epictetus has only been recounting some of the bounties of providence for humans, and there could be many more:

Are these the only works of providence from which we benefit (Ταῦτα μόνα ἐστὶν ἔργα ἐφ’ ἡμῶν τῆς προνοίας)? No, what words could be enough to praise or proclaim them as they deserve (τίς ἐξαρκεῖ λόγος ὁμοίως αὐτὰ ἐπαινέσαι ἢ παραστήσαι)! For if we had any sense, what else should we do, both in public and in private, than sing hymns and praise the deity, and recount all the favours that he has conferred (εἰ γὰρ νοῦν εἶχομεν, ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ εὐφημεῖν καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας)! (Epictetus 1.16.15)

There are countless works of providence that humans could discover (ἔργα ἐφ’ ἡμῶν τῆς προνοίας). No human λόγος would be enough to fully express all of them and to equal them. The word λόγος here resonates at several levels. It may refer both to the words used in an actual hymn and to the reason which is capable of grasping the things which deserve praise. It may also hint at the divine reason which would be required to be equal to the task. Humans are to praise the works of providence (ἐπαινέσαι).<sup>110</sup> The language of παραστήσαι (sc. τὰ ἔργα) may also be interesting to ears tuned to Rom 12.1.<sup>111</sup>

Epictetus makes a clear statement of what humans should do vis-à-vis the providentially arranged cosmos. He describes in what the human task consists, using the language of singing<sup>112</sup> hymns and worship or praise (ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ εὐφημεῖν καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας).<sup>113</sup> And the entire *Discourse* 1.16 has placed these words in a context that strongly determines how we should read them.

**110** This is standard terminology in rhetorical contexts, cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorics* for the γένος ἐπιδεικτικόν at 1358b (ἔπαινος, ἐπαινοῦσιν).

**111** While παραστήσαι may simply be used as a word like “establish” in a communicative sense, it also recalls setting up things that are presented, e.g. votive offerings or gifts brought to a temple etc. In Rom 12.1b the act of παραστήσαι involves more than words, but the act is itself communicative and as we argue precisely in terms of a sign production of how God has acted in Christ.

**112** Cf. ᾄδειν in 1.16.16.

**113** The language of ἐπεξέρχεσθαι (going through the items one by one) and χάριτας come together in an interesting blend. While the former may recall the lecture room, the latter is here used for the instances the deity has provided favours, and thus send the mind to the shrine.

The phrase ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ seems to include all hearers and thus Epictetus makes it clear that this is a calling that applies to all human beings, the farmer just as much as the philosopher.<sup>114</sup> The phrase emphasises both individual and communal aspects.<sup>115</sup> The formulation ἄλλο τι ... ἢ could be taken in more than one way. First, the ὑμνεῖν should take more space from other activities that fill the hours of the day. Second, ὑμνεῖν is the activity which should be performed while going about the other activities of the day. The immediately following passage supports the second interpretation:

As we dig and plough and eat<sup>116</sup> (οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας καὶ ἀροῦντας καὶ ἐσθίοντας), oughtn't we to sing this hymn of praise to God (ἄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν θεόν): (17) "Great is God, for having provided us with these implements with which we till the earth (μέγας ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἡμῖν παρέσχεν ὄργανα ταῦτα δι' ἧν τὴν γῆν ἐργασόμεθα); great is God for having given us hands (μέγας ὁ θεός, ὅτι χεῖρας δέδωκεν), and the power to swallow, and a stomach, and enabling us to grow without being conscious of it (αὔξεσθαι λεληθότως), and to breathe while we're asleep." (18) This is what we should sing on every occasion (ταῦτα ἐφ' ἐκάστου ἐφυμνεῖν ἔδει), and also the most solemn and divine hymn to [thank God] for having given us the power to understand these things and to make methodical use of them (ταῦτα ἐφ' ἐκάστου ἐφυμνεῖν ἔδει καὶ τὸν μέγιστον καὶ θεϊότατον ὕμνον ἐφυμνεῖν, ὅτι τὴν δύναμιν ἔδωκεν τὴν παρακολουθητικὴν τούτοις καὶ ὁδῶ χρηστικῆν). (Epictetus 1.16.16–18)

In this passage, Epictetus pictures a farmer at work or someone eating while at the same time singing a hymn (ἄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν θεόν) which articulates the features of providence that usually pass unnoticed (λεληθότως). Epictetus points out these features which are involved in precisely the situations in which the farmer or the person eating find themselves. In principle, they would have what it takes to understand this too and be moved to the right attitude of gratefulness. It is a reflective sort of gratitude based on an understanding of how divine providence is involved in the everyday situation.<sup>117</sup>

In this passage we see that Epictetus 1.16 uses the language of singing a hymn as a metaphor that describes what the human calling consists in. It is an excellent metaphor to describe the dimension we call sign production: the hymn articulates the understanding about God's relation to the world that can be had, expressing it in gratitude and praise towards God. Epictetus uses the image of singing a hymn to describe the appropriate human stance in every di-

<sup>114</sup> As becomes immediately clear in 1.16.16.

<sup>115</sup> Engberg-Pedersen 2000 has set great store by the social dimension of Stoicism.

<sup>116</sup> Oddly Hard's translation renders ἐσθίοντας with "sow", which we have changed to "eat".

<sup>117</sup> Cf. ἐφ' ἐκάστου "in every situation" (1.6.18).

mension of life, not just when the vocal chords are actively engaged in actual singing.

The following considerations support this interpretation. First, it becomes apparent from Epictetus' use of the image, since literal singing should be hard while one is eating (ἐσθίοντας [1.16.16]). Second, the Stoics emphasise right intention and the mindset involved in an action (such that the right aiming at the execution of an action is important, not the success or the results of these actions).<sup>118</sup> Third, the comprehensive scope of the application of the image of singing (ἐφ' ἐκάστου [1.16.18]) suggests that Epictetus speaks of something that concerns all of life, and not just specific acts of "worship".

We further note the following points on this passage. First, the mention of the hands (1.16.17) for which humans are grateful once more picks up a topic central to the ancient discourse about being human.<sup>119</sup> Second, this capacity to understand is described as a divine gift (τὴν δύναμιν ἔδωκεν) which deserves gratitude. It is also the gift which is needed be appropriately and reflectively grateful. Third, Epictetus reserves the greatest hymn (τὸν μέγιστον ὕμνον) for the capacity of human beings to understand things. Epictetus distinguishes the practical ability methodically to use tools and hands to provide sustenance (ὁδῶ χρηστικὴν [sc. δύναμιν]) from the ability to follow the ways of God in providing for humans (δύναμιν ... παρακολουθητικὴν τούτοις).<sup>120</sup>

This capacity whereby humans discover and follow the course set out by nature is of signal importance for the elucidation of the human vocation by Epictetus. Human beings as λογικὰ ζῶα are made in such a way that they can understand the world in its relation to God and respond in appropriate sign production which expresses this understanding.

#### 4.4.2 Epictetus 1.16.19 – 21

And with this we come to the climax of the entire discourse, what we argue is the most important parallel to Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1, which we are now finally in a position to place in its own context and as part of its wider discourse. (We will quote the Greek in a segmented and numbered form for ease of reference in our analysis.)

<sup>118</sup> On this point see Forschner 2018, 183–4. Cf. Cicero, *Fin.* 3.22.

<sup>119</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. on this παρακολουθητικὴ δύναμις the passages already quoted (Epictetus 2.10.3, 4.7.7) and below (Epictetus 1.6.13). See also Dobbin 1998, 161.

(19) Well then, since most of you have become blind,<sup>121</sup> isn't it necessary that there should be somebody to take your place, and sing the hymn of praise to God on behalf of one and all? (20) And what else can I do, lame old man that I am, than sing the praise of God? If I were a nightingale, I would perform the work of a nightingale, and if I were a swan, that of a swan. But as it is, I am a rational being, and I must sing the praise of God. (21) This is my work, and I accomplish it, and I will never abandon my post for as long as it is granted to me to remain in it; and I invite all of you to join me in this same song.

- 19a τί οὖν; ἐπεὶ οἱ πολλοὶ ἀποτετύφλωσθε,  
 19b οὐκ ἔδει τινὰ εἶναι τὸν ταύτην ἐκπληροῦντα τὴν χώραν  
 19c καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ᾄδοντα τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν θεόν  
 20a τί γὰρ ἄλλο δύναμαι γέρων χλωλός  
 20b εἰ μὴ ὕμνεῖν τὸν θεόν;  
 20c εἰ γοῦν ἀηδῶν ἦμην,  
 20d ἐποίουν τὰ τῆς ἀηδόνας,  
 20e εἰ κύκνος,  
 20f τὰ τοῦ κύκνου.  
 20g νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι·  
 20h ὕμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν.  
 21a τοῦτό μου τὸ ἔργον ἐστίν,  
 21b ποιῶ αὐτὸ  
 21c οὐδ' ἐγκαταλείψω τὴν τάξιν ταύτην,  
 21d ἐφ' ὅσον ἂν διδῶται,  
 21e καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ᾠδὴν παρακαλῶ. (Epictetus 1.16.19–21)

For our reading of this passage in view of it being a parallel to Romans 12.1, we argue the following points:

1. In *Diatr.* 1.16.20, Epictetus uses the language of λογικός to refer to the specifically human capacity, on which a human calling is based.
2. In *Diatr.* 1.16.19–21, Epictetus speaks of his own calling as a human being, as a ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν. However, he does not just speak about his own particular vocation, but about what he sees as the vocation of every human being, i.e. the human vocation.
3. We should distinguish language used to state *that* there is such a vocation, from language used to describe in what actions this vocation consists. In *Diatr.* 1.16.19–21, Epictetus uses both. He uses the image of singing a hymn to God as a metaphor that describes the human vocation as a sign production.
4. The entire passage serves a protreptic function.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. also Epictetus 1.6.42 (οἱ μὲν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν δόντα ἀποτετυφλωμένοι μηδ' ἐπιγινώσκοντες τὸν εὐεργέτην) which is an oblique parallel to Rom 1.21 (ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία).

#### 4.4.2.1 λογικός as the distinctive capacity

As to the first point: Epictetus refers to himself as λογικός (20 g), in contrast to other animals, the nightingale and the swan (20c–f). This shows that λογικός is used to denote the capacity which distinguishes human beings from other animals (ἄλογα<sup>122</sup>). It refers both to reason and speech. That both animals which Epictetus mentions in 20c–f are birds makes it possible to compare the song of the birds<sup>123</sup> with the singing of a hymn of praise. In 21a Epictetus states that he has a task in life, a vocation, an ἔργον. In 21a Epictetus identifies the “singing” (ὕμνεϊν) of 20 h as his task. This task is based on his distinct capacity as λογικός. The contrast with the two other birds (20c–f) shows that what Epictetus describes as his ἔργον in 21a is in fact his human vocation. For in line with the Stoic (and more broadly shared) assumption that each being has a distinct purpose, he details for the nightingale and the swan that they also have an ἔργον, and that merely by being a bird of this or that kind, it should have to perform the work appropriate to that kind of bird: τὰ τῆς ἀηδόνοιο ποιεῖν (20d) amounts to the same thing as τὸ ἔργον τῆς ἀηδόνοιο ποιεῖν (so also 20 f).<sup>124</sup>

#### 4.4.2.2 A human vocation

As to the second point: Epictetus performs an act of exhortation or invitation (παρακαλῶ)<sup>125</sup> in 21e. He invites all his hearers to join him in the song (ὠδή) that he has identified as his vocation as a human being. By using this language, he connects that to which he invites his hearers with the key metaphor of ὑμνεῖν, not only in 20b and 20 h, but also earlier in the *Discourse* (cf. 1.16.15–19). While in practice Epictetus’ hearers belong to the well-situated, in principle all human beings are addressed, because all human beings are λογικὰ ζῶα, and on this the vocation is based. Thus, Epictetus speaks about his own vocation and about the human vocation. His particular calling as a philosopher is to exhort human beings to their calling as human beings. While many are blind to the providence that could be “seen” (19a), Epictetus fills out the human role in the cosmos

122 Cf. DL 7.61.

123 The nightingale (ἀηδόνοιο) has the meaning of “singer” right in her name and is well known to the ancients for her singing: Pliny the Elder describes her singing (*Nat.* 10.81–82). There is even a fragment by Democritus where she is praised as the inventor of song. Cf. DNP, s.v. “Nachtigall”.

124 Which Hard’s translation rightly adds as paraphrase (“I would perform the work of a nightingale”). Merely rendering this as “I would do what is appropriate to being a nightingale” (so Wolter, see our discussion in section 6.3.2) misses the contextual nuance.

125 Cf. Rom 12.1.

(19b), even “singing” on behalf of others (19c); he will do this for as long as he lives (21b–d). But that others fail to do as he does, does not mean that it is not their calling too, merely that they fail to live up to their calling as human beings. The use of the definite article in ἄδοντα τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν θεόν (19c) further supports our reading: this seems to indicate more than that he has already mentioned this topic. Rather it recalls the key metaphor of the entire *Discourse* used to describe the life that fulfils the purpose of human beings in the cosmos. Thus, when Epictetus describes this as his task (τοῦτό μου τὸ ἔργον) as a human being (λογικός) he is also making a statement about the task of all human beings.

The reading we present here is in strong disagreement with an interpretation to which Dobbin’s commentary seems inclined.<sup>126</sup> Dobbin notes that the “self-reference” to his lameness (20a) “has a note of Socratic irony to it” and then refers “for the role [Epictetus] deems appropriate for his age” to a line of Hesiod:<sup>127</sup> ἔργα νέων, βουλαὶ δὲ μέσων, εὐχαὶ δὲ γερόντων (“Deeds are for youth, counsel for middle years, prayers for old age”).<sup>128</sup> This could suggest an interpretation, in which what Epictetus describes as ὑμνεῖν τὸν θεόν (20b) would not be a description of a human vocation, but only something appropriate for Epictetus himself, or for someone in a similar situation, either because the movements of the body are restricted (χλωδός), or because of old age (γέρων). The remark τί γὰρ ἄλλο δύναιμι (20a) would amount to a statement asserted without reservation: for someone in my situation, only ὑμνεῖν remains (where ὑμνεῖν is taken to refer only to literal singing or, as in the line from Hesiod, prayers [εὐχαί]). This interpretation might claim the following two points as support.

First, Epictetus may hint at the end of life in 21c<sup>129</sup> and 21d (ἐφ’ ὅσον ἂν διδῶται) and thus speak about his own situation as an old man.

Second, the choice of the birds as examples might hint at death as well. The deliberate choice of swan (κύκνος [20e]) might be an allusion to the end of life by recalling the idea of the dying swan’s song.<sup>130</sup> Perhaps also the fact that the nightingale sings at night might be associated with death.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Dobbin’s remark is brief and may not fully reflect his own position. We have adduced further possible arguments for the position, but will refute them.

<sup>127</sup> Dobbin 1998, 161.

<sup>128</sup> Porphyry, *Abst.* 2.18 (148.13 ed. Nauck) = frag. 321 ed. Merkelbach/West. The translation is as in Dobbin 1998, 161.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. the use of similar language at Epictetus 1.9.16.

<sup>130</sup> This idea appears, literarily, in the myth of Cycnus, the son of Sthenelus (Ovid, *Met.* 2.367–380). It can be found in the writings of the Stoic Chrysippus (τὸ κύκνειον ἄσας ἀποθανεῖν [SVF 3, p. 199 l. 43]); Pliny the Elder expresses his doubts about the idea at *Nat.* 10.63. The idea of the swan sensing its approaching death and singing a final song already appears in Plato’s *Phaedo*

Thus, on this interpretation Epictetus would not be speaking about a human vocation. But this interpretation is wrong for the following reasons.

First, precisely because a human being is defined as a rational being, the physical condition of his body is not for Epictetus a defining factor. For a Stoic, the body belongs to external things, its condition cannot be determinative for ethical action.<sup>132</sup>

Second, there is indeed, as Dobbin notes, Socratic irony in 20a, but we suggest it works in such a way as to goad the hearers into action. It is a sly way of suggesting an (in truth) irrelevant limitation that ultimately is supposed to goad the hearers. The point is not that what he means by ὑμνεῖν is for those too old to act – to the contrary, they might go about it with all the energy of youth (and to this he exhorts [21a]). This rests on understanding that ὑμνεῖν also functions as a metaphor (see below).

Third, the comparison with the nightingale and the swan (20c–f) is concerned just with the different species as such and does not mention any kind of difference of age or strength. While the concept of the dying swan’s song is part of the cultural encyclopedia, there are no indications in the text that this concept should be activated here.<sup>133</sup> The far more plausible reading is that birds are used to illustrate the place of humans in the *scala naturae*<sup>134</sup> and that their singing fits nicely with Epictetus’ use of the image of humans singing hymns, in which they can articulate as praise their insight into divine providence.

Fourth, the language of not leaving (ἐγκαταλείπειν) one’s post (τάξις [21c]) emphasises the task that one has as long as one lives (21d), irrespective of age.<sup>135</sup> Epictetus uses such military language to encourage young men not to commit suicide, because it would be an abandonment of the place and task to which they were assigned (ἀνάσχεσθε ἐνοικοῦντες ταύτην τὴν χώραν, εἰς ἣν

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(84e–f), a work Epictetus certainly knew (cf. Long 2002, 158–159); he alludes to it at Epictetus 1.12.23. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates discusses the immortality of the soul as he faces his own death. As part of a discussion on the immortality of the soul it can also be found in Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.73. Cf. DNP, s.v. “Schwan”.

**131** On the nightingale as understood within the ancient encyclopedia cf. DNP, s.v. “Nachtigall”. (Note that it is mentioned at Plato, *Phaed.* 85a.)

**132** Cf. for example Epictetus 1.9.11 on the body; further Epictetus 1.29.16 (Socrates).

**133** If the *Phaedo* is a text to which Epictetus alludes in Epictetus 1.16, then one should note that Socrates compares himself with the swans (who are associated with Apollo [85b]) in respect of his own service to the God (ὁμόδουλος τε εἶναι τῶν κύκνων καὶ ἱερὸς τοῦ αὐτοῦ θεοῦ [85b]). For his service to Apollo, see our discussion of the passage in Plato’s *Apology* in section 6.3.1.1.

**134** Cf. also our discussion of Epictetus 1.6 below.

**135** That is: as long as it is the will of God that one should remain (cf. Epictetus 1.9.16).

ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς ἔταξεν [1.9.16]).<sup>136</sup> This is made absolutely clear, when, in a free paraphrase of what is said in Plato's *Apology*,<sup>137</sup> where Socrates rejects the suggestion that he will be allowed to save his life, if he stops with his examination of the people of Athens (cf. Epictetus 1.9.23), Epictetus puts the following words in the mouth of Socrates:

How absurd of you to think that if one of your generals had stationed me in a post (εἰ μὲν με ὁ στρατηγὸς ὁ ὑμέτερος ἔταξεν εἰς τινα τάξιν), I should hold it, and defend it, preferring to die a thousand deaths (μυριάκις πρότερον αἰρεῖσθαι ἀποθνήσκειν) rather than abandon it (ἐγκαταλιπεῖν), but if God has stationed us in some position and laid down rules of conduct<sup>138</sup> (εἰ δ' ὁ θεὸς ἐν τινι χώρᾳ καὶ ἀναστροφῇ κατατέταχεν), we should abandon it (ἐγκαταλιπεῖν δεῖ ἡμᾶς)! (Epictetus 1.9.24)

Thus, while the language of remaining in one's post is used to speak about remaining in life, it is precisely language that points to the fact that one has a purpose and a task in life, a vocation, irrespective of age.

Finally, as argued above, it is the fact that Epictetus invites all his hearers to join him (21) which makes it clear that he does not only speak about his own calling, but about the vocation of all human beings as λογικοί. This rules out the alternative interpretation.

#### 4.4.2.3 Description of the vocation as a sign production

As to the third point: Epictetus uses language that implies that human beings have a vocation in 19b (χώρα), 21a (ἔργον), and 21c (τάξις). He describes that vocation in terms of the metaphor of singing a hymn to God (19c, 20b, 20 h). Saying that ὑμνεῖν is a metaphor does not mean that actual singing and praising is excluded. Our notion of sign production captures the sense in which such ὑμνεῖν is a human action that is expressive of the insight which is possible because of the human capacity to discern God's providential works and which represents an appropriate response. In these terms, Epictetus here describes the actions in which the human vocation consists as a sign production. Throughout the *Discourse*, Epictetus has explained the distinctly human capacity to discern God's relation to the world and the human task to articulate this insight and to adopt a stance of

<sup>136</sup> They should wait for the signal that God gives them, when their service (ὕπηρεσία) comes to an end (Epictetus 1.9.16).

<sup>137</sup> Cf. our discussion of Plato's *Apology* in section 6.3.1.1 (where Socrates uses the word λατρεία [to Apollo] for this task of examining the people of Athens).

<sup>138</sup> Hard's translation for ἀναστροφή might not emphasise enough that this is about a basic orientation of one's life (cf. Gal 1.13).

reflective gratitude. He has densely expressed this description in the metaphor of ὑμνεῖν.<sup>139</sup> And it is this sense which our notion of sign production here seeks to capture. With this we are already touching upon the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus, which we will discuss more fully in section 4.5 on Epictetus 1.6.

#### 4.4.2.4 Protreptic function

As to the fourth point: at the end of the *Discourse*, Epictetus invites all his hearers (παρακαλεῖν) to join him in the same song (21e). But because he has used the image of singing a song to God as a metaphor that describes in what the human vocation consists, he is effectively inviting his hearers to fulfil their vocation as human beings, to become genuinely human. Protreptic speech seeks to convince hearers of the value of some activity and to win them over, to “turn” them to it.<sup>140</sup> Often such speech is used to motivate for philosophy (and then it presents philosophy as the highest human aspiration). In *Diatr.* 1.16.19–21, Epictetus seeks to exhort his hearers to become genuinely human and to fulfil their role in the cosmos. This aspect of the text is very important for the comparison with Rom 12.1–2, which also has a protreptic function (Rom 12.1 [παρακαλεῖν]).

#### 4.4.3 Conclusion for Epictetus 1.16

We have thus shown through a close reading of the entire *Discourse* 1.16, that Epictetus uses the language of λογικός in Epictetus 1.16.20 to refer to the distinctly human capacity on which a human vocation is based. We have seen that he uses a variety of language to express the idea that human beings have a vocation and to describe in what this vocation consists. We have suggested that the notion of sign production captures a crucial aspect of Epictetus’ conception of the human vocation. We will substantiate this claim further in the next section, where our analysis of Epictetus 1.6 shows that the human vocation has a certain structure in Epictetus and that sign production is a key part of that structure.

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<sup>139</sup> The influence of Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus* should not be underestimated (the final lines: οὔτε βροτοῖς γέρας ἄλλο τι μείζον οὔτε θεοῖς, ἢ κοινὸν αἰεὶ νόμον ἐν δίκῃ ὑμνεῖν [38–39]); but also its emphasis on providence). For text and commentary see Thom 2005. Cf. also the discussion in Forschner 2018, 156–161.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. DNP, s.v. “Protreptik”.

## 4.5 The structure of the human vocation: A close reading of Epictetus 1.6

We have seen that Epictetus is a clear proponent of the idea that there is a human vocation, that is, that there is a certain task in life for human beings, that this task is something which falls to human beings as such, and that this task is assigned to them by God (“Zeus”). It is also clear that this idea is closely linked with the idea of the human endowment with reason. This is what makes humans distinct and gives them the potential for fulfilling that vocation.

Our reading of Epictetus 1.6 will show that there is also a clear structure to that human vocation.<sup>141</sup> We can describe this structure as consisting of two parts, which we may label “seeing the truth” and “responding appropriately (in sign production).” Both parts are based on the right exercise of human reason. Using their reason rightly, human beings are able to perceive the truth of God in relation to the world and to respond appropriately in actions that reflect this understanding (i.e. in producing signs). In this section, we show that the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus is a sign production based on an understanding of God in relation to the world.

It is important to work out this structure of the human vocation, because we will show in our reading of Romans that Paul not only uses the idea of a human vocation, but that there is a similar structure to the human vocation in Romans (as can be seen particularly in Rom 1.18–32, especially 1.18–21, see section 5.2).

Epictetus 1.6 is once more a text about divine providence, as reflected in the title.<sup>142</sup> To be more precise, it is a text about the human task to praise divine providence (ἐγκωμιάσαι τὴν πρόνοιαν [1.6.1]) based on what one sees in the cosmos (Ἀφ’ ἐκάστου τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ γινομένων [1.6.1]).<sup>143</sup> Epictetus names two conditions that are needed for this task: the ability to understand the things that have come to be in their relation (δύναμιν ... συνορατικὴν τῶν γεγονότων ἐκάστω)<sup>144</sup> and the disposition to be grateful (τὸ εὐχάριστον). This already ap-

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**141** This structure can also be seen in the earlier material we have discussed in 2.2.6.3, but in Epictetus 1.6 it is expressed clearly and explicitly.

**142** Περὶ προνοίας.

**143** The opening line merely asserts that it is easy to do so, given certain conditions, not that all human beings would be charged to do so. But the context of the entire discourse will support the view as stated here.

**144** Hard translates this as “the capacity to view each particular event in relation to the whole”. Long 2002, 175 aptly paraphrases this as the “capacit[y] to take a synoptic view”. Oldfather renders it as “the faculty of taking a comprehensive view of what has happened in each individual instance.”

proaches the two parts of the structure of the vocation as described above, the “seeing of the truth” and the “responding appropriately”, but the response is named only indirectly, by the disposition which enables it. Epictetus explains that without the former one would not be able to see the usefulness of things (οὐκ ὄψεται τὴν εὐχρηστίαν τῶν γεγονότων [1.6.2]), while without the latter one would still not be moved to respond by giving thanks for them such as they are (οὐκ εὐχαριστήσῃ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς [1.6.2]<sup>145</sup>). Then Epictetus begins to discuss a type of example for his general point that one can discern the usefulness of things, namely the fact that many things in the cosmos are suited to other things in the cosmos (“co-adaption”<sup>146</sup>). If God (ὁ θεός) had made colours, but not given anyone the ability to see them (δύναμιν δὲ θεατικὴν αὐτῶν), it would be as pointless as, having given the ability to see, he had made nothing which falls under its scope (1.6.3).<sup>147</sup> This raises the question who is responsible for the “harmonious” fit (Τίς οὖν ὁ ἀρμόσας τοῦτο πρὸς ἐκεῖνο κάκεινο πρὸς τοῦτο [1.6.6]). An argument from design follows: in the domain of human arts, once we find a sheath perfectly fitting a blade and vice versa, we expect this to be the work of a craftsman and not to have come about for nothing (τεχνίτου τινὸς πάντως τὸ ἔργον, οὐχὶ δ’ εἰκῆ κατεσκευασμένον [1.6.8]). The work shows something of its maker – and never should this be more apparent, than when the work is sight and things to be seen and indeed light itself (ἄρ’ οὖν τούτων μὲν ἕκαστον ἐμφαίνει τὸν τεχνίτην, τὰ δ’ ὄρατὰ καὶ ὄρας[ε]ις καὶ φῶς οὐκ ἐμφαίνει [1.6.8]).

Given that one of the consequences of the inappropriate response of the human beings referred to in Rom 1.18 – 32 is presented as deviation from the sexual behaviour that Paul assumes to be in line with the created order and its male plus female make-up (Rom 1.26 – 27), it is interesting to note that Epictetus uses the example of sexual intercourse between male and female and the desire for it as a further illustration which reveals the divine artist (τὸ δ’ ἄρρην καὶ τὸ θῆλυ καὶ ἡ προθυμία <ῆ> πρὸς τὴν συνουσίαν ἑκατέρου καὶ δύναμις ἡ χρηστικὴ τοῖς μορίοις τοῖς κατεσκευασμένοις οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἐμφαίνει τὸν τεχνίτην; [1.6.9]). Animals also procreate and make use of the way in which they are fittingly made

**145** We might expect Epictetus to say that without the former, one would not see what one has to see, but without the latter, even if we had the former, we would still not do the latter. This would be closer to the logic of Rom 1.19 – 21, where Paul assumes that the people he describes would be able to see, and yet are not responding appropriately. But Epictetus merely considers the case of one that has neither ability (ὁ δ’ οὐκ εὐχαριστήσῃ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς οὐδ’ ἂν <ῆδη> [1.6.2]).

**146** For the term see Dobbin 1998, 105.

**147** This first example is clearly one of “co-adaption”, but it also further elucidates what we have identified as the first part of the structure of the human vocation, namely the human ability to “see”.

for each other, but only humans can understand the order and arrangement intended by their maker.<sup>148</sup>

The reflection on the remarkable constitution of the human mind serves as the final teleological argument for divine providence (1.6.10). Then Epictetus begins to discuss the key difference that emerges with human understanding. Having surveyed features that require divine providence as an explanation, he says:<sup>149</sup>

Well now, is it in us human beings alone that these things<sup>150</sup> come about? Many, indeed, in us alone, those of which the rational animal has a special need (ὡν ἐξαιρέτως χρειάν εἶχεν τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον), but you'll find that we share many of them with the irrational animals too (καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἄλογα). (13) Is it the case, then, that they too understand how things come about (καὶ παρακολουθεῖ τοῖς γινομένοις ἐκεῖνα)? No, not at all, since use (χρῆσις) is one thing and understanding (παρακολούθησις) is another. God had need (χρειάν εἶχεν)<sup>151</sup> both of these creatures, which merely make use of impressions (χρωμένων ταῖς φαντασίαις),<sup>152</sup> and of ourselves, who understand the use of them (ἄλλο ἐκείνων χρειάν εἶχεν ὁ θεὸς χρωμένων ταῖς φαντασίαις, ἡμῶν δὲ παρακολουθούτων τῇ χρήσει). (14) For them, it is enough merely to eat, drink, take rest and procreate, and perform such other functions as are appropriate to each (τάλλ' ὅσα ἐπιτελεῖ τῶν αὐτῶν ἕκαστον),<sup>153</sup> whereas for ourselves, who have been further endowed with the faculty of understanding (οἷς καὶ τὴν παρακολουθητικὴν δύναμιν ἔδωκεν),<sup>154</sup> (15) that is no longer enough, but unless we act in a methodical and orderly fashion, and in accordance with our own specific nature and constitution (ἀκολούθως τῇ ἑκάστου φύσει καὶ κατασκευῇ πράττωμεν), we shall no longer attain our proper end (τοῦ τέλους τευζόμεθα τοῦ ἑαυτῶν). (16) For in so far as beings have different constitutions, their works and their ends will differ too (ὡν γὰρ αἰ κατασκευαὶ διάφοροι, τούτων καὶ τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὰ τέλη). (Epictetus 1.6.12–16)<sup>155</sup>

**148** Similarly Cicero, ND 2.128, cf. Dobbin 1998, 105.

**149** Epictetus 1.6.12–22 is discussed by Long 2002, 174–175. Dobbin 1998, 102 notes that 1.6.12–22 is a “protreptic section, based on the powers of the mind and the place this makes for man in the natural order.”

**150** That is, those that require providence as an explanation.

**151** Cf. on God having “needs”, Long 2002, 174.

**152** For Epictetus’ emphasis on the right use of impressions as his “cardinal rule of life” cf. Long 2002, 85.

**153** Hard’s translation with “function” is not strictly implied in the *semantics* of the terms translated, but we find it suitable for the import of the passage. Dobbin 2008, for instance, renders ἐπιτελεῖ with “satisfies”. This difference is similar to the distinction between τέλος as the goal and τέλος as the termination of something.

**154** The Greek formulation is more “personalist” than Hard’s rendering suggests (cf. Long 2002, 174). For the mental faculties as God’s gift to humans, see Epictetus 1.1.12.

**155** Translation R. Hard.

The world is, for the Stoics, providentially governed and humans have a role in it that requires not just using what their constitution consists in, but understanding it and making use of it according to that understanding. While the other animals all serve their function within the grand cosmic plan in a way that does not require them to follow what is happening, for humans it is different. Their function does not merely require them to follow what is happening. Rather, their being able to understand the rational order of the Stoic cosmos is a crucial element of their human vocation. In Epictetus 1.6.16 we have a clear and explicit instance of the widely shared ancient principle that the constitution of a being is an indication of what they are made for and in what their specific activity consists.<sup>156</sup> Once more Epictetus uses the idea of an ἔργον<sup>157</sup> for each being. The formulation “according to one’s nature” (1.6.15), reminiscent of one of the variants of the Stoic telos formulae,<sup>158</sup> indicates the importance of this principle for Stoic thought.<sup>159</sup> For Epictetus, humans alone have the capacities to not only make use of their mental impressions (1.6.13) as other animals do but also to understand this use:

So where a being’s constitution is adapted for use alone, mere use suffices; but where a being also has the capacity to understand that use (οὐ δὲ καὶ παρακολουθητικὴ τῆ χρήσει), unless that capacity<sup>160</sup> be properly exercised in addition, he will never attain his end (τούτω τὸ κατὰ τρόπον ἂν μὴ προσῆ οὐδέποτε τεύξεται τοῦ τέλους). (Epictetus 1.6.17)

Within the cosmic order, all beings are made for a task or function,<sup>161</sup> but there is one kind of being, humans, whose purpose is not just to recognise and understand these purposive structures but to articulate them. With this we come to the clearest articulation of the structure of the human vocation:

But God has brought the human race into the world to be a spectator of himself and of his works, and not merely to observe them, but also to interpret them. (τὸν δ’ ἄνθρωπον θεατὴν εἰσήγαγεν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐ μόνον θεατὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξηγητὴν αὐτῶν.) (Epictetus 1.6.19)

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**156** Cf. Long 2002, 174: “Nature ... comprises the constitutions of living creatures, making them capable of performing the functions specific to their identities.”

**157** Dobbin 1998, 109 rightly notes that Epictetus uses a form of the function (ἔργον) argument we have noted above.

**158** The material is presented in Rieth 1934. For recent literature see Forschner 2018, 178 n. 74.

**159** Cf. Long 2002, 174: “To live ‘in accordance with nature’ is to play one’s specific part within the structure of the cosmic plan.”

**160** Oldfather translates τὸ κατὰ τρόπον as “the principle of propriety”.

**161** Cf. the formulation ἕκαστον κατασκευάζει ... ὡστ[ε] in 1.6.18.

Here we see the two-part structure of the human vocation very clearly.<sup>162</sup> The purpose of human beings is explained as, first, seeing God and his works (θεατῆς αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν αὐτοῦ). But then, second, it is to interpret his works (ἐξηγητῆς αὐτῶν). Humans are to articulate the insight into God's relation to the world in words, actions and relations that signify their understanding.<sup>163</sup> They are to produce signs of their understanding of God. Thus, we see here that for Epictetus the human vocation has the structure of a sign production based on the understanding of God.

Epictetus continues to expound these two sides of the human vocation, in terms that make it clear that Epictetus belongs to the wider tradition on the human vocation we have studied in the last chapter:

It is thus shameful (αἰσχρόν) for a human being to begin and end where the irrational animals do. Rather, he should start off where they do and end where nature ended with regard to ourselves (καταλήγειν δὲ ἐφ' ὃ κατέληξεν ἐφ' ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ φύσις). (21) Now it ended with contemplation, and understanding, and a way of life that is in harmony with nature (ἐπιθεωρίαν καὶ παρακολούθησιν καὶ σύμφωνον διεξαγωγὴν τῇ φύσει). (Epictetus 1.6.20–21)

Epictetus acknowledges in 1.6.20 that there is a part of the constitution of the λογικὸν ζῶον that it shares with the other ζῶα, but if it does not exercise its distinct capacity, then it will not reach its goal and fulfilment. This goal is described once more in terms of the two-part structure of the human vocation: it is, first, seeing and understanding (ἐπιθεωρίαν καὶ παρακολούθησιν), and, second, a way of life (διεξαγωγὴ) which is in tune with nature as so understood (σύμφωνον τῇ φύσει).<sup>164</sup> The second part is the appropriate response in a sign production.<sup>165</sup> A life which reflects the understanding of God becomes an interpretation of God's works. Thus, for Epictetus, all of life is involved in a fitting sign production. As Long writes about Epictetus 1.6.12–22:

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**162** Note that the perspective is on humankind in general (τὸν δ' ἄνθρωπον [1.6.19]), which corresponds to the consideration of human beings from the standpoint of their definition (cf. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον [1.6.12]). The formulation τὸν ἄνθρωπον θεατῆν εἰσήγαγεν is exactly the kind of language for the human vocation we have considered in sections 2.2.6.3 and 3.2: God has made human beings and he has made them for a purpose in the cosmos.

**163** Dobbin 1998, 109 explains this second part of the vocation as “initiat[ing] others into the world's wonders.” However, his rendering of ἐξηγητῆς with “[to] appreciate” in Dobbin 2008 is an undertranslation.

**164** That is, the world as it is as understood in the θεωρία accompanied by παρακολούθησις.  
**165** This response includes the gratitude which is mentioned at the beginning of this discourse (1.6.1). The element of thanksgiving as characteristic of the human-response side of the vocation is paralleled in Rom 1.21.

Epictetus ... make[s] the point that a creature's conformity to, or proper use of, its nature is a *service* to God. He tells his students to regard the human contribution to that service as "studying and interpreting" God and his works. This is what it is to be a *rational* animal.<sup>166</sup>

While there is no space to discuss the rest of Epictetus 1.6, where Epictetus offers a kind of "theodicy",<sup>167</sup> we will conclude this section by quoting Epictetus 1.6.23–25, because its language and motifs show that it belongs to the broader Greco-Roman discourse on the human vocation we have studied in the previous chapter:

But you travel to Olympia to behold the work of Pheidias (ὄν ἴδητε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Φειδίου),<sup>168</sup> and each of you regards it as a misfortune to die without seeing such sights (ἀνιστόρητος); yet when there is not need to travel at all, [but you are already there]<sup>169</sup> and [he] is present in his works (ἀλλ' ἐστὲ ἤδη καὶ πάρεστί[ι] τοῖς ἔργοις), will you not yearn to behold these works and know them (ταῦτα δὲ θεάσασθαι καὶ κατανοῆσαι οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσετε)? Will you decline, therefore, to perceive (αἰσθήσεσθε) either who you are (οὔτε τίνες ἐστέ), or for what you have been born (οὔτ' ἐπὶ τί γεγόνατε), or what that purpose is for which you have received sight (ἐφ' οὗ τὴν θεάν παρείληφθε)?<sup>170</sup> (Epictetus 1.6.23–25)<sup>171</sup>

Epictetus exhorts his hearers to perceive their identity as human beings, to understand their purpose, and then to live their vocation. They are to perceive who God is and to produce signs of this understanding, which means that others will be able to perceive who God is in their lives, in their sign production, rather than in the statue produced by Pheidias. As we have seen in the last chapter, the question for what purpose have you been born (ἐπὶ τί γεγόνατε) is the basic question for which, in the Greco-Roman tradition, the human vocation is the answer. And in Romans, Paul, as we shall see, draws on this answer for his own articulation of the genuine human vocation.

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**166** Long 2002, 175.

**167** Dobbin 1998, 103. Especially noteworthy as parallels to Romans would be 1.6.38–40.

**168** The statue of Zeus at Olympia. On which see Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 12.

**169** For this quotation we have used Oldfather's translation, except in the brackets, where we have changed the translation to fit the textual conjecture suggested by Dobbin 1998, 110, which assumes a different Greek text (quoted above).

**170** Heinemann 1926, 20 quotes Epictetus 1.6.25.

**171** Transl. W. A. Oldfather.

## 4.6 Conclusion

We have thus shown that Epictetus uses the language of λογικός to speak about the distinct capacity on which a human calling is based and that there is a two-part structure to this vocation: seeing and understanding God and his providential actions in the world and producing signs of this understanding. We have also seen that Epictetus uses the definition of human beings to speak about genuine humanness. We have demonstrated how Epictetus brings to clear expression broader traditions about what it means to be human by noting how he resonates with the themes we have studied in chapter 3.

All these contextualisations are needed to show how Epictetus 1.16.20–21 is a parallel to Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1. In Epictetus, reason language is used to speak about a genuinely human calling. The next chapters show how the same holds true for Romans, even as there are significant differences as well.

## 5 Romans as a letter about being human

In this chapter we seek to show that Paul's letter to the Romans is not only about salvation, but also about genuine humanness, in the sense of the Greco-Roman traditions we have considered in the previous chapters.<sup>1</sup> Paul would agree with Epictetus that human beings can be defined as *θηητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα* and, we argue, he would also agree with him that they have a role to play in the cosmos precisely as *λογικὰ ζῶα*. Like Epictetus, Paul too operates with an idea of genuine humanness. Paul articulates his vision of genuine humanness in a way that draws on the traditions of Israel's scripture, but also on the Greco-Roman cultural traditions we have studied.

This chapter offers a birds-eye reading of key passages in Rom 1–8 in which Paul articulates a vision of genuine humanness. We are here offering a hypothetical reading, suggesting ways in which central points in the argument resonate with the traditions we have investigated so far. There is no space, however, for detailed commentary on all the things scholars debate when talking about the texts we will discuss.

In outline, our argument that Romans is about genuine humanness will proceed using the following steps. First, we will show that in Rom 5.12–21 Paul speaks about those in Christ as constituting a new humanity who are able to fulfil their role in the cosmos. We will argue that Rom 5.12–21 is not an extraneous illustration, but essential to the argument of Romans 1–8 by indicating how the passage relates to Rom 1.18–4.25, 5.1–11 and 6.1–8.39. Second, and in the light of the first step, we will show that Rom 1.18–32 is about the corruption of genuine humanness and the failure to fulfil the human vocation. We will do this by analysing the Greek natural theology of Rom 1.19–21 in terms of the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus, by considering the Jewish traditions that describe idolatry as a dehumanising act, and by noting that the corruption of thinking is, within the Greco-Roman encyclopedia, the corruption of the human *proprium*. Third, we will argue that (i) Rom 6.1–11 describes how Christ has brought about a change of conditions in which those who belong to him (*via baptism*) are

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**1** Paul is of course talking about salvation (Rom 1.16, 10.1, 10.10, 11.11, 13.11). With our emphasis on genuine humanness we do not mean to suggest that “Romans is not about salvation in any traditional Christian sense” (Stowers 1994, 113). While this claim is overblown, Stowers is right to challenge the “systems of sin and salvation [that] reshaped the frame of reference” within which Romans is read and to warn of distortions due to the fact that Romans “came to bear the major economies of salvation” (1994, 1). One such distortion is a “going to heaven” reading in which being “human” does not matter.

now capable of being genuinely human by thinking right and acting appropriately; and that (ii) Rom 6.12–23 exhorts to the vocation to which human beings have thus been liberated, and in particular how they are to be producing signs of justice and holiness. Forth, we will show how Romans 8.1–11 describes the recovery of genuine humanness in Christ through the Spirit, and how Rom 8.18–30 describes the dynamic vocational relation to the cosmos in which the liberated human beings find themselves, as those through whom – in suffering and prayer – the signs of new creation come to birth. All of this will then provide a high road back to Rom 12.1–2 (chapter 6).

Before we go through these steps, however, the following remarks are in order. The first remark concerns the place of Rom 9–11 in our treatment. We will not discuss Rom 9–11 in this chapter, because it is not directly about genuine humanness in the senses we have explored, but about the problem of Jews who do not believe that Jesus is the messiah of Israel.<sup>2</sup> This is not, of course, to say that Rom 9–11 is not an integral part of the letter. It is. Nor is the subject matter of Rom 9–11 unrelated to the genuine humanness that has been made possible for Jews and Gentiles through the messiah, Jesus. It is precisely the rejection of Jesus as messiah by those to whom he belongs τὸ κατὰ σάρκα (Rom 9.5), which gives rise to the difficult question of how the election of Israel relates to the new way of being human inaugurated by its messiah. Paul even entertains the hope that Gentiles who are at last able to fulfil their genuine human vocation may have a positive contribution (Rom 11.14). But this is only indirectly related to the ancient philosophical traditions about genuine humanness that prepare us for Rom 12.1, which is why we have to leave out the dense scriptural argument of Rom 9–11.

The second remark is about salvation in Romans. In stating that Romans 1–8 is about genuine humanness, we are not saying that it is not about salvation. The traditional soteriological readings are right about the emphasis Paul gives to rescue from sin. But they have largely screened out the important theme of genuine humanness, the story of how human beings, seen as charged with a role in the cosmos, have become corrupted and the story of how they can be reclaimed for genuine humanness, and hence liberated to fulfil their proper task within a world dynamically transformed even as it is still marred by suffering.<sup>3</sup> Our read-

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<sup>2</sup> For Paul, as the work of Novenson (2012; cf. 2017) shows, Χριστός does mean “messiah”, and is not simply a “proper name”. We will sometimes speak of “messiah”, but following linguistic custom established in New Testament scholarship, mostly use “Christ”.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest an alternative analysis of the human plight in which “sin” does not feature. Rather, it is to offer a deeper understanding of what “sin” actually means. On this point cf. Wright 2016.

ing contributes to retrieving this central strand within Romans, especially as it resonates with its Greco-Roman contexts, and in this way to challenge accounts of sin and salvation in Romans which downplay human action and its purpose within a creation in which the resurrection has inaugurated a new age.

The third is about reading Paul in his Greco-Roman context. In reading Romans in the light of Greco-Roman traditions on what it means to be human and what the human role within the cosmos is, we stand in sympathetic agreement with the attempt to relate Paul to Greco-Roman and notably ancient philosophical contexts, even while we differ from the specific proposals of Stowers or Engberg-Pedersen (among others). Neither of them have seen the relevance of the idea of a human vocation or of the ideal of genuine humanness to Paul's argument. Van Kooten's reading of Romans in Greco-Roman context focuses on the related but slightly different question of Paul's model of a topology of the soul, and thus he does not develop the idea of a human vocation in the light of philosophical traditions as we propose.

The fourth is about reading Paul in his Jewish context. We agree considerably with Wright's exposition of a larger Jewish-scriptural narrative on which Paul draws to describe a human vocation, Israel's vocation and the vocation of the messiah and those in him.<sup>4</sup> Our argument, however, focuses on the Greco-Roman traditions that, we argue, are needed to explain Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1. Our basic hypothesis is that if Paul does indeed retrieve philosophical tradition in Rom 12.1 in order to speak about a human vocation, then something like the human vocation in the sense of these traditions should be expected already in the preceding argument of the letter. And this is what we sketch in this chapter. If our argument is correct, Paul's interaction with the ancient discourse on what it means to be human goes beyond a model in which Paul arrives at conclusions in a purely Jewish manner<sup>5</sup> and then only secondarily presents them in a way that engages with Greco-Roman traditions (often to subvert them or criticise them).<sup>6</sup> Rather, Paul should be seen as having won through to a fresh synthesis of Jewish and Greco-Roman perspectives on the human vo-

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. especially Wright 2013, 485–494.

<sup>5</sup> By this we do not mean to say that Jews were not influenced in many ways by Greco-Roman culture (and vice-versa). Rather we mean to say that Paul was able and likely to have engaged with ideas outside the specialised discourse one might expect between learned men within an ancient synagogue or such as could be derived from reading the Greek traditions of Israel's scripture.

<sup>6</sup> While this description does no justice to the breadth of material worked through in Wright 2013, it broadly fits Wright's overall presentation of Paul thinking from the Jewish world and into the Greco-Roman world (noting their overlaps).

cation.<sup>7</sup> Jewish and Greek traditions are both thought through in order to provide a theological orientation for the communities which he envisions as praising God together (cf. Rom 15.6) – both Jews and Greeks.

Having made these remarks, we turn to the steps of the argument as outlined above to demonstrate that and how Romans is about genuine humanness.

## **5.1 Rom 5.12–21 is about a new way of being human based on the messiah**

The main support for our claim that a central concern of Romans 1–8 is genuine humanness comes from Rom 5.12–21.<sup>8</sup> For in Romans 5.12–21 Paul speaks about those in Christ as (i) constituting a new humanity (5.1.2.), who are (ii) able to fulfil their role in the cosmos (5.1.3.). And since (iii) Romans 5.12–21 stands in a central position within Rom 1–8 (5.1.1.), this provides clear evidence that genuine humanness is a crucial part of what Romans 1–8 is about.

### **5.1.1 Rom 5.12–21 is structurally important for Rom 1–8**

We begin by briefly arguing the third point, the centrality of Rom 5.12–21, because the other points depend upon it. We can see that Romans 5.12–21 is central as a transitional moment<sup>9</sup> by the way it summarises key aspects of 1.18–4.25. In the way Paul speaks about Adam’s disobedience and the diffusion of sin and death in the world in 5.12–21, he looks as though he is summarising and recasting the failure of humans he has described in Rom 1.18–32. In the way Paul speaks about Christ’s obedience and the gift of new life, he is clearly retrieving the turning point of Rom 3.21–26 brought about in the Christ event. But we can also see its centrality by noting how Rom 5.12–21 introduces themes that are ex-

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7 By “fresh synthesis” we are not suggesting that all he is doing is eclectically taking bits of Jewish and Greco-Roman tradition and putting them into an amalgam. Rather, his understanding of the implications of the Christ event puts him into a position in which he can think through Jewish and Greek traditions about what it means to be human in a new light and thus find the genuinely human existence that has become possible in Christ to fulfil not only Jewish but also Greek aspirations.

8 Cf. Theobald 2000, 48 whose section title for Rom 5.12–21 is “Zusammenfassung: Adam und Christus oder vergebliches und erfülltes Menschsein”; cf. also Michel 1978, 184 whose title is “Der neue Mensch und die neue Menschheit”.

9 Barclay 2015, 494 speaks of a “bridge”.

panded upon in Rom 5–8. For instance, the motif of abundance (περισσεΐα, περισσεύειν, ὑπερπερισσεύειν, πλεονάζειν) in Rom 5.15, 5.17, 5.20 is part of the question asked in Rom 6.1 (πλεονάση), which introduces the theme of the following section. The language of ruling (βασιλεύειν) in Rom 5.14, 5.17 and 5.21 is picked up again in Rom 6.12. Similarly, the theme of life (ζωή) in Rom 5.17, 5.18, 5.21 comes again in Rom 6.4, 6.22–23, 8.2, 8.10. Finally, the question of Torah in Rom 5.13–14, 5.20 returns in 6.14–15 and becomes the central question in Rom 7.7–25.

The importance of Rom 5.12–21 is also evident from the way it builds upon Rom 5.1–11. Romans 5.1–11 is itself already closely connected with what precedes it, but also looks forward to themes stated in Rom 8.<sup>10</sup> It is itself a kind of summary, ranging from justification (Rom 5.1) to the future glory (Rom 5.2), and reflects upon the importance of what has happened through Christ (Rom 5.1c, 2a, 9, 10c, 11cd) for salvation (Rom 5.9). We note in passing that Rom 5.1–11 already contains hints of a human vocational response, in the positive use of “boasting” based on the hope which has become available (Rom 5.2c, 11a) through Christ.

It is on this summary that the comparison of Adam and Christ in Rom 5.12–21 builds. The link between the passages is strongly emphasised in the formulation διὰ τοῦτο which introduces it in 5.12. Scholars have puzzled about how to interpret this link,<sup>11</sup> but this should not cast doubt on the fact that Paul intends to make an important statement in Rom 5.12–21, which builds on and is connected to his preceding argument.<sup>12</sup>

### 5.1.2 The Adam–Christ typology speaks of a new kind of humanity in Rom 5.12–21

The important point which Rom 5.12–21 expresses is that what happened to and through the messiah has a significance for all of humanity in that it marks the inauguration of a new way of being human. On this reading, the link between Rom 5.1–11 and 5.12–21 can be stated as: through Christ human beings have

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Luz 1969, 178 n. 44 for a list of terminological overlaps.

<sup>11</sup> Luz 1969, 179 calls this the “schwierigste aller Fragen, die uns der Aufbau des Römerbriefs stellt”.

<sup>12</sup> We agree with Wolter 2014, 341, when he emphasises how the aspect of “through Christ” in 5.1–11 (especially in 5.1–2 and 5.11) is further developed in 5.12–21 (especially in 5.15 [ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] and the διὰ-formulations in 5.16–19 and 5.21).

been rescued from sin (5.1–11) and therefore (5.12) there is now a new way of being human through him (5.12–21).

Our reading is supported by the following consideration of the comparison between Adam and Christ. Speaking about Adam is not a speculation about primeval events. Paul does not deduce universal sinfulness from a myth about Adam's trespass. Though the passage looks back on Rom 1.18–32, the point of speaking about Adam is not to remind of a mythical basic story as an event that is the "historical" cause for present human sin. Rather, Paul uses this comparison because it allows him to speak about corrupt humanness and genuine humanness in a compact reduction to figures of universal significance. In the case of Adam as the prototype of humanity it seems obvious that he is significant, too, for what it means to be human. Paul sees the Christ event as being of universal significance, not least for what it means to be human. To express this significance, he draws on the comparison and contrast with Adam, the figure in Israel's scripture which uncontestedly stands in a relation to all human beings, Jews and Gentiles.<sup>13</sup>

The very fact that Paul wrote Rom 5.12–21 in the way he did suggests that he is not just concerned with salvation (as an eventual being saved from the wrath of God, cf. Rom 5.9) but with the appropriate way of being human, a way fulfilling the purpose of human beings in the cosmos. Readings looking only for salvation may find in Rom 5.12–21 a pleasant excursion about the origin of sin and death.<sup>14</sup> But Paul is not concerned with narrating the origin of "sin" with a myth about Adam's trespass. Rather, he sees the universal failure of humans to do as they should have done (1.18–21) as a given;<sup>15</sup> he has come to understand what happened to and through the messiah to be of universal significance for a new way of being human, one which includes Gentile "sinners", who can be renewed from their corrupting idolatry (Rom 1.23); and to express this significance he draws on the figure of Adam to explain the significance of the Christ event. It is because the Christ event has implications for all human beings *as human beings*, that he draws on the figure of Adam as someone, whose story of disobedience in Gen 3 also concerns all human beings.

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**13** As Wolter rightly notes, Paul draws on the figure of Adam to make a point about Christ, and not the other way around (2014, 362).

**14** Cf. Luther's description, in his preface to Romans, of what happens in Rom 5.12–21 as "Dar-nach thut er eyn lustigen auss bruch vnnd spaciergang" (Luther 1897 [1522], 18).

**15** This is not an intervention on the solution to plight scheme discussed since Sanders 1977 (cf. 442–3, 474–5), because we are not speaking here about the genesis of Paul's thought. For a critique and modification of Sanders scheme see Wright 2013, 747–764.

The point of speaking about Adam and Christ, then, is more than merely to “highligh[t] the universal sweep of God’s saving purpose through Christ”.<sup>16</sup> Rather, we propose, it is to emphasise how important the Christ event is for a new way of being human. That is why Christ and Adam are both decidedly referred to as ἄνθρωπος (Adam in 5.12b; Christ in 5.15d). It goes without saying that the purpose for which Adam was made would have been to be genuinely human. But as the story of Gen 3 records, the way of being human for which Adam stands is characterised by disobedience (5.19 [παρακοή]). The way of being human for which Christ stands, by contrast, is marked by obedience (5.19 [ὕπακοή]). Romans 5.12–21, then, is contrasting two ways of being human: one based on the conditions which obtain since “Adam”, the other based on the change of conditions brought about in the Christ event.

The comparison between Adam and Christ can also be understood in terms of a contrast of vocation. Adam is described as the τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, namely the messiah (5.14). Adam was meant to obey God and to be genuinely human in fulfilling his vocation (Gen 1.26–27). In this sense he was a type of Christ. But in his failure he has effectively become a universal symbol of the old humanity (cf. Rom 6.6: ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος).<sup>17</sup> Adam’s disobedience (παρακοή [5.19]) is emblematic for the universal failure to conform to the purposes of the creator in 1.18–32.<sup>18</sup> When Paul speaks of the ὑπακοή πίστεως in Rom 1.5 it is precisely that which is now possible even for Gentiles, based on their relation to the messiah, the fully human one, who is marked by obedience (ὕπακοή [5.19]).

The way Rom 6 builds on Rom 5.12–21 supports a vocational reading. For, as we shall see in Rom 6, Paul emphasises the new way of life that is available to those who belong to Christ via baptism: they can now walk in the newness of life (Rom 6.4). The significance of the Christ event which Rom 5.12–21 conveys is that all those who have been saved are now in a position to fulfil their genuine human calling, by following the path of genuine humanness opened up in Christ. What happened to and through the messiah is of universal significance for a new way of being human, one which includes Gentile “sinners”, who can be renewed from their corrupting idolatry (Rom 1.23). If Rom 5.12–21 is about a new way of being human that is available in the present on the basis

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<sup>16</sup> Dunn 1988, 272.

<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that in Rom 6.4 there has to be an allusion to Adam (though it is likely). Romans 6 discusses the life of those in Christ as a new way of being human, based on what Christ has achieved. The universal significance of that achievement was expressed in Rom 5.12–21 by contrasting the universal figure Adam with Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Rom 5.14 hints at the differences between what happened to Adam and what happened to other humans who sinned while the consequence was the same.

of the messiah Jesus, the consequences for the life of Christ-followers drawn in Rom 6 are much more closely connected to what precedes them in Rom 5.12–21.

Thus, we conclude, on the basis of the nature of the Adam and Christ comparison, that Rom 5.12–21 does speak about genuine humanness available in Christ.

### 5.1.3 Rom 5.17 speaks of those in Christ who are now able to fulfil their vocation

Our point that Rom 5.12–21 is about genuine humanness is further directly supported by a reading of Rom 5.17. Paul compares what happened through Christ with what happened through Adam by making a contrast in terms of life and death. But he develops the contrast asymmetrically: while the consequences of the *Adamsgeschehen* are described as the rule of death (ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος), the consequences of the *Christusgeschehen* are described, not, as one might have expected, as the rule of life (ἡ ζωὴ βασιλεύσει), but as the rule in life of those who are in Christ (οἱ ... λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν).<sup>19</sup> We propose, then, that “ruling in life” is one of the ways in which Paul speaks about the exercise of the human vocation, a state of genuine humanness.

Rom 5.17 is not, we suggest, a slip of the pen, but a deliberate point Paul makes. The corruption of humanity for which the one human, Adam, stands as a comprehensive symbol, produces a state described as the rule of death, through the humanity for which Adams stands (ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἐνός [5.17]). By contrast, those humans who belong to Christ, referred to lavishly as οἱ τὴν περισσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες (recalling motifs from 5.1–11), are at last enabled to fulfil their human vocation, in this life already: ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν διὰ τοῦ ἐνός Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (5.17). Thus, the language of Rom 5.17 supports our claim that for Paul one of the central points about the Christ event is that those in Christ are now able to fulfil their human vocation, because the gift of Christ means that genuine humanness has been restored as a possibility.

There seems to be a problem for our interpretation here, however. The future indicative form βασιλεύσουσιν has led some interpreters to assume that Rom 5.17 only speaks about a strictly future event and that the statement does not apply to the present life of those in Christ.<sup>20</sup> But in fact, as far as grammar goes, this it is

<sup>19</sup> We use the German terms for compactness of expression (cf. Wolter 2014, 362).

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Dunn 1988a, 282; Käsemann 1980, 147; Michel 1978, 190.

not a problem. Against some commentators, it is important to stress that the future indicative form here does not on its own (i. e. on grammatical grounds) settle the question whether the “rule” refers only to a time strictly in the future, or to a state that has already begun in the present existence of Christ-followers. As a recent Greek grammar notes, the “future indicative may ... be used to express ... hypothetical scenarios and general truths ... [, and] inferences ... In such cases the realization of the action does not necessarily lie in the future; rather, the sense underlying the use of the future indicative is that the truth of the statement will be ascertainable at some future moment (if reasoning is followed to its logical conclusion, or if evidence becomes available)”.<sup>21</sup> In Rom 5.17, the future form is part of an *a fortiori* argumentation (εἰ γὰρ ... πολλῷ μᾶλλον) whose point is to stress the certainty of the inference, not the temporal location of the action. Thus, the temporal reference could only be established by contextual meaning, not on purely grammatical grounds (cf. similarly Rom 5.21 with the subjunctive βασιλεύση<sup>22</sup>).

This means that it is possible, and contextually even likely,<sup>23</sup> that Rom 5.17 refers to something which is predicated of Christ-followers in the present: they are now ruling, that is they fulfil their calling as human beings (but they will do so more fully in the consummated eschaton). Some scholars might resist such a conclusion because they assume it would mean that Paul embraced an “over-realised eschatology”. However, speaking of “over-realised eschatology” depends on the content of what is thought to be already realised. We suggest that with “rule in life” Paul here refers to the genuine humanness which is restored as a possibility for those who belong to the messiah in the present. The present βασιλεύειν ἐν ζωῇ anticipates the state of bodily resurrection which still lies in the future (and will be accompanied by the renewal of the cosmos and hence a fuller realisation of the “rule” in the future).

Our notion of sign production<sup>24</sup> offers a way to explain how this “anticipation” of the future in the present βασιλεύειν ἐν ζωῇ might work. In the phrase

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**21** CGCG 33.45. This point does not just apply to classical Greek, as for instance, Epictetus 1.6.2. shows for Koine Greek.

**22** Note CGCG, 33.3: “Moods other than the indicative ... do not inherently express tense.”

**23** The point of Rom 6, which builds upon Rom 5.12–21, is the present existence, see below.

**24** It may be useful here to repeat our definition of “sign production” (see section 1.4) which is used, employing a broad notion of “action”, for “human actions performed in such a way as to signify, embody and express those truths and meanings a particular worldview holds to be of paramount importance, and which to communicate in a given context it sees as the role of human beings in the cosmos.” In particular, for Paul, this means that we use it for “actions by human beings (in Christ), performed in such a way as to signify, embody and express the

βασιλεύειν ἐν ζωῇ we encounter, as elsewhere in Rom 5–8, special, metaphorical meanings of “death” and “life” which are related to the everyday notions (e.g. biological life and death, or “ways of life”) but which go beyond them. At the level of the language of scholarly interpretation one might mark these as “eschatological” life or death (our language of “genuine” gets at something similar). We may also speak of “metaphorical” death (which of course says something about the use of language, and not about the ontological status of that to which the language refers). Some interpreters see hypostasised powers at work in the figures of “Sin” and “Death”, but that is not a necessary reading.<sup>25</sup> In any case, that Paul can speak about slaves to ὑπακοή (Rom 6.16) should be a warning against too readily assuming such powers in every phrase.

We suggest a different reading of such language as ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν in terms of our notion of sign production. If human beings commit actions which Paul would class as sinful, they are not just falling short in terms of some standard of morality. If human beings are beings capable of communicative action, then their acts also signify in terms of what human beings are like, and what God is like who created them and who called them to their role in the cosmos. In this perspective, if human beings keep committing acts of sin, they are producing signs of sin and “death”. And these signs in turn create the conditions in which other human beings operate in the world. Distorted sign production of one induces distorted sign production of others, leading to a state in which “death rules”.

The site and means of sign production is the body. As we will see, the reversal that Christ has brought is precisely one in which the body beholden to sin (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας [6.6]) and death (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου [7.24]) has been liberated such that it can be used in the way God intended when he gave bodies to human beings, that is: they are now able to produce the signs of genuine human “life” (instead of “death” and “sin”). The rule in life in Rom 5.17, then, is the genuine human sign production of “life” (in the metaphorical sense). This “life” does not exclude mortality in the ordinary sense. But it

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truths and meanings of the Christ event, which to communicate in a given context Paul sees as the role of human beings in the cosmos.”

<sup>25</sup> For a critical note on the “sin as power” reading, see e.g. Stowers 1994, 179–180. Paul does use “personified” language, making “death” and “sin” the subjects of actions, but whether such language implies actual “powers” independent of God and humans is another matter. The determination of human beings by “powers” should in any case not be made the central issue of Paul’s anthropology (as it seems to be in Harding 2015). See also Miller 2014, 99–135 for an interpretation of Rom 6–8 which defends a “strong notion of human agency” (102) against a “‘cosmic powers’ reading” (100).

does exclude the conditions in which the body is beholden to produce metaphorical “death” (cf. Rom 7.25). And since that life is oriented to the Christ event, which is the supreme event of God’s grace, it will also be a sign production of “grace” (i. e. not only enabled by but also signifying it).

In this way, our notion of sign production also suggests reading the ruling language of Rom 5.21 as referring to the exercise of the genuinely human vocation, which supports our overall interpretation of Rom 5.12–21 as being about genuine humanness. While in Rom 5.17 the subject of the ruling are those in Christ, in Rom 5.21 the subject of the action is χάρις: ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 5.21). Some understand χάρις here to be used metonymically for God, in view of the importance of the theme of God’s grace in this section.<sup>26</sup> But our notion of sign production and the parallelism with the ruling language of Rom 5.17 can explain the phrase as yet again referring to the form genuine human life takes as a consequence of the Christ event. “Grace” rules when human beings produce signs in their conduct which bespeaks the rule of grace, which displays that justice which God has revealed in the gospel. They give God the glory and this means that they produce signs of the way in which he is just and how he has acted in relation to the world, signs of his δικαιοσύνη and of the life of the new age (ζωὴ αἰώνιος). That they are now able to produce signs of δικαιοσύνη rests on the fact that Christ is described as δικαίων τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3.26). This is also, we suggest, why those who rule in Rom 5.17 are identified by the long circumlocution that expressed precisely the dependence on the Christ event, whose import is that this “rule” is now possible: οἱ τὴν περισσεΐαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες. God has revealed himself in Christ in an act of grace which now makes δικαιοσύνη possible, and the vocation for Jesus-followers is to display this in their lives. This is what genuine humanness (βασιλεύειν) looks like in the conditions brought about in the Christ event.

Our reading of the language of βασιλεύειν as referring to genuine human life in the exercise of the human calling is supported by a consideration both of traditions in the Greek bible and of philosophical contexts.

In applying the language of βασιλεύειν to those who belong to the messiah Jesus, including Gentiles, Paul is retrieving traditions of Israel’s scripture about the role of human beings in the cosmos one finds in Gen 1.26–28 and Ps 8.6–9.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Rom 5.15 (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ), 5.17, 5.20d. But Paul certainly does not make χάρις into “a personal force ruling over human beings” as Fitzmyer suggests (1993, 422); similarly Dunn 1988a, 287.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also the retrieval of Ps 8 in Rom 8.17–30 (central to the recent argument by Goranson Jacob 2018, see section 5.4.2).

The language of κατακυριεύειν (over the animals in Gen 1.28 LXX) reflects a view of the human role in the cosmos similar to that expressed in Ps 8.6–9 LXX, which reflects upon the placement of human beings in the created order (lower than ἄγγελοι, but placed above the animals [8.8–9]), and sees them as given a task (κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου), in a place of dominance (πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ [8.8]), and crowned (“wreathed”) with honour and glory (δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν [8.6]). That such language has royal associations for Paul is clear from his retrieval of Ps 109 LXX (in addition to Ps 8) in 1 Cor 15.20–28 (note βασιλεύειν [15.25]), which uses similar language.<sup>28</sup> The scenario of Dan 7.13–14 LXX, with a figure ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου being given ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία (Theodotion: ἐξουσία) may also have influenced Paul’s language (cf. also Dan 7.22 and 7.27, where the holy ones share in the kingly rule). That this “kingly rule” should only happen in the coming age in Jewish expectation, as Dunn suggests with reference to Dan 7.22 and other passages,<sup>29</sup> does not mean, however, that for Paul this rule should be strictly in the future. For Paul applies it to the present state of those in Christ; for him Christ is the first fruit of resurrection and the new age has already been inaugurated.

The language of βασιλεύειν for the exercise of genuine humanness is also supported by its resonance with philosophical tradition. We briefly note the Stoic paradox claiming that only the wise man is king.<sup>30</sup> More relevant to our context is that Epictetus speaks about God as a good king (ἀγαθὸς βασιλεύς) in *Discourse* 1.6, which we have studied in the last chapter. Epictetus draws on the comparison with a king to highlight the fact that God has not only richly bestowed faculties upon human beings but has given in an unstinting, unrestricted manner.<sup>31</sup> In Rom 5.17 the greatness of the gift received (οἱ τὴν περισσεΐαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες) is the basis of the reign in life of those who belong to Christ.<sup>32</sup> While in that passage of Epictetus it is not humans who are called kings but God, it is used precisely to make a point about how humans have received something which is the basis for their appro-

<sup>28</sup> ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (Ps 109.1), κατακυριεύει (Ps 109.2), cf. βασιλεῖς (Ps 109.5, cf. Ps 2).

<sup>29</sup> Dunn 1988a, 282. Cf. also the passages cited by Zeller 1985, 119.

<sup>30</sup> SVF 3.332. Cf. Philo, *Mut.* 152.

<sup>31</sup> ὁ γὰρ θεὸς οὐ μόνον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν τὰς δυνάμεις ταύτας ... ἀλλ’ ὁ ἦν ἀγαθοῦ βασιλέως καὶ ταῖς ἀληθείαις πατρός, ἀκώλυτον τοῦτο ἔδωκεν, ἀναγκαστον, ἀπαρὰ πόδιστον (1.6.40).

<sup>32</sup> Epictetus makes recognition of the greatness of what has been received (τίνα εἰλήφατε [1.6.41]) the basis for not complaining in the manner of those who have become blind towards their benefactor (πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν δόντα ἀποτετυφλωμένοι μὴδ’ ἐπιγινώσκοντες τὸν εὐεργέτην [1.6.42]).

ropriate human response (see the previous chapter). A human being that fulfils the genuine human task is called a king, however in another famous *Discourse* by Epictetus. *Discourse* 3.22 is a celebration of the ideal Cynic as someone sent from the gods to demonstrate that it is possible to live in complete independence from exterior goods apart from those provided by nature.<sup>33</sup> After having introduced the theme of kings earlier in the discourse when speaking about the example of Agamemnon,<sup>34</sup> whom Homer shows to have been unhappy and sorrowful despite being king, Epictetus lets the figure of the ideal Cynic recount all the hardships he endures (3.22.47) but also state that he lacks nothing (3.22.46).<sup>35</sup> He faces the kings, which their slaves fear, as if *they* were the slaves (3.22.49).<sup>36</sup> And finally the Cynic says: “who, when he lays eyes upon me, does not feel that he is seeing his king and his master (οὐχὶ τὸν βασιλέα τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὄραν οἴεται καὶ δεσπότην [3.22.49])”. In 3.22.80 he even speaks of the kingly rule of the Cynic (ἡ δὲ τοῦ Κυνικοῦ βασιλεία). In fine, such resonances with philosophical tradition lend further support for reading Paul as claiming in Rom 5.12–21 that one of the significant consequences of the Christ event is that a new way of being human is available in the present.

#### 5.1.4 Conclusion for Rom 5.12–21 and transition to Rom 1.18–32

We have thus shown, in this section, based on the nature of the Adam Christ comparison and an interpretation of Rom 5.17, that Rom 5.12–21 claims that the Christ event implies that a new way of being human is available, through Christ. While this interpretation is strongly supported by our proposed reading of Rom 5.17 and 5.21 as applying to the *present* life of Jesus-followers, our overall interpretation does not stand or fall with this more particular claim.

Similarly, the notion of sign production may be illuminating for Rom 5.12–21, but could not be discovered simply based on that passage. However, having established that Paul draws out the universal significance of the Christ event for a new way of being human in Rom 5.12–21, we will be prepared to read Rom 1.18–32 not just as so much rhetorical flourish to demonstrate that all have sinned, but as a description of the “old”<sup>37</sup> way of being human. Yet the description of the corruption of genuine humanness also implies a picture

<sup>33</sup> On this *Discourse*, see especially Billerbeck 1978.

<sup>34</sup> 3.22.60.

<sup>35</sup> This may remind one of 2 Cor 4 or Phil 4.10–13.

<sup>36</sup> Probably an allusion to Diogenes of Sinope’s encounter with Alexander, cf. DL 6.38.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Rom 6.6b.

of what the purpose of human beings within creation would have been. And the details on which Paul draws for articulating this picture strongly resonate with the ancient philosophical traditions about the human vocation, and lend themselves well to an analysis in terms of a sign production.

## **5.2 Rom 1.18–32 describes the corruption of genuine humanness and implies a general structure of the human vocation that resonates with ancient philosophical tradition**

In this section, we seek to establish that Rom 1.18–32 is about the corruption and the distortion of genuine humanness, and not simply a demonstration of universal sinfulness (as in many soteriological readings). We will show that Rom 1.18–32 is a critique of the human race in terms of the failure to honour the true God, the failure to praise him, and hence, depicts the corruption and disastrous distortion of the true vocation of human beings, their failure to do the properly human thing. It does so in ways that resonate clearly with ancient philosophical traditions we have studied but at the same time it also draws on Jewish-scriptural elements.

It is important to note at the start that because Rom 1.18–32 charts a process of corruption, the positive vocation which is presupposed, has to be inferred from Paul's critique of the failure to fulfil that vocation.<sup>38</sup> But reversing the negative description is not very difficult, once one suspects that Paul does more in Rom 1.18–32 than a traditional soteriological reading expects.

In order to make our thematic exposition as clear as we can, it will be helpful briefly to indicate the structure of Rom 1.18–32 such as it appears to the concerns of our investigation: 1.18 contains an initial statement that human beings have failed in their vocation. 1.19–21c expands the initial statement and shows that this vocation has a structure which is similar to the two-part structure we have seen in Epictetus: a true understanding of the world in relation to God, an appropriate sign production based on it. Romans 1.19–21a expands upon the first part (the understanding), 1.21bc expands upon the second part (the responding sign production). 1.19 states that such an understanding can be had and emphasises its manifestness. 1.20a explains the mode in which this understanding can be obtained, and highlights the role of the human mind necessary for this understanding; 1.20b further explains the content of the understanding

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<sup>38</sup> An attempt to invert what is stated negatively in Rom 1.18–32 is also made by Kim 2011, 121.

of God that can be had in this way (which was already hinted at in 1.20aα). Romans 1.21d–22b describes a process of the corruption of the capacity in which the exercise of the human vocation would be grounded, namely the human mind. Romans 1.23 restates in terms of a Jewish-scriptural encyclopedia (critique of idolatry) the initial statement (1.18) that human beings have failed in their vocation; this rests on Jewish traditions which see idolatry as epitome of dehumanising practice. The production of idols is also a particularly clear example of sign production. Romans 1.24 describes how the bodily conditions necessary for appropriate sign production change for the worse: the human body, the means of agency, and hence of sign production, is described as being handed over to desires, such that it becomes prone to produce negative signs. Romans 1.25 contains a summarising restatement of the human failure in the exercise of their calling; the language used for this statement combines the ways of expressing that failure in Rom 1.18 and 1.23 (importantly it also uses the language of λατρευεῖν). Romans 1.26–27 expands upon what was said in Rom 1.24 by giving two examples of sexual behaviour criticised as exchanging the creational order intended by the creator with its opposite; this example also lends itself to an analysis in terms of sign production with parallels in Epictetus. Romans 1.28–32 is something like a “peroration” within Rom 1.18–32, since it summarises once more its main points (1.28) and seeks to influence emotions with a rhetorically heavy list of negative characterisations portraying the distortion of genuine humanness (1.29–31). Romans 1.28 again emphasises the central role of human thinking (1.28b) both for understanding God rightly (1.28a) and for determining action appropriate for human beings (1.28c); once more this verse lends itself to an analysis in terms of sign production. Romans 1.32 brings the section to a close with a heavy condemnation which concentrates on the wrong thinking of the characters criticised in 1.29–31: it introduces the motif of “death” as associated with these actions and ends with a statement that humans approve of the negative signs produced by other human beings instead of those which would have been based on the right knowledge of God (Rom 1.28).

For our interpretation of Rom 12.1–2, the present passage is of major importance. Interpreters regularly note the close connections between Rom 1.18–32 and Rom 12.1–2, in which negative statements in Rom 1.18–32 correspond to positive ones in Rom 12.1–2: for instance, the act of ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα (1.24) stands in contrast with the παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν (12.1b); the λατρεύειν τῇ κτίσει (1.25) with the λογικὴ λατρεία (12.1c); the ἀδόκι-

μος νοῦς (1.28) with the ἀνακαινώσις τοῦ νοῦς (12.2); the statement οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν (1.28) with the δοκιμάζειν in (12.2).<sup>39</sup>

These connections gain depth and coherence in the light of the philosophical traditions we see in Epictetus. Scholars have long recognised the importance of Epictetus 1.16.20–21 as a parallel for Rom 12.1c. But it has not hitherto been noticed that there are also parallels between Epictetus 1.16.1–19 (i.e. the entire discourse for which the noted parallel forms the climax) and Rom 1.18–32: for instance the link between perception of God’s providence in the world and gratitude (Epictetus 1.16.7) with Rom 1.20–21; the discussion about the human body (Epictetus 1.16.1), especially in the light of the wider ancient discourse we charted (e.g. in Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.4), with Rom 1.24; and above all, the fact that Epictetus 1.16 throughout operates with the idea of a human vocation (as becomes explicit in 1.16.20–21), just as Rom 1.18–32 presupposes such a notion, as we shall see.

In what follows, then, we will show, first, that Paul presupposes a notion of human vocation in Rom 1.18–21 which closely parallels the philosophical tradition we have investigated, especially Epictetus (section 5.2.1). Second, we will show that in focussing on the corruption of the mind, Paul focuses on the corruption of the human proprium (section 5.2.2). Then we will show, third, how the issue of genuine humanness comes through in 1.18–32 in terms of the Jewish tradition of criticising idolatry (section 5.2.3). Fourth, we will show that both the structure of the human vocation presupposed in Rom 1.19–21 and the framing of the failure of humans as idolatry, as false worship, implies that Paul is not simply concerned with the proper form of worship (“religion”) or simply with ethics, but that he speaks of a human vocation consisting of a sign production which correlates a degree of understanding of God with a corresponding appropriate kind of response (section 5.2.4).

### 5.2.1 The idea and structure of the human vocation in Rom 1.18–21

We begin by showing *that* Rom 1.18–21 contains a clear statement of human vocation (5.2.1.1). But this will inevitably involve discussion of its *structure* (5.2.1.2). We will see that the structure of the human vocation in Rom 1.18–32 closely res-

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<sup>39</sup> For these links (often extending to Rom 2) see for instance Furnish 1968, 103–104; Evans 1979, 30–32; Dunn 1988b, 707–708; Thompson 1991, 81–83; Adams 1997, 51 n. 11 (with other connections within Romans); cf. also van Kooten 2008, 388–389. Further, see Kim 2011, 122; Bell 2011.

onates with the philosophical tradition that we have studied so far (especially in Epictetus).

### 5.2.1.1 That the idea is present in Rom 1.18–21

We can see that Rom 1.18–21 operates with the idea of a human vocation on the basis that the three elements of the notion of a human vocation (a task for all humans, the divine intention, the recognisability of the task for humans) that we developed earlier in dialogue with Heinemann are all present.

As to the first element, it is assumed that there is something all humans should do. This is clear from the fact of God’s wrath over the actions of humans (1.18), which allows the inference that they should have done something which is the opposite of the ἀσέβεια<sup>40</sup> and ἀδικία that, according to Paul, they have exhibited. It is also implied in the expectation that humans should give God honour or be appropriately grateful, which we could infer to be stated positively as θεὸν ὡς θεὸν δοξάσαι or εὐχαριστήσαι (1.21). For our purposes we do not need to be concerned at this point with whether Rom 1.18 speaks of all human beings or only of some as those who in fact “hold down” the truth through injustice (τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων), because in either case it remains the expectation that all humans should do the opposite of the described behaviour. Reverting the formulation, we might infer that the positive counterpart would be something like “upholding the truth by justice” (ἀνέχειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ).<sup>41</sup>

As to the second element, the divine intentionality: there is something God intends for all human beings and it consists in the appropriate response (θεὸν ὡς θεὸν δοξάσαι and εὐχαριστήσαι).<sup>42</sup> This follows again from the textual indications mentioned for the first point. In the wider argument this is also implied by the mention of that which God wants in Rom 2.18 and indeed Rom 12.2.<sup>43</sup>

As to the third element, the fact that the required action is recognisable to humans: this can be inferred from the statement that humans are said to be without excuse (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους [1.20]), precisely because they are attributed the knowledge about God in his relation to the world of which Rom

<sup>40</sup> Though Paul does not use εὐσεβεία, it is noteworthy that under this heading there is a clear statement about the human vocation and its structure in Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 31.1.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. for example Homer, *Od.* 19.111, saying of a king that he upholds justice (εὐδικίας ἀνέχρησι).

<sup>42</sup> We will discuss in section 5.2.4.1 how this response includes “ethical” acts but goes beyond them in another sense.

<sup>43</sup> In not translating θέλημα as “will” we try to keep a distance between the modern conception of a faculty independent, in principle, from both reason and emotion, and the ancient conceptions. For the problem of the notion of will, see Frede 2011.

1.19 – 20 explicitly speaks (see below). The point is reinforced by the contrast implied by the adversative conjunction of γνόντες τὸν θεὸν with a failure to θεὸν ὡς θεὸν δοξάσαι or εὐχαριστήσαι: this contrast suggests that the knowledge would have allowed them to recognise the required action. For they could hardly be justly charged with something that is impossible for them to do, and if there would be now way of knowing about it, it would be impossible for them to do.<sup>44</sup> While Paul does not explicitly mention the human endowment with reason at this point, his use of the language of τὰ ἄόρατα αὐτοῦ ... νοούμενα καθορᾶται (Rom 1.20) implies the human mind as the capacity required for this task, which is in line with the tradition we studied.

Based on these three criteria, we conclude, then, that Paul operates with the idea of a human vocation in Rom 1.18 – 21. In describing *that* Rom 1.18 – 21 implies a human vocation, we have already begun to speak about the structure of the vocation, which we now need to consider more closely.

### 5.2.1.2 Upholding the truth in justice: The structure of the human vocation as a sign production

In this section, we will show that the structure of the human vocation that is implied by Rom 1.18 – 21 is a close parallel to the two-part structure of the human vocation we find in Epictetus. We find some evidence of such a structure already in Rom 1.18, but these hints are then confirmed by our analysis of Rom 1.19 – 21, which verses expand and explain Rom 1.18.

We get the first hint about the structure of the human vocation in Rom 1.18. For by “inverting” the phrase τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατέχειν we get a formulation like ἀνέχειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ as a positive correlate that describes the human vocation. We will begin with an analysis of this phrase (1.18) in the light of the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus. Then we will show that this reading bears out for Rom 1.19 – 21, which expand upon and explain Rom 1.18.

In Epictetus, as we have seen, the structure of the human vocation consists of two parts. The first part is to “see” or understand the world in its relation to God (a human being as θεατῆς θεοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν αὐτοῦ). The second part is the appropriate sign production which is grounded in this vision (human

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<sup>44</sup> The readings which think Paul only tactically concedes a possibility for humans which he really does not believe in seem to depend more on theological assumptions about what justification by faith must mean than on a historical contextualisation of Paul’s statements. For the principle in Aristotle, cf. Nussbaum 1994, 61.

being as ἐξηγητής αὐτῶν).<sup>45</sup> For Epictetus, humans can see divine providence for humankind in God’s works; their acts of gratitude for these beneficial works “interpret” them, and thus these actions become signs which express the truth that the world is so governed. In expressing gratitude human beings embody the appropriate response to that truth and in so doing adopt the role they have been assigned in the cosmos.

For Paul, the phrase ἀνέχειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ suggests a similar two-part structure. There is a first part: a truth about God in his relation to the world (ἀλήθεια) which humans need to see.<sup>46</sup> And there is a second part: a right way of being and acting (namely ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) which is grounded in a vision of this truth (ἀλήθεια). That this second part amounts to a sign production is suggested by the fact that these actions “uphold” (ἀνέχειν) the truth. Such actions either produce signs of that truth, or they produce signs which signify the opposite of that truth, and thus “hold it down” (κατέχειν).

Romans 1.18 seems to imply that if humans respond with these actions to God’s truth, their actions no longer amount to πᾶσα ἀσέβεια καὶ ἀδικία. This suggests that a comprehensive range of concrete actions, words, attitudes and relations can become signs.<sup>47</sup> These actions include proper worship (“religion”) and proper moral behaviour (“ethics”), but neither of them are in themselves the point; rather, both are ways in which the genuinely human vocation of producing signs can be fulfilled.

Our result of finding a two-part structure of the human vocation in Rom 1.18 is confirmed by an analysis of the argument that follows in Rom 1.19–21.

Romans 1.19–21 explains in more detail what is stated densely in Rom 1.18. Romans 1.19a further explains the meaning of the ἀλήθεια in 1.18 as τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (“that which can be known about God”). This is specified as τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ and as ἡ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης in Rom 1.20.

In Rom 1.19a, Paul emphasises how manifest “what can be known about God” is among humans (φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς), and in order to state this “manifestness” he adds that God is the one that has made it manifest (1.19b). Paul has no need to insert Rom 1.19b as a safe-guard against the kind of “natural

<sup>45</sup> The formulation is based on Epictetus 1.6.19 (cf. section 4.5).

<sup>46</sup> Here we agree with Käsemann’s interpretation of the ἀλήθεια als “die Erschlossenheit der göttlichen Welt und ihres Anspruches” (1980, 35). Käsemann even quotes Epictetus 1.6.19 among the parallels for Greek natural theology (36), but misses the point that it is a statement about human vocation.

<sup>47</sup> In Greco-Roman context such a formulation suggests both actions towards God and towards fellow humans in a comprehensive manner. For this context, see Dihle 1968.

theology” which some Protestant interpreters find troublesome.<sup>48</sup> This is absolutely clear from Rom 1.20a, which explains how humans can get to know this truth without any need for “special revelation”. In this way, Paul confirms that the first part of the human vocation is to understand God in his relation to the world, to the extent that he can be known (which is: to the extent that he has made himself knowable).

Only in Rom 1.21 does Paul further address the second part of the human vocation, the response in a sign production.<sup>49</sup> Inverting the negative statement of Rom 1.21, we can formulate this as θεὸν ὡς θεὸν δοξάσαι or εὐχαριστήσαι. These formulations strongly support our interpretation that the appropriate human response, the ἀνέχειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν δικαιοσύνη, consists in a sign production: God is to be given honour (δοξάσαι) and to be thanked (εὐχαριστήσαι), in the manner in which specifically human beings can do so, that is by articulating the appropriate response to how God is (his δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης [1.20]) in speech, and in actions which signify and embody it appropriately. This can be supported from our reading of Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16. We observe that the δοξάσαι is a close parallel to what Epictetus calls ὑμνεῖν τὸν θεόν (1.16.20), which he identifies as his human vocation (1.16.21). Similarly, the εὐχαριστήσαι in Paul exactly matches the εὐχαριστήσαι which we have found to be the “response part” of the human vocation in Epictetus (1.6.2).

Thus, we find Paul presupposing a structure of the human vocation in Rom 1.19–21 which is very similar to the philosophical tradition. Though Paul does not say it here explicitly, within the ancient cultural encyclopedia, it would be clear that only a being that is λογικός could be charged with such a sign producing role within the cosmos. But while he does not yet use the language of λογικός here (he will, of course, do so in Rom 12.1), his explanation in Rom 1.20a of how human beings can come to an understanding of God in so far as he has made himself known to them strongly emphasises the kind of intellectual activity which only the endowment with reason would afford: τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ

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**48** On Protestant “prejudice” which fails to recognise that “Paul employs Greek natural theology” see van Kooten 2008, 344–345, who points out that “these commentators are particularly found among the adherents of Luther and Barth.”

**49** The inexcusability mentioned in Rom 1.20c refers to the failure to have followed through with the link between knowledge and response in action, as Rom 1.21 makes clear (note the δῖοτι). It is stated even before Paul has expanded upon the response bit of the vocation (the ἀνέχειν ... ἐν δικαιοσύνη).

ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται.<sup>50</sup> As we will see in the next section, the concentration on the human mind in Rom 1.18–32, albeit the mind in its corruption, lends further support to our reading of Rom 1.18–32 as being about a failure to be genuinely human.

### 5.2.2 The corruption of the human *proprium* in Rom 1.21–22 and the debased mind of Rom 1.28

In this section, we will show that Paul’s emphasis on the corruption of the human mind in Rom 1.18–32 supports our reading of Romans as being about genuine humanness.

In his critique of the human race in Rom 1.18–32, Paul puts a strong emphasis on the human mind and human thinking (examples are the intellectual perception [νοούμενα καθορᾶται] of God’s invisible nature [1.20], or the statements about knowing and approving such as γνόντες τὸν θεὸν [1.20]; οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει [1.28]; ἐπιγνόντες, συνευδοκοῦσιν [1.32]) and he describes a process of the corruption of human reason and understanding (ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν [1.21d]; ἔσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία [1.21e]<sup>51</sup>; παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν [1.28]), which includes distorted self-knowledge (φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν [1.22]).

As our study of the Greco-Roman context has shown, the endowment with reason is, within the ancient encyclopedia, the human *proprium*<sup>52</sup> (in the earthly sphere), that which makes humans *human*.<sup>53</sup> As such it is the capacity which grounds the human vocation; genuine humanness cannot be achieved without its proper use. These traditions are clearly relevant for Paul. And thus when

<sup>50</sup> For the connection between νοῦς and λόγος and τὸ λογικόν, cf. Philo, *Her.* 232 (τὸ δὲ λογικόν, ὃ δὴ νοῦς ὠνομάσθη), *Spec.* 1.333 (τὸ λογικόν, ὃ δὴ νοῦς ἐστί), *Det.* 83 (ὁ νοῦς καὶ λόγος κέκληται).

<sup>51</sup> The use of καρδία for the seat of human thinking here indexes the use of categories belonging to a Jewish encyclopedia. Even though the Stoics identify the heart as seat of the ἡγεμονικόν, they would not regularly use this expression. On the Stoic debate about the localisation of the ἡγεμονικόν, see especially Annas 1992.

<sup>52</sup> Note that we do not use *proprium* here in the technical sense established by Aristotle, where it only concerns unique properties that do *not* indicate the essence of a thing (Aristotle, *Top.* 102a 18–19). Perhaps the *definiens* would be more precise.

<sup>53</sup> Though cf. the debates on animal reason we mentioned in section 3.1.

Paul speaks about the corruption or loss of that human proprium, he must at the same time be describing the corruption of genuine humanness.<sup>54</sup>

Such a decided emphasis on the role of human understanding would not seem to be necessary, if Paul would be merely concerned with demonstrating that humans are sinful. It makes excellent sense, however, if Paul really is concerned here with the role of human beings in the cosmos, with genuine humanness and the human vocation. If reason, properly used, is what elevates above the other animals, then its wrong use corresponds to a loss of genuine humanness.<sup>55</sup>

That these traditions are relevant for Paul can be seen directly in Rom 1.28 (as part of Rom 1.28–32). For Rom 1.28–32 makes a direct connection between the corruption of the mind and the corruption of genuine humanness. Romans 1.28–32 has the feel of a “peroration” within the argument of Rom 1.18–32 as a textual unit.<sup>56</sup> As such it both recapitulates its main points and, with its heavy enumeration of vices, seems to influence emotions.<sup>57</sup> Within Rom 1.28–32, verses 28 and 32 contain the main statements, while Rom 1.29–31 is an expansion of ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα (Rom 1.28) by means of characterising the subject of this behaviour. Verses 28 and 32 form a kind of *inclusio*<sup>58</sup>, with verse 32 adding the motif of death.

Romans 1.28 draws an explicit connection between a debased mind (ἀδόκιμος νοῦς) and behaviour which is not befitting (ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα). We propose that this is not just a way of speaking about “improper conduct”,<sup>59</sup> but about actions which are not befitting to what humans are meant to be and do, that is, their genuine humanness. For while τὰ καθήκοντα can simply refer to du-

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<sup>54</sup> For an exploration of this theme in terms of the constituent parts of human beings, cf. van Kooten 2008, 375–388. Our focus is more on the normative notions of what it means to be human in the sense of ideals of action and of the exercise of a vocation which is possible given a certain inner constitution (whatever it may be in detail). There is an interesting parallel in Aspasius 130.11–13, in the context of discussing the Aristotelian concept of brutality (θηριότης): ἔνεστι γὰρ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἰσχυρὰ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ὁ νοῦς. ὅταν οὖν διεφθαρμένη ᾖ ἡ τοιαύτη ἀρχή, μεγάλων κακῶν αἰτία γίνεται (“For the powerful principle in reason is mind, and when such a principle has been corrupted, then, it is the cause of great evils” [transl. Konstan 2006]).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. e.g. the language of Epictetus 2.9.3 (“destroyed what is human in you, and ... failed to fulfil your part as a human being” [transl. Hard]), as discussed in section 4.2.

<sup>56</sup> The end of the unit is clearly marked, formally, by the beginning of a “diatribal” address in Rom 2.1. There could be disagreements about the beginning of the unit.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Lausberg 2008, §431–442 for the two main functions of a *peroratio*, namely *recapitulatio* and *affectus*.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. especially ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει (Rom 1.28) with ἐπιγνώστες (Rom 1.32); ἀδόκιμος νοῦς (Rom 1.28) with συνευδοκεῖν (Rom 1.32) (to something presented as obviously wrong).

<sup>59</sup> As Furnish 1968, 103 paraphrases ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα.

ties, it is nevertheless implicitly a relative term: something is becoming to *someone* (in a specific role or identity).<sup>60</sup> The term καθήκον can be used precisely to denote what is becoming to human beings (or other animals) as such.

In this way it is used, for instance, in Cicero's presentation of the Stoic doctrine of οἰκείωσις in *De finibus* 3.20–21,<sup>61</sup> which is a dense summary of the Stoic determination of the goal of human beings.<sup>62</sup> This passage focuses especially on the development of human reason, which in its developed form understands the things that should be done and how they are part of a rational order;<sup>63</sup> in this way human beings can aspire to the goal of a congruence with nature (ὁμολογία/*convenientia*).<sup>64</sup> The nature in question includes both the nature of the universe and the particular nature of human beings.<sup>65</sup> Forschner's explanation of what this ὁμολογία is about provides an excellent example for the phenomenon which our notion of sign production aims to capture:

Gemeint ist mit “*homologia/convenientia*” als dem wahrhaft Guten ... einerseits interne Konsistenz des Handelns ... andererseits ..., dass diese in sich konsistente und stimmige Form des Denkens, Fühlens und Handelns sich in die Ordnung des Kosmos [beziehungsweise] dem vernünftigen Willen Gottes bewusst und willentlich fügt, dass sie auf ihre (begrenzte) Weise die alles gestaltende und ordnende Vernunft der Allnatur spiegelt und darstellt, und

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**60** As can be seen when Cicero renders καθήκον with *officium* and notes examples taken from political life: *consulum officium, senatus officium, imperatoris officium* (*Att.* 16.14.3).

**61** As Cicero explicitly states: *officium – id enim appello καθήκον* (*Fin.* 3.20).

**62** Forschner 2018, 171 (“Zielbestimmung des Menschen”); cf. 163–177 on the Stoic concept of οἰκείωσις (secondary literature: 177 n. 1). Forschner defines καθήκοντα as “Handlungen, die als intersubjektiv zugängliches Verhalten dem Menschen im Blick auf die Stufe seiner Entwicklung und seiner Stellung im sozialen Ordnungsgefüge gemäß sind und angesichts der konkreten Situation zu ihm passen” (172).

**63** *Prima est enim conciliatio hominis ad ea, quae sunt secundum naturam. simul autem cepit intelligentiam vel notionem potius, quam appellant ἔννοιαν illi, viditque rerum agendarum ordinem et, ut ita dicam, concordiam ...* (“Humans’ first attraction is towards the things in accordance with nature; but as soon as they have understanding, or rather become capable of ‘conception’ – in Stoic phraseology *ennoia* – and have discerned the order and so to speak harmony that governs conduct ...” [*Fin.* 3.21; transl. H. Rackham, adapted]). This *ordo* refers to the consistency of the actions among themselves, but also to their congruence with the divine intentionality (cf. Forschner 2018, 173–174 quoted below).

**64** *Ita cognitione et ratione collegit ut statueret in eo collocatum summum illud hominis per se laudandum et expetendum bonum, quod cum positum sit in eo, quod ὁμολογίαν Stoici, nos appellamus convenientiam* (“by exercise of intelligence and reason [humans] infer the conclusion that herein resides the Chief Good of human beings, the thing that is praiseworthy and desirable for its own sake; and that inasmuch as this consists in what the Stoics term *homologia* and we ... may call ‘conformity’” [*Fin.* 3.21; transl. H. Rackham, adapted]).

**65** Forschner 2018, 173.

dass sie das verwirklicht, was die Allnatur uns Menschen im Allgemeinen und dem Individuum im Besonderen zu leisten vorgibt.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, this Stoic philosophical context of καθήκον fits very well with our proposed reading of ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα as referring to those things which not are not becoming to the ideal of genuine humanness and even to sign production.

Our reading is further supported by the observation that Rom 1.29–31 is a list that characterises the agents of ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα. Romans 1.29–31 does not directly list vices such as φθόνος. Rather it characterises those humans as πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ ... μεστοὺς φθόνου ... and so forth (Rom 1.29), changing at the end of verse 29 to direct designations of the wrongdoers by their actions or their qualities (ψιθυριστὰς until ἀνελεήμονας). This suggests that while Rom 1.29–31 does provide examples for the behaviour which falls under ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, its main point is that these actions are so many ways in which humans exhibit an identity which fails to display the genuine humanness for which they would be called and fails to reflect the creational order which they could understand.<sup>67</sup>

Thus we can conclude that Paul does seem to make a link between corruption of the human proprium, the mind, and behaviour which fails to be genuinely human.

### 5.2.3 Restatement in terms of the Jewish traditions about dehumanising idolatry in Rom 1.23–25

Further support for our reading can be found in Rom 1.23. We argue in this section that the corruption of genuine humanness, which was expressed in terms of Greco-Roman traditions in Rom 1.19–21, is restated in Rom 1.23 in terms of the Jewish-scriptural encyclopedia: καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν.<sup>68</sup> This becomes apparent from the similarity with the language used

<sup>66</sup> Forschner 2018, 173–174 (“sowohl die Allnatur als auch die besondere Natur des Menschen und ihre Stellung im Rahmen des Ganzen”).

<sup>67</sup> It also fails to bring about God’s wise order in the world.

<sup>68</sup> Hooker 1960, 300–301 detects references to Adam throughout Rom 1.19–32 (“[o]f Adam it is supremely true that ...”). But even though Greek natural theology traditions are employed by Jewish Hellenistic texts (e. g. Wis 13.1–9), the traditions Paul uses in Rom 1.19–20 predominantly

in Ps 105.20 LXX: καὶ ἠλλάξαντο τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ἐν ὁμοιώματι μόσχου ἔσθοντος χόρτον.<sup>69</sup>

The Psalm recounts the story of Israel in scriptural tradition; and it refers, in the verse quoted, to the Sinai/Horeb incident and to the “production” and worship of the “golden calf” by Israelites encamped at the mountain.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, Rom 1.23 applies to all human beings criticised in 1.18–32. But in both cases, it seems that the formulation of an exchange of δόξα offers a theological comment upon something already described: Ps 105.20 LXX is a theological reframing of what is narrated in Ps 105.19 LXX (the production and worship of idols); Rom 1.23 restates in Jewish theological idiom the failure of human vocation which was already expressed as τὸν θεὸν ὡς θεὸν δοξάσαι in Rom 1.21 or as τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατέχειν in Rom 1.18.<sup>71</sup>

Based on this observation, we propose the following interpretation of Rom 1.23, which confirms our idea of sign production as a human vocation: the δόξα τοῦ ἀφάρτου θεοῦ in Rom 1.23 refers to that which should be displayed (i.e. the *signified*) in a genuinely human sign production.<sup>72</sup> Rom 1.23 describes how the true sign production, which would display and reflect God’s nature appropriately, and thus represent his “glory” in the world, is exchanged for a false sign production, one for which “idols” (as *signifiers*) are emblematic: If human beings produce the true signs, their actions display and reflect God’s nature appropriately, they “uphold” his truth; if they produce idols, they produce negative signs which distort the truth and proclaim falsehood. According to our interpretation of Rom 1.19–21, human beings are called to understand God as he has shown himself and to produce signs that reflect that understanding, and in this way contribute to the ways in which other human beings can come to know God. Their sign production could be instrumental in the ways in which God, acting through human beings, is making himself known. The antithesis of this human vocation in Jewish perspective is the production of idols, because it is based on a wrong understanding of the divine nature, it uses the artistic skill (which the endowment with reason makes possible) for something which dis-

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point to a philosophical context (which does to rule out, of course, that Paul may think of scriptural Adam traditions as well).

69 Hooker 1967 pointed out further parallels between Ps 105 LXX and Rom 1.18–32; an example is the mention of ἐπιθυμία (105.14) with Rom 1.24. Cf. also Jer 2.11 (ὁ δὲ λαὸς μου ἠλλάξατο τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ).

70 Cp. Ps 105.19 LXX (καὶ ἐποίησαν μόσχον ἐν Χωρηβ καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ γλυπτῷ) with Exod 32.8 (ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς μόσχον καὶ προσεκυνήκασιν αὐτῷ καὶ τεθύκασιν αὐτῷ).

71 Cf. ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα (Rom 1.25).

72 For such a use of δόξα, cf. for instance 1 Cor 10.31 (πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε).

plays untruth, and in this way distorts the conditions in which other human beings can come to know God.

This reading implies that the issue in Rom 1.23 not simply true or false worship, even though the verse refers to idolatry. Our reading of Rom 1.18–25 throughout suggests that Paul is concerned with the genuine human role within the cosmos, which includes both worship and just behaviour (or “religion” and “ethics”), but both as ways in which humans produce appropriate signs reflecting God into the world. Paul, then, does not simply speak about idolatry as the false kind of “religion”, but finds the paradigm of the worship or manufacture of “idols” a suitable way of talking about what happens when humans fail to fulfil the “response part” of the human vocation, which consists in any acts, words or relations which appropriately reflect God.

This emphasis on genuine humanness is supported by a consideration of the Jewish traditions that ridicule the production of “idols” and criticise idol worship as dehumanising practice. In Jewish idol polemics,<sup>73</sup> idols are characterised by the absence of those features which one finds in living human beings: idols lack sense perception,<sup>74</sup> the ability to produce sounds or to speak,<sup>75</sup> the ability to move,<sup>76</sup> to eat,<sup>77</sup> to breathe,<sup>78</sup> to answer,<sup>79</sup> to help, to save,<sup>80</sup> to act, or even to protect and defend themselves.<sup>81</sup> They are said to be false,<sup>82</sup> worthless,<sup>83</sup> lifeless,<sup>84</sup> and powerless.<sup>85</sup> Those who produce them are said to be or become like them,<sup>86</sup> and so are those who trust in them or worship them.<sup>87</sup> Both are said

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**73** Cf. Isa 44.9–20; Isa 46.1–13; Jer 10.3–15; Ep Jer (*passim*); Wis 13.10–14.31. Cf. Philo, *Decal.* 52–81.

**74** Deut 4.28; Ps 115.5–7 (cf. Ps 135.15–18).

**75** No sound: Ps 115.7; no speech: Ps 115.5; Jer 10.5; Ep Jer 6.7.

**76** Ps 115.7; Isa 46.7; Jer 10.4–5.

**77** Deut 4.28.

**78** Jer 10.14 (οὐκ ἔστιν πνεῦμα ἐν αὐτοῖς).

**79** Isa 46.7.

**80** Ep Jer 6.36, 49, 54.

**81** Isa 57.13; Ep Jer 10.12–22, 27, 64.

**82** Isa 44.20 (Ψεῦδος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ μου); Jer 10.14 (ψευδής); Ep Jer 6.7 (ψευδής), 6.44 (πάντα τὰ γινόμενα αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν ψευδῆ), 6.50 (γνωσθήσεται μετὰ ταῦτα ὅτι ἐστὶν ψευδῆ).

**83** Jer 10.15; Ep Jer 6.26 (ἀτιμία).

**84** Wis 14.29 (ἄψυχοι).

**85** Ep Jer 6.54.

**86** Ps 115.8, 135.18, cf. Wis 14.8. The idols cannot make any actual difference in the world, yet their effect as signs may be pernicious. Those who become like them are unable to act in ways that promote wise ordering in the world, and they produce distorted signs.

to be put to shame.<sup>88</sup> Those who make them and worship them are said to be without understanding or knowledge, foolish, or stupid,<sup>89</sup> even though their production requires skill.<sup>90</sup> These practices are called vain and false.<sup>91</sup> These idols are contrasted with the true God,<sup>92</sup> but sometimes also with human beings,<sup>93</sup> often their makers; with animals,<sup>94</sup> or sometimes even with other things.<sup>95</sup>

Thus these traditions support our claim that Rom 1.23 is not just about false “religion”, but rather uses idol images to speak about the ultimate corruption of the genuine human vocation. Idols represent in Jewish tradition the very worst that humans can do. And the production of idols is a clear example of sign production: human actions which signify a wrong conception of God and human beings.<sup>96</sup> These signs can even become “snares” for others.<sup>97</sup>

Further support for such a reading may perhaps be found in the forms (human, bird, four-footed animals, reptiles) mentioned in Rom 1.23. It seems significant that the list begins with the φθαρτὸς ἄνθρωπος, a dead statue of perishable humans, and then proceeds to mention the animals over which human beings would have been set to rule according to Gen 1 and Ps 8. Romans 1.23 then describes how humans, instead of offering a sign production from fully alive human beings which reflects God into the world and summons the praise of creation,<sup>98</sup> have instead produced “dead” human statues, or even worse, images of subhuman animals, which are emblematic for the corruption of genuine humanness.

What we find in Rom 1.24–25 coheres well with our reading of Rom 1.23. The notion of a vocation which consists in a sign production can make sense of the

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**87** Ps 115.8, 135.18, cf. 2 Kings 17.15 (which in the LXX reads ἐπορεύθησαν ὀπίσω τῶν ματαίων καὶ ἐματαιώθησαν). Cf. also Philo, *Decal.* 80 (where the worshippers of images of animals are compared to ἀνθρωποειδῆ θηρία).

**88** Producers: Isa 44.9; Jer 10.14; worshippers: Isa 44.11; 42.17; Ep Jer 6.26, 39.

**89** Isa 44.18–20 (with verse 19 a “interior monologue” of their wrong thinking); Jer 10.14 (ἐμωράνθη πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀπὸ γνώσεως, cf. Rom 1.22); Ep Jer 6.41.

**90** Jer 10.9; cf. Wis 14.2.

**91** Jer 10.3 (μάταια, cf. Rom 1.21). Cf. 2 Kings 17.15.

**92** E. g. Isa 46.1–13.

**93** E. g. Ep Jer 6.11.

**94** Ep Jer 6.68.

**95** Ep Jer 6.59; Wis 14.1.

**96** Cf. for the sign value of idols a statement like Ep Jer 6.50 (γνωσθήσεται μετὰ ταῦτα ὅτι ἐστὶν ψευδῆ, τοῖς ἔθνεσι πᾶσι τοῖς τε βασιλεῦσι φανερόν ἔσται ὅτι οὐκ εἰσι θεοὶ ἀλλὰ ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ οὐδὲν θεοῦ ἔργον ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐστίν).

**97** Cf. Wis 14.11.

**98** This formulation is inspired by Wright 2013, 1509: “summing up the worship of creation and reflecting his wise order into his world”.

connection between Rom 1.24 and 1.25 in the following way: Rom 1.24 describes a process in which humans use their bodies, the means of agency given to them for appropriate sign production, for unethical acts (ἀκαθαρσία) which bring dishonour (ἀτιμάζεσθαι).<sup>99</sup> This does not just refer to the dishonour they bring upon themselves through such acts, but also to the fact that instead of displaying genuine humanness, they become signs of its distortion.

Romans 1.25 is a redescription of Rom 1.24, which brings out that the issue is a vocation of sign production, not merely ethics. The connection οἵτινες makes this clear: those who ended up ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν are those who have by these acts exchanged the truth with the lie (μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει), that is, they have produced signs which reinforce the ψεῦδος, instead of producing signs of the ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ. Paul's Jewish monotheist convictions assume there to be a creational order which includes appropriate relations between male and female: appropriate sexual behaviour according to a Jewish sexual ethics<sup>100</sup> amounts to a sign production which affirms this "natural" (cf. φυσικός [1.26–27]) order; its opposite contradicts the "natural" order and thus upholds the ψεῦδος.

Here there is a significant parallel in Epictetus 1.6, which, as we have seen, is one of the best examples for the human vocation and its structure as a sign production grounded in an understanding of the divine ordering of the world. In Epictetus 1.6.9, male plus female "co-adaption"<sup>101</sup>, sexual desire, and intercourse are signs for the created order and its maker:

And male and female (τὸ δ' ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ), and the desire (προθυμία) that they have for intercourse with one another, and the power that they have to make use of the organs that have been constructed for that purpose (δύναμις ἢ χρηστικὴ τοῖς μορίοις τοῖς κατεσκευασμένοις), do these things not reveal their maker either (ταῦτα ἐμφαίνει τὸν τεχνίτην)? Surely they do.<sup>102</sup>

Thus we find in the traditions to which Epictetus gives expression a link between a human vocation and the example of male and female relations.<sup>103</sup> This link may help explain Paul's choice of sexual relations (Rom 1.26–27) as an exam-

<sup>99</sup> What Paul has in mind with Rom 1.24 becomes clear from his examples in Rom 1.26–27.

<sup>100</sup> Which is, however, also shared by certain philosophers (cf. below).

<sup>101</sup> For the term, see Dobbin 1998, 105.

<sup>102</sup> Transl. R. Hard.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. also the views of Epictetus' teacher Musonius Rufus for whom only marriage and procreation are appropriate contexts for sex (μόνα μὲν ἀφροδίσια νομίζειν δίκαια τὰ ἐν γάμῳ καὶ ἐπὶ γενέσει παίδων συντελούμενα [Diss. 12.7–8]); cf. his designation of other behaviour as "reproaches against a human being" (ἐγκλήματα ἀνθρώπου [Diss. 12.6]; transl. King 2011).

ple,<sup>104</sup> provided that he is really talking about the distortion of the human vocation and about the sign value of human actions (Rom 1.18–25).

Further support for our reading can be found in the language of *σεβάζεσθαι*<sup>105</sup> and *λατρεύειν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα* used in Rom 1.25. While taking the phrase *λατρεύειν τῇ κτίσει* by itself might suggest that this is a way of characterising image-worship, which would thus apply to “religion”, in the context of the paragraph (Rom 1.18–25), in which it also applies as a characterisation of the “ethical” behaviour in Rom 1.24, it is better to take this language to be a comprehensive designation of what human beings should realise in their lives, that is their vocation as human beings. Inverting the language of Rom 1.25, we find *λατρεύειν τῷ κτίσαντι* to be another formulation which positively describes the human vocation, comprising both ethical conduct and worship as actions which produce appropriate signs of the understanding of God that has been made known.

#### 5.2.4 Conclusion for the human vocation presupposed in Rom 1.18–32, implications for a vocational reading of Rom 1–8, and two confirmatory readings

On the basis of the readings offered above, we can conclude that Paul’s critique of the human race in Rom 1.18–32 strongly resonates with both philosophical traditions about genuine humanness and the human vocation and with Jewish-scriptural traditions about genuine humanness. Reading Paul’s language about human sin *à rebours* (so far as purely soteriological readings might be concerned), we have found that Rom 1.18–32 presupposes an account of the human vocation which sees both true worship and right ethical conduct as actions through which humans produce signs that are the appropriate response to what God has made known of himself.

We had already established that in Rom 5.12–21 Paul assumes that genuine humanness and the exercise of the human vocation are possible in the present for all those in Christ. We have now shown that in Rom 1.18–32 Paul’s argument amounts to a critique of the failure to be genuinely human and to fulfil the human vocation in the cosmos. Before we can show how Rom 6 details how this vocation looks like for Christ-followers, we need to sketch how the positive

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<sup>104</sup> Paul may also be looking ahead to Abraham and Sarah in Rom 4 (see our discussion in 5.2.4.2).

<sup>105</sup> The verb would take a direct object in the accusative (e.g. *σεβάζεσθαι θεόν*); here it is omitted, but implied in the dative demanded by *λατρεύειν*.

account of a human vocation presupposed in Rom 1.18 – 32 relates to the fulfilment of that vocation for those in Christ. This requires us to distinguish three levels of vocation.

#### 5.2.4.1 Three levels of vocation

There is here a major difference between Epictetus and Paul. While for Epictetus the human vocation concerns all human beings insofar as they are rational animals, for Paul as a Jew there is a division of humanity into Jews and Gentiles, a relation which is decisively transformed by the Christ event. When we try to think together Paul's wrestling with the Jewish way of life, based on the observance of Torah, in its relation to the Christ event, and the philosophical traditions about the human vocation we have found to underlie Paul's argument in Rom 1.18 – 32, especially in Rom 1.18 – 21, it appears that we need to distinguish three different levels:<sup>106</sup>

(1) There is the idea of a human vocation at a general level (1a), which applies to all human beings, but in particular to Gentiles (1b). It has the general structure of a certain understanding of God which is to be reflected in appropriate sign production. Before and apart from Torah and before and apart from Christ, it applies in a particular form: the available understanding of God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) is intelligently perceived from the order of created things; the actions which rightly reflect that understanding would be a basic ethical conduct and a rudimentary aniconic worship. (In this form, it most closely resembles the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus.) Both sides are grounded in the human endowment with reason as their specific capacity: to understand the world in relation to God, one needs a properly perceiving mind, and to figure out the appropriate sign production in a given moment requires discernment based on reason. The "response side" of the vocation also requires a body that is able to display the actions that right thinking determines as the appropriate signs.

(2) There is the idea of the vocation of Israel, which applies only to Jews under Torah.<sup>107</sup> While this is no longer a *human* vocation insofar as it no longer

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<sup>106</sup> We note that our hypothetical account of these three levels already takes into consideration data from Rom 6.

<sup>107</sup> We can only hint at how this seems to relate to Rom 2.17–24. For our reading we suppose that even though the interlocutor is criticised, what is subject to critique is a failure to live up to the self-understanding expressed in Rom 2.17–24, not the self-understanding as such. It is still, however, much more plausible to assume that it is a Jewish self-understanding, despite the efforts of Thiessen 2014, for instance, to argue that Paul's interlocutor "is someone of non-Jewish

applies to all human beings as such, for those who are Jews and hence in a covenant relationship to Israel's God, fulfilling the vocation of Israel is their way of displaying genuine humanness. The general structure of Israel's vocation remains the same: a sign production based on what can be known of God. But the available understanding of God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) is now based on the revelation of God to Israel given in the Torah,<sup>108</sup> while the sign production is regulated by the commandments required by Torah.<sup>109</sup> Torah observance is the means through which members of God's covenant with Israel display their identity as the appropriate response to God's revelation to Moses.

(3) There is the vocation of all those in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. This is a human vocation, which still has the same general form: a sign production based on an understanding of God. But because the Christ event is an act of revelation, what can be known about God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) now includes the story of how God acted in Christ's death and resurrection for the salvation of the world. The appropriate response now consists of actions which are a sign production of that which the good news about Christ proclaims (cf. Rom 1.3–4; Rom 1.16–17). This includes ethical conduct and worship, but both of them as part of a missional existence.<sup>110</sup> This appropriate sign production is one which reflects God's truth as revealed in and about Christ into the world, in everyday life, in worship, and in ethical action. It is an integrated existence, which witnesses to and embodies the truth of the good news. The conditions necessary for the fulfilment of this vocation are spelled out by Paul in Rom 6 (see below).

These three levels should be understood as related to each other.<sup>111</sup> The first level has "nature" (the created order) as a "source" from which the insight can be generated which the actions should display; the second, Torah; the third, the Christ event. At the first level, there is no awareness of "sin" in the source – the regularity of the course of the stars does not tell about human shortcomings. At the second level, at which Torah is the "source", the first level is contained as

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descent who believes he has become a Jew" (379). And the point is more than simply to say, in effect, "Jews, too, are sinful" (e.g. Michel 1978, 127: Rom 2.17–29 becomes a "Radikalisierung des Gerichtsurteils, das Paulus als Verkündiger des Evangeliums über das Judentum ausspricht."). By contrast, cf. Wright 2013, 838.

**108** Cf. Rom 2.18 (γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα ... ἐκ τοῦ νόμου); Rom 2.19 (ἔχοντα τὴν μὴ μὴ μὴ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ).

**109** Cf. how in Rom 2.23 a παράβασις τοῦ νόμου constitutes an act of τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζειν.

**110** For our use of "missional", cf. our remarks in section 1.4.

**111** We note again here our dependence on and agreement with Wright 2013, ch. 10 on the purpose of Israel's vocation in Paul's understanding. We go further than Wright in our use of the notion of a sign production and by establishing a connection to the Greco-Roman traditions of vocation that are part of Paul's synthesis.

well (as Genesis tells about the creation of the world as a place of God's order). At this level there is awareness of human sin: Torah both contains a narrative about sinful human action and its commandments and prohibitions already show awareness of "sin". The behaviour which displays covenant membership includes stipulations concerning sin and its effects. The sign production to which Israel is called already contains a "response" to human sin: Israel is to mark her difference from the sinful and idolatrous behaviour of the Gentile world around it, it is to be light for the Gentile world.<sup>112</sup> The Torah also already contains a future perspective in which Israel fails to obey its vocation (Deut 27–32; Lev 26). At the third level, where the Christ event is the "source", there is awareness of the previous levels, including Israel's vocation and Israel's failure to fulfil it. For Paul, it is only through what happened in Christ that rescue from sin has been achieved. This makes possible a sign production which points to the messiah Jesus as the one in whom Israel's vocation and through it, the vocation of a human being has been fully achieved. Its effect is that now others are able to produce the signs which correspond to the human vocation. They are signs of the way God has revealed himself precisely in the Christ event, understood as the moment which brings both Israel's history with God to a decisive turning point, and through this, the story of all human beings. The messiah's obedience to his vocation, culminating in his death and resurrection, is a response that dealt with human sin, and thus dealt with the human failure to produce the appropriate signs, and even with their actively producing negative signs.<sup>113</sup>

Having made these distinctions, we are in a position to answer how the vocation of Christ-followers (as it will be described in more detail in Rom 6) relates to the human vocation presupposed in Rom 1.18–32: The vocation of Christ-followers is the fulfilment of the general human vocation, because it shares the same general structure (an understanding of God reflected in sign production). But it fulfils it under different conditions: what can be known about God has changed, the context of other humans' failure to fulfil their vocation as human beings and their adverse sign production has been in principle dealt with, and, as we shall see, the mind has been renewed and the bodily conditions have changed through baptism.

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**112** Cf. Isa 49.6 (τέθεικά σε ... εἰς φῶς ἔθνῶν τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς) and Rom 2.19–20 (in particular: φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει).

**113** Cf. Rom 1.29–31, Rom 2.24. It is in *these* conditions that the Christ event has taken place, cf. Rom 5.16c. This is of course about "salvation" but not as it is normally seen. The mind is renewed and the bodily conditions have changed such that they are "rescued" to fulfil their calling as human beings, both in the present *and* in the consummated new creation.

In our reading of Rom 1.18–4.25 with a view to genuine humanness, we have so far focused on Rom 1.18–32. Before we move on to Rom 6, it will be worth briefly to consider two other passages in Rom 1.18–4.25 which strengthen our case.

#### 5.2.4.2 Two confirmatory readings: Rom 3.23 and Rom 4.18–25

We begin with Rom 3.23. Romans 3.23 contains a recapitulatory remark (similar to Rom 3.9 [πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι], but already within a new section [3.21–26]) which sums up the conditions of the “old” humanity as πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ. This verse suggests either an equivalence or at least a close relation between ἁμαρτανεῖν and ὑστερεῖσθαι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ. We have argued above that the δόξα τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ in Rom 1.23 should be understood as that which the sign production in which the human vocation consists should signify, that is, that which to display about who God is within creation is the task of human beings (based on the insight which would be available to them). We suggest that what Rom 1.23 said specifically about the first level<sup>114</sup> of knowledge about God (ἀφθάρτος indicates this), Rom 3.23 says about all human beings, Jews and Gentiles,<sup>115</sup> before the messiah (i. e. before the reversal that became possible in the Christ event as described in Rom 5.12–21): all human beings have sinned, “missed the mark” of genuine humanness, “failed of their purpose” (ἥμαρτον),<sup>116</sup> and thereby they have fallen short of the glory of God, that is, they have “failed to do justice”<sup>117</sup> (in their actions) to the glory of God which their actions should have displayed. For Paul, then, we propose that human beings give God glory if they fulfil their genuine human vocation and display his justice in the world.<sup>118</sup> If they are doing this, then God is displaying himself through them, just as in the case of the messiah Jesus, what happened in his life and death became the vehicle for the ἔνδειξις τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ.<sup>119</sup> Hence, we find further support from Rom 3.23 that

114 The “level” refers to the “levels of vocation” discussed in the previous section.

115 Cf. Rom 3.23.

116 Cf. LSJ, s.v. ἁμαρτάνω.

117 Cf. LSJ, s.v. ὑστερέω.

118 Cf. our reading of glory is similar to Wright’s statement (2013, 488) that “[h]umans are not to be passive recipients of God’s mercy and grace; they are to have ‘glory’, in the sense that they are to be given stewardship of the world, as the creator always intended.” Our emphasis on sign production, however, puts less emphasis on the interpretation of the Genesis narrative (“stewardship”), and more on the philosophical traditions about human beings as rational and hence communicative beings. Cf. also Adams 1997, 65.

119 Rom 3.25 and 3.26.

what is at stake in Rom 1.18–4.25 is the human failure to be genuinely human and to display the glory of God.

The issue of genuine humanness is also part of the point in Paul's discussion of Abraham in Rom 4.<sup>120</sup> As Edward Adams has argued, Paul's portrayal of the figure of Abraham in Rom 4 represents an explicit reversal of Rom 1.18–32.<sup>121</sup> This is particularly clear in Rom 4.18–25, especially in the description of Abraham as having given God glory (δοῦς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ [Rom 4.20]), which stands in contrast to Rom 1.21 (τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν).<sup>122</sup> Adams identifies as further links between Rom 1 and 4 (a) the reference to God as creator Rom 1.20, 1.25 and Rom 4.17; and (b) the δύναμις of God in Rom 1.20 as one of the attributes that can be known, which is echoed in Rom 4.21 in Abraham's conviction that God is δυνατός to do as he has promised.<sup>123</sup> Adams further argues that a Jewish tradition about Abraham's rejection of idolatry and his recognition of the true God underlies Paul's portrait in Rom 4.<sup>124</sup>

The idea of Abraham as a figure who represents a reversal from what went wrong with humanity is also present in the Jewish tradition which Wright has identified, in which Abraham is understood to be part of the solution to the problem of sinful humanity since Adam.<sup>125</sup>

These Jewish traditions suggest that for Paul, the scriptural figure of Abraham displays genuine humanness even in a time before the law is given, in contrast to the corrupted humanity which fails to do so:<sup>126</sup> Abraham (i) thinks clearly about God and his promises,<sup>127</sup> (ii) he praises God by giving him glory,<sup>128</sup> (iii) he

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**120** On the links between Rom 4 and Rom 1 see Adams 1997.

**121** Adams 1997.

**122** For interpreters who have noted this link, see Adams 1997, 47 n. 1.

**123** Adams 1997, 51–55.

**124** Adams 1997, 59. We may note that many of the texts adduced (55–59) are from Philo (e.g. *Virt.* 211–216, *Abr.* 68–72, *Her.* 97–99), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.155–156) and other Hellenistic Jewish writers (see his footnote 27), and hence may be influenced by philosophical tradition. For Stoic philosophy in the creation theology of Philo's *De Abrahamo* see Niehoff 2018, 102–103.

**125** For this tradition, see Wright 2013, 792–795. *Gen. Rab.* 14.6 is adduced by Wright as a late, but particularly clear example of a tradition he sees represented already earlier.

**126** Note also the motif of hope (Rom 4.18) with Philo's exposition of hope as a sign of genuine humanness (see section 2.2.6.4).

**127** Rom 4.17 (where πιστεύειν has a clear cognitive content); Rom 4.19–20 (the κατανοεῖν is directed to the conditions which make it seem impossible for a child to be born according to the promise, but this does not cause Abraham to doubt, in view of what he holds to be true about God's creative δύναμις [Rom 4.17]).

**128** Rom 4.20.

fulfils his vocation as a human being;<sup>129</sup> and he (iv) produces the sign which is Isaac.<sup>130</sup>

We only have space to briefly expand upon the last point: Abraham operates with a certain understanding of who God is, in the way he has made himself known to him (Rom 4.17). This is spelled out in terms of God's creative power to create from nothing (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα) and in terms of resurrection (τοῦ ζωοποιῶντος τοὺς νεκρούς). God promises him a son (Rom 4.18) and Abraham's trust in this promise amounts to a sign production, because this human act signifies that God is able to do (Rom 4.21) what corresponds to his understanding of him (Rom 4.17). Thus this act of faith reflects this truth, and the consequence is that it amounts to a sign production of δικαιοσύνη (Rom 4.22) and brings God glory (Rom 4.20). The conditions in which he exercises his faith are cast in resurrection terms: Abraham's old age and Sarah's "barrenness" are expressed in terms of the language of death (his σῶμα is νενεκρωμένον; νέκρωσις τῆς μήτρας), such that Abraham's preception of the situation (κατανοεῖν [Rom 4.19]) fits with an understanding of God who creates life from death in Rom 4.17. This brings Abraham's faith as an act of genuinely human sign production into a close parallel with the belief in the resurrection of Jesus expressed in Rom 4.24. Thus, we conclude that Abraham is, within Romans, also a figure which to some extent anticipates the genuine humanness which has now, as a consequence of the Christ event, become a possibility for all those who believe (Rom 5.12–21). With this last consideration we have returned full circle to Rom 5.12–21 and are now prepared to see how Paul unfolds what the vocation of Christ-followers looks like in Rom 6.

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**129** This is suggested by the fact that Abraham's πίστις is "reckoned" εἰς δικαιοσύνην (Rom 4.9) according to the quotation from Gen 15.6. The point that this occurred while Abraham was uncircumcised makes Abraham into a figure whose πίστις amounts to a sign production of δικαιοσύνη: Abraham's circumcision is interpreted by Paul as sign (σημεῖον) which is the seal of his δικαιοσύνη τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ (Rom 4.11). (This verse incidentally shows Paul can also thematically operate with the category of sign production, which we have adduced as an interpretative device.)

**130** Which is, however, only implied, not narrated by the text of Rom 4. In fathering a child despite his and Sarah's old age, he is perhaps introduced as contrasting with Rom 1.26–27. The point that is developed in the text is Abraham's faith that God will keep his promise about a son from Sarah.

### 5.3 Rom 6 explains the new identity for those in Christ and their vocation

We begin by briefly recapitulating what we have argued so far: We have already shown (in section 5.1) that in Rom 5.12–21 Paul explains the significance of the Christ event as the inauguration of a new way of being human, one in which genuine humanness has at last become possible, in contrast to the “old” humanity which has failed to live up to the human calling. We have further shown (in section 5.2) that Paul’s critique of the human race in Rom 1.18–32 implies a structure of the human vocation which is very similar to philosophical traditions about the role of human beings in the cosmos. This structure we have determined to be a sign production based upon the available understanding of God in relation to the world. We have seen that just as in the philosophical tradition, so also in Paul, the human vocation is grounded in the specific human capacity to think and reason.

Yet there are important differences between Paul and the philosophical tradition (for which we here take Epictetus as “spokesperson”): as we have proposed (in section 5.2.4.1), for Paul, in contrast to Epictetus, the structure of the human vocation evolves “dynamically”, because what can be known about God changes, and based upon this the appropriate sign production changes.

Another difference concerns the role of the body: for Epictetus the body is only accidentally involved in ethical action, since what determines right conduct is right judgment.<sup>131</sup> But for Paul, the body is crucial: the body is that bit of creation for which a human being is responsible and which can be used either to display the appropriate human sign production or its opposite (which becomes particularly clear in Rom 6).

A third major difference emerges from Rom 1.18–32. As we have seen, Rom 1.18–32 describes a process of corruption which undermines the exercise of the human vocation: it tells of the corruption of the human mind and of the incapacitation of the body, the means of sign production, being overpowered by desires. For Epictetus, right instruction and training is needed for human beings to achieve genuine humanness,<sup>132</sup> but no “eschatological” turning point is needed, as there is for Paul, and no liberation from the conditions described as the “rule of sin”.

In this section we aim to show that in Rom 6 Paul explains the vocation of all those who belong to Christ as a sign production that displays what God has

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. e.g. Epictetus 2.5.20–22 about the *σωμάρτιον* as among the externals.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. e.g. Epictetus 3.2.

done in the Christ event and how this vocation has become possible through Christ. This is of great importance for our argument, as Paul picks up in Rom 12.1b what he explains here.

We will proceed in two steps: we will show (1) that Rom 6.1–11 explains how through the messiah’s death and resurrection the conditions for genuine humanness have decisively changed, how these changes apply to Christ-followers, and that these changes mean that there is now a particular vocation for all Christ-followers; (2) that Rom 6.12–23 explains that this vocation takes the form of a sign production which displays the new reality inaugurated by Christ’s death and resurrection in the actions performed by the liberated body.

### 5.3.1 Rom 6.1–11: How genuine humanness has become possible through Christ

As we have seen, in Rom 1.18–32 Paul has described a process in which human beings have become corrupted in their thinking and have distorted their vocation. In Rom 5.12–21 the consequence of this distortion was interpreted as the rule of “death” through human sin. But through Christ’s death and resurrection, a reversal has occurred, which Paul has described as the possibility that those who belong to Christ now “rule in life” (Rom 5.17) and that grace rules through δικαιοσύνη, leading to the life of the new age (Rom 5.21).<sup>133</sup>

We will now show that Paul assumes in Rom 6.1–11 that somehow<sup>134</sup> through Christ, the conditions have changed,<sup>135</sup> such that those who belong to

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**133** Which we have interpreted in terms of the exercise of “genuine humanness” and “sign production” in section 5.1.3.

**134** For our purposes, we do not need to guess how Paul thinks such participation works, and thus we will leave vague terms like “somehow” in our discussion. Cf. the remarks of Sanders 1977, 522 about our lack of appropriate categories to think about “participation”; the matter is important, but “more opaque to research than is thought” (549). Others have not been deterred by Sanders’ remarks and investigated further, e.g. Macaskill 2013, the contributions in Thate et al. 2014. For Wright’s account in terms of incorporative messiahship, cf. Wright 2013, 825–835.

**135** These conditions can be thought of in various models, which can also be combined: they could be anthropological (for instance the power of the desires of the body has been curbed [cf. Rom 6.12]); they could be “social” (for instance the presence of a community of Christ-followers enables a new kind of walk of life [cf. Rom 12.10]); they could be pneumatological (the indwelling of the Spirit enables new forms of agency [cf. Rom 8.5]); they could be demonological or related to cosmic forces (which could also be spelled out in terms of atonement categories, so for example Wright 2016, 388 “the creator God overthrowing on the cross the powers that had kept the nations captive”); they could be developed in terms of baptism or “participation” in

him are bodily capable of displaying in their sign production the δικαιοσύνη which is their genuine human vocation. Such a vocational reading makes better sense than a moralistic one, which assumes there is a problem for ethics given Paul's teaching on justification.

We will first go through the main points on which our reading is based, before we comment on further details and answer objections:

First, Paul assumes in Rom 6.3b that the “we” he talks about in Rom 6.1–11 have all been baptised εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. They are the same people who have been described as οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες in Rom 5.17.

Second, Paul interprets this baptism as being into Christ's death (Rom 6.3b, 4b), such that those who have been baptised εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν have been “buried” with him (Rom 6.4a) and thus have in some sense “shared” in his death (Rom 6.5a).

Third, in Rom 6.6b Paul claims that this “death” in baptism marks the end of ὁ παλιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος (Rom 6.6b), who has in some sense partaken of the crucifixion (συνεσταυρώθη). Even though Paul does not explicitly speak of a καινὸς ἄνθρωπος, it is nevertheless implicit in his statement that through this “death” in baptism a new way of being human has begun, one in which genuine human life is possible.<sup>136</sup>

Fourth, in Rom 6.6c (ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας) Paul claims that, as a result of this “death” of the παλιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος,<sup>137</sup> for those in Christ the σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας is abolished, set aside, or made powerless.<sup>138</sup> This refers to a change in the bodily conditions for those who belong to Christ. The same change is in view in the language of having died to sin in Rom 6.2b. Romans 6.12b makes it clear that the change is to be understood as a reversal of the incapacitation of the body being overpowered by desires described in Rom 1.18–32.

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Christ, or in terms of the concept of “assimilation to God” (on which cf. van Kooten 2008, 124–219) and so on. For our purposes, we do not need to attempt to settle the matter here or decide among the various more or less compatible accounts. In any case, Paul seems to put more weight on the fact that a new way of living is now possible than spelling out how this happens, not least in ways we might neatly map onto the categories we would like to apply to answer such questions.

**136** A similar point could be made about ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος in Rom 12.2, which we like many others take to imply a contrast with ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων.

**137** The ἵνα in 6b should be taken as consecutive.

**138** Cf. BDAG, sv. καταργέω.

Fifth, in Rom 6.6d (τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ) Paul claims that this change in the bodily conditions implies that the Christ-followers' "we"<sup>139</sup> no longer need to serve "sin." The language of δουλεύειν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (Rom 6.6d) is used to refer to the same state as the language of ἐπιμένειν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (Rom 6.1b) or ζῆν ἐν [τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ] (Rom 6.2c); this is the same state in which, in the language of Rom 6.12a, ἡ ἁμαρτία [βασιλεύει] ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι, and in which their members become ὄπλα ἀδικίας. In other words, it seems that Paul claims that they have been liberated from a state in which their bodies have been producing signs which display the rule of sin and of injustice.

Sixth, instead, Paul claims, Jesus-followers are now in a state in which they can walk in the newness of life (ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατεῖν [Rom 6.4c]). This is what we have earlier called "eschatological" life; it is the same kind of life that Paul speaks of in Rom 5.17 as βασιλεύειν ἐν ζωῇ. This new state is also one in which they can ζῆν τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Rom 6.11b). While this description appears as the object of λογίζεσθαι in Rom 6.11b, this does not mean that Paul considers its truth to be dependent upon the act of λογίζεσθαι; however, in order for human beings to realise this truth in their actions, they need to think in this way.

Seventh, and to anticipate our argument, in Rom 6.13 Paul explains that because of this new, genuine, eschatological "life", they are now in a position to be sign producers of that very life and of δικαιοσύνη: they are to present themselves τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντες and their members as ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ.

The conclusion from this is that all those in Christ have been transformed and enabled for a vocation which is a sign production of the new life and of δικαιοσύνη.

The following comments need to be made to defend and clarify our reading.

First, Paul's logic in this passage relies on several and interrelated meanings of "life" and "death", as we have already seen in discussing Rom 5.12–21. We may discuss these meanings in relation to the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα. Human beings are living beings (ζῶα) but they are also mortal (θνητὰ). What happened to the one human being, Christ, is that he biologically died (cf. Rom 6.3c), that he was raised from the dead (Rom 6.9b), in such a way that he will no longer biologically die (Rom 6.9c). In having overcome biological death, Christ has also overcome "metaphorical" death, which no longer has a claim (κυριεύει) upon him. Through his biological death, Christ has "died" to sin (Rom 6.10b), and because of this now has a new, genuine, eschatological ("metaphorical") life (Rom 6.10c–d), in addition to his new "biological" life.

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139 For the expression, cf. Wolter 2014, 409.

For those in Christ, through baptism something has happened, which allows them to overcome “metaphorical” death, even though they are still mortal (cf. the θνητὸν ὑμῶν σῶμα [Rom 6.12a]).<sup>140</sup> They can be assured that they will be raised from the dead in the future (cf. Rom 8.11), but they already have a new kind of life in the present: having died with Christ, they also live with Christ (συζήσομεν [Rom 6.8b]). It is best to understand this as a reference both to the future resurrection (after biological death) and to the new kind of life in the present (after “death” in baptism); for in the verses that follow (Rom 6.9–10) both aspects are mentioned with regards to Christ, as we have just seen, and then applied to Christ-followers in Rom 6.11 (οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς). The future indicative form συζήσομεν is not a problem for our interpretation: just as in Rom 5.17, so also here, the form occurs in a syntactical context in which no absolute tense interpretation is required on grammatical grounds.<sup>141</sup>

Second, in view of the definition of human beings as λογικά, it is noteworthy how much emphasis is laid on right thinking in this passage. While ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε (Rom 6.3a) is rhetorical, Paul stresses knowing in Rom 6.6a (τοῦτο γινώσκοντες), in Rom 6.9a (εἰδότες), and very prominently in Rom 6.11 (λογίζεσθε).<sup>142</sup> In all of these instances, what is important is the content of the thinking: in Rom 6.6, it is self-knowledge about the past which is overcome through Christ; in Rom 6.9, it is an implication of Christ’s resurrection for Christ himself (which seems to include what is said in Rom 6.10); in Rom 6.11 it is again a self-knowledge about the change in conditions which occurred so that they are now “dead to sin”,<sup>143</sup> and living for God through Christ. Throughout the passage, Paul has been concerned with explaining the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection for the new way of being human, and it is this understanding which Paul encourages Jesus-followers to think through. This understanding is precisely such that the present existence of Jesus-followers is cast in “resurrection” terms in Rom 6.11: they have not yet overcome “biological” death but they can already overcome, through Christ, “metaphorical” death, and live a new, genuine life to God in the present.

Third, it follows from these two explanations that Paul, in Rom 6.1–11, really does seem to describe a new humanity, a new way of being θνητὰ λογικά ζῶα: one which is mortal (θνητά), but in a sense in which actually has come through

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**140** This rests upon an understanding of the messiah “somehow” representing his people (cf. our comments above).

**141** One might make a similar point about Rom 6.5b.

**142** It bears pointing out that also πιστεύομεν in Rom 6.8b appears to have a clear cognitive sense.

**143** Thus it summarises the insight of Rom 6.6 (cf. also 6.2b).

“death”; which is thinking (λογικά), but what they are thinking about (the implications of Christ’s resurrection for the cosmos) is more important than the fact that they are thinking; which is living (ζῶα), but which is alive with the new life, alive to God in the messiah Jesus. (In all these ways, Paul’s Jewish and messianic understanding takes him significantly past Epictetus.)

Fourth, it has further become apparent from the previous explanations that for Paul this new humanity has only become a possibility through Christ. Through the messiah Jesus, his death and resurrection, the conditions for genuine humanness have changed in two ways: (a) in the Christ event a fresh truth about God has been revealed, which has completely reshaped what can be known about God, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 1.19), on which the human vocation as a sign production is based; and (b) the body, the means of sign production, has been liberated, through baptism as a sharing in Christ’s death and resurrection, from being a σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, such that it is now able to produce the signs which appropriately give expression to the new understanding of God.

Thus, based on the steps of our reading and these explanations, we can conclude that Paul explains in Rom 6.1–11 how genuine humanness has become possible through Christ. Christ has restored the conditions in which the exercise of the human vocation becomes possible; the shape it now takes is what Paul explains, as we now show, in Rom 6.12–23.

### 5.3.2 Rom 6.12–23: The vocation of Christ-followers explained as a sign production for δικαιοσύνη

Rom 6.12–23 is very important for our argument, because Paul here crafts the language and imagery for the vocation of Christ-followers on which he will draw in Rom 12.1b.<sup>144</sup> In this section, we seek to show how this language is best explained by understanding it in terms of a sign production for δικαιοσύνη. We will begin by considering what this means for δικαιοσύνη in Romans; then we will analyse the language of παρίσταναι in Rom 6.12–23.

#### 5.3.2.1 Signs of δικαιοσύνη and the three levels of vocation

We have already proposed three different levels of the human vocation in Paul’s letter to the Romans (section 5.2.4.1). We now have to develop this proposal fur-

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<sup>144</sup> The linguistic links are noted by many interpreters, though their interpretation differs from ours, cf. e.g. Reichert 2001, 234; Barclay 2015, 494, 504–505.

ther with regards to the term δικαιοσύνη. We propose that for all three levels of vocation there is a corresponding notion of δικαιοσύνη. Because the levels of vocation are related to one other, the notions of δικαιοσύνη are related. In all these cases, δικαιοσύνη should be understood as a property both of God and of human beings, in a way that relates them to each other.

At the first, general level of human vocation, the δικαιοσύνη pertains to God as creator of a good creation (including human beings), which becomes manifest and would be, in some sense, “verified” by the right actions of human beings. Human beings who are just in a basic ethical sense uphold the truth of the good creation through their actions (ἀνέχειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ). These two senses are related because if a good creator creates humankind, and humans are evil and unjust, then this calls into question the “justice” of God’s actions as a creator. If creation includes beings which by their exercise of reason can do evil things and fill the earth with a negative sign production, then their actions have the potential to produce material that supports the claim that creation is in fact not good. From this perspective, God’s judgment upon human sin is his necessary distancing of himself from this misrepresentation.

At the second level, that of Israel’s vocation, the δικαιοσύνη pertains to God as the one who made a covenant with Israel to address the problem of human sin, his “covenant faithfulness”,<sup>145</sup> which is upheld on the human side by obedience to the commandments of Torah.<sup>146</sup> The keeping of Torah is the appropriate response to God’s making of a covenant with Israel, which brings to display their allegiance and faithfulness to the covenant, and which produces signs of how God has revealed himself at Sinai and in Israel’s scriptural tradition. Again, these two senses are related, because if God enters into a covenant with Israel, but Israel is unfaithful to the covenant, then this calls into question the “justice” of God’s actions as the one who made a covenant with Israel. The δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ requires human beings who are faithful to God’s covenant with them. Paul hints at this problem, and as God’s justice in his judgment of the world, at the level of Israel’s vocation, in Rom 3.1–8 (cf. especially Rom 3.3–4).

At the third level, that of the vocation of all those in Christ, the δικαιοσύνη pertains to God’s revelation in the good news (Rom 1.17), the good news about Christ’s death and resurrection as the fulfilment of the scriptural promises (Rom 1.1–4). This good news is itself the power for salvation (δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν [Rom 1.16]), because all those who hear and believe it

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145 Cf. Wright 2013, *passim*.

146 Cf. Sanders 1977, 75.

(Rom 1.16) can be rescued, that is, they can be restored into the conditions for genuine humanness: they can start to think truly about how the resurrection of Christ involves their existence as human beings (Rom 6.11), they can use their liberated bodies as means of a sign production which displays this fresh truth about themselves (παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας [Rom 6.13]) and which is an embodied witness to the δικαιοσύνη displayed in the Christ event (τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ [Rom 6.14]). If they are producing signs of this δικαιοσύνη, they are upholding this fresh truth about God in their lives, and their existence becomes missional: it testifies to and embodies the reconciliation brought about in the Christ event. Such an existence then displays the genuine humanness which has become possible through the messiah.

In this way, the existence of those who believe in Christ can become a sign production for the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ about which Rom 3.21–26 speaks. Our proposal for reading δικαιοσύνη is thus similar but goes significantly further than Wolter’s interpretation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in his Romans commentary.<sup>147</sup> To bring out the difference, it will be instructive briefly to quote from Wolter’s summary.

Wolter points out that the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a nominalisation of the statement that God is δίκαιος, and that it primarily denotes a property of God.<sup>148</sup> But while δικαιοσύνη primarily denotes properties, it can also be used metonymically for actions:

“Gerechtigkeit” [bezeichnet] nicht nur eine Eigenschaft ..., sondern auch in metonymischer Weise die Handlungen, die dieser Eigenschaft entsprechen, die aufgrund dieser Eigenschaft getan werden, und die diese Eigenschaft zur sichtbaren und erfahrbaren Darstellung bringen.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, summarising the use of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Jewish tradition, Wolter finds that speaking about δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is always also a way of speaking about “Gottes heilvolle[s] Handeln zugunsten seines Volkes oder zugunsten des einzelnen Frommen”, but in such a way that it is clear that such action is at the same time “die *Manifestation* einer Eigenschaft Gottes”.<sup>150</sup> Wolter explains the link between a property predicated of God and his actions as follows:

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<sup>147</sup> Cf. Wolter 2014, 119–125.

<sup>148</sup> Wolter 2014, 122.

<sup>149</sup> Wolter 2014, 122.

<sup>150</sup> Wolter 2014, 122.

Wenn Gott Gerechtigkeit “tut”, so manifestiert sich in diesem Handeln seine Gerechtigkeit in einer Weise, dass sie für die Menschen erkennbar und erfahrbar wird. Wenn Gottes Gerechtigkeit Ereignis wird, erweist sich darin immer auch das Gott-Sein Gottes, denn nur Gottes Gerechtigkeit ist diejenige Heilsmacht, die eine heilvolle Wirklichkeit zu schaffen vermag.<sup>151</sup>

Wolter denies, however, that this δικαιοσύνη becomes a property of human beings (and of their actions). Rather, Wolter claims that in 2 Cor 5.21 (ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ) Paul describes

die Folge von Gottes Versöhnungshandeln: Weil Gott “uns mit sich durch Christus versöhnt hat” (2 Cor 5.18) und uns dadurch zu einer “neuen Schöpfung” gemacht hat, sind “wir”, d. h. unsere neue Existenz, zur Manifestation des gerechten Handelns Gottes – zur Gerechtigkeitstat Gottes – geworden. Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes wird damit nicht zu einer Eigenschaft der Versöhnten, sondern bleibt eine Eigenschaft Gottes und seines Handelns.<sup>152</sup>

We agree with Wolter that human beings who are redeemed have become a manifestation of God’s δικαιοσύνη. But we go further in claiming that for Paul this δικαιοσύνη also becomes a property which is displayed in the genuinely human acts of the redeemed, and in that sense a property of human beings.<sup>153</sup>

If we posit for Paul that human beings are those beings who are called to make manifest “on earth” who God is and how he is like, then it follows that if God is δίκαιος, then their calling includes acting and living in such a way that their actions become signs of this property of God (and his actions). The redeemed are not merely a manifestation of God’s just action in the way a painting could be said to be a manifestation of the skill of the artist. The liberation which Christ has brought is the liberation of human beings, and this means restoring them to the genuine humanness to which they are called. And as beings capable of action and capable of sign production based on understanding, they are now able rightly to think about the Christ event (Rom 6.11) and display this in their existence and their actions (Rom 6.12).

If one of the ultimate goals of human conduct is a sign production in the earthly, perceptible sphere of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, then “reconciliation” in Christ can be described as not only liberating human beings from the unpleasant consequences (*Unheilsfolgen*) of their sin, but as liberating them for that which they would have been called all along, that is to become those who are enabled to

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<sup>151</sup> Wolter 2014, 122.

<sup>152</sup> Wolter 2014, 124.

<sup>153</sup> Our reading is supported by Wright’s analysis of 2 Cor 5.21 in Wright 2013, 878–885: Paul speaks about his own apostolic ministry as “embodying the divine covenant faithfulness” (881).

produce the signs in which their calling consists: they have been made δίκαιοι so that they can fulfil the human vocation of producing signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. And these signs are specifically signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ such as it has appeared in the Christ event and which the good news proclaims.

### 5.3.2.2 The language of *παρίσταναι* in Rom 6.12–23

Paul uses both language which expresses that all those in Christ have a vocation and language which explains in what this vocation consists. The language of *δουλεῖν*, for instance in Rom 7.6 (ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος), is an example for language which expresses *that* they have a vocation (and points to the conditions that make it possible, here the Spirit). The language of *παρίσταναι* is used by Paul specifically to explain what this vocation consist in. We argue that this language is used by Paul to explain the vocation of Christ-followers as using the body to produce signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ such as it has appeared in the Christ event.

This can best be seen already in the first instances of *παρίσταναι* language in our passage, in Rom 6.12–13:

- 12a So do not let sin rule in your mortal body (Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι),  
 12b so as to obey its desires,  
 13a nor present your members as weapons of ἀδικία to sin (μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ);  
 13b rather, present yourselves to God as such as are alive from the dead (ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας)  
 13c and your members as weapons of δικαιοσύνη to God (καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ).<sup>154</sup>

We suggest that Paul uses the language of *παρίσταναι* here to express what we describe as sign production. The following observations support our conclusion. First, there is a parallelism between 6.12a and 6.13a which suggests that the state in which sin rules in the body of a human being is the same as the state in which that person presents its members as weapons of ἀδικία to sin.<sup>155</sup> This language refers to concrete unjust behaviour (in an ethical sense), but it makes this behaviour a sign, too, of something else, namely of the rule sin. Thus, we see here from

<sup>154</sup> Our translation, leaving ἀδικία and δικαιοσύνη untranslated.

<sup>155</sup> So rightly Wolter 2014, 390.

the negative side that a logic of sign production seems to be employed. This interpretation coheres with our interpretation of the rule of death in Rom 5.17.

Second, in Rom 6.13c–d we see Paul develop the positive counterpart: the bodily conditions have changed for those in Christ (they are now ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας), and their task is now to present themselves as such who have been liberated in this way, and this means using their members to produce signs of δικαιοσύνη. This δικαιοσύνη is the one that has been made manifest in the Christ event (Rom 3.21–26), because the members which are to present themselves as weapons of δικαιοσύνη are those of the bodies that have become ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας (Rom 6.13b) on the basis of the Christ event.

Third, the notion of sign production is here particularly apt, not only because of what is *signified* by human action (i. e. that God is δίκαιος), but because the actions in view in Rom 6.13 clearly reflect the right understanding on which they are based and which are expressed in Rom 6.11: Their understanding of their own identity as νεκρούς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Rom 6.11) is reflected in their action of παρίσταναι ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας. Actions in which an understanding is expressed are acts of sign production.

Our reading is also confirmed by Paul's explanations in Rom 6.16–17. Paul changes the metaphor used with the language of παρίσταναι from weapons (ὄπλα) to that of slavery (παριστάνετε ἑαυτοὺς δούλους εἰς ὑπακοήν), but the same logic of sign production is implicit.<sup>156</sup> What Rom 6.16–17 adds, however, is that the actions which become signs, either of “sin” and “death”, or of “obedience” and “justice”, imply a statement about the identity of the subject of the action (i. e. δούλος τῆς ἁμαρτίας), even if the conditions of the subject have changed so that it no longer would have to commit those actions. Furthermore, Rom 6.17 supports our claim that the sign production is to reflect the new truth revealed in the good news, because the τύπος διδαχῆς, which has been entrusted to the communities in Rome,<sup>157</sup> refers to a core of teaching about the good

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<sup>156</sup> Studies of Paul's language of enslavement include Martin 1990, Combes 1998, Byron 2003; for an overview of debates about the possible origins of this language see Goodrich 2013a (though that does not settle the interpretation of Paul's specific use). We cannot here do justice to the complicated questions about how Paul's language might have been understood by his hearers with direct experience of enslavement, and to what extent such experience shaped Paul's discourse and its reception (see for instance, with regards to Corinth, Nasrallah 2019, 55–56).

<sup>157</sup> For this syntactical reading, cf. Wolter 2014, 397–398.

news.<sup>158</sup> And in becoming obedient to this, they have become [δοῦλοι] ὑπακοῆς εἰς δικαιοσύνην (Rom 6.16e).

There are some variations in the language, but Paul essentially describes the same point in Rom 6.19. Since Rom 6.17b, Paul has been talking about a temporal contrast, between a past, and the present. This presentation in terms of a change of conditions is reflected in the use of δουλοῦσθαι (becoming a slave, in contrast to “being a slave”). Paul once more uses the language of παρίσταναι both to characterise the former state (παρεστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῆ ἀκαθαρσία καὶ τῆ ἀνομία [Rom 6.19b]) and to contrast it with the state which is now possible and to which they are exhorted (παραστήσατε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῆ δικαιοσύνη). Again, the language is best explained in terms of sign production. Committing an act which can be classified as ἀκαθαρσία or ἀνομία is one that leads εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν (Rom 6.19b): the action produces signs and these sign products, as it were, remain. By contrast, the actions in which members are presented as δοῦλα τῆ δικαιοσύνη lead εἰς ἁγιασμόν.<sup>159</sup> This should not be reduced to “holiness” in the sense of a mere moral status. Rather, we suggest, that the right actions performed by those who partake of God’s holiness since baptism, which produce signs of life, of new creation, of the power of the one raised from the dead, constitute a process of sanctification, involving not only the agents, but beyond them, their sphere of action, and those aspects of the world their actions reach, such that one might speak of a process of the sanctification of the world.

Finally, our claim that Rom 6.12–23 explains the vocation of those in Christ in terms of a sign production is confirmed by Paul’s use of the language of καρπός in Rom 6.20–23. The language of “fruit” should not be flattened out in a translation like “advantage”.<sup>160</sup> Rather, we suggest, the καρπός refers to the signs produced by human beings, either as slaves of sin, or as slaves of δικαιοσύνη.<sup>161</sup> This can be seen, first, in Rom 6.20–21: when they were δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας their καρπός consisted of actions whose end is “death” (τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἐκείνων θάνατος). Second, in Rom 6.22: now that they have become slaves of God, their καρπός, the signs they have produced by their action, contribute to a ἁγιασμός, the extending within the old creation of the sphere in which new creation comes to display. The end of these actions, that to which they point and in

**158** Cf. Wolter 2014, 398 who explains τύπος διδαχῆς, based on lexical data for τύπος, as “eine Verdichtung der Christus-Botschaft auf ihren wesentlichen Gehalt.”

**159** ἁγιασμός is glossed as “consecration”, “sanctification”, “holiness” in GE. The word ending -μός could indicate either a single act or the product of an act.

**160** As the NRSV does.

**161** Such actions are communicative and bring transformation to God’s created world.

which they are consummated, is the life of the (new) age (ζωή αἰώνιος), which their actions in the present anticipate and thereby embody as signs.

But this becomes absolutely clear, third, in Rom 7:4–6, where Paul, in relation to Torah, goes over similar ground: the change brought about in the Christ event, with regards to Torah, is that those addressed now belong to the one raised from the dead, so that they may bear fruit for God (καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ [Rom 7.4]); in contrast to their former state, in which the passions elicited by the Torah lead to a state in which they bore fruit for death (εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ [Rom 7.5]). This language strongly suggests that Paul thinks in terms of a logic of sign production and explains the vocation of those in Christ in such terms.

This is important for our reading of Rom 12.1b. There Paul also uses the language of *παρίσταναι*, but in yet another metaphorical application, drawing on the language of sacrifice: *παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ*. Many have supposed that the fact that Paul uses “sacrificial” language hints at his speaking about cult or “religion”. But as Reichert has rightly pointed out, Paul uses the language of *παρίσταναι* to construct different metaphors, taken from the domain of military life (ὄπλα [Rom 6.13c]), slavery (δούλους [Rom 6.16b]; [τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν] δοῦλα [Rom 6.19]), or, as in Rom 12.1, the domain of sacrifice (θυσία),<sup>162</sup> in order to make a point about Christ-followers’ life, and not to speak about military matters or the practice of slavery.<sup>163</sup> And hence, one should also not expect Rom 12.1b to be thematically about sacrificial practices in Rome or Jerusalem.<sup>164</sup> Rather, we suggest, in Rom 12.1b, Paul draws on the *παρίσταναι* language he has crafted in Rom 6 in yet another way in order to refer to the vocation of those in Christ as a sign production. The metaphor of sacrifice is suitable as an expression of life as a sign production, not least because sacrifice is a highly symbolic action,<sup>165</sup> charged with meaning to which a community gives expression through ritual acts. While one could not under-

**162** Reichert 2001, 233 n. 44.

**163** On enslavement and the ubiquity of slavery in the Roman world see Scheidel 2011; on Rome as a “slave economy”, see Scheidel 2012. On approaching the study of “slavery” in Greco-Roman contexts see DuBois 2009. For discussion of slavery with regards to the New Testament and early Christianity see Harrill 2006 and Glancy 2002.

**164** We do not mean to deny that by using “cultic” language Paul is indirectly framing the action to which he refers in cultic terms, which may amount, ultimately, to a statement about what “true cult” looks like. Our point is that we should not infer, merely from the fact that he uses cultic language, that his topic is a comparison of the practices in the communities of Christ-followers with cultic actions and views on “religion” in their surrounding.

**165** For a semiotic analysis of cultic action in terms of a “symbolische Kommunikation”, cf. Rüpke 2015, 24.

stand that Rom 12.1b uses *παρίσταναι* language to explain the vocation of Christ-followers as a sign production from that phrase alone, it can be so understood on the basis of the explanations Paul has given in Rom 6.12–23.

### 5.3.3 Conclusion for Rom 6

We have thus shown that Rom 6.1–11 describes how through the messiah's death and resurrection the conditions for genuine humanness have changed such that it is now possible for those in Christ to exercise their genuinely human vocation. We have further shown that Rom 6.12–23 describes that vocation as a sign production which witnesses to and embodies the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, and in this way serves to make manifest the truth about how God has rescued and restored human beings, such that they can fulfil their purpose in the cosmos.

It remains for us in this chapter to consider briefly how Romans 8 contributes to a reading of Rom 1–8 in terms of genuine humanness.

## 5.4 Rom 8.5–8 and Rom 8.17–30: The role of the Spirit for genuine humanness and the cosmic horizon of the human vocation

In Rom 8, Paul draws together many strands of his earlier argument, but at the same time he expands the panorama to include the transformation of all creation. We will only have space to consider two points which Rom 8 contributes to a reading of Romans as about genuine humanness. The first point concerns the role of the Spirit for genuine humanness, about which Paul speaks in Rom 8.5–6. The second point concerns the creational horizon of the human vocation in Rom 8.17–30.

### 5.4.1 Rom 8.5–6: The role of the Spirit and the renewed thinking

Paul assumes that there is an important role for the Spirit in the transformation of human beings which became possible through the Christ event.<sup>166</sup> The Spirit is

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**166** On the Spirit in Paul, cf. Horn 1992; Fee 1994; for a recent history of research, with a focus on ethics, see Rabens 2012, 253–306.

mentioned in Rom 5.5 in connection with a process concerning the human heart in Rom 5.5, which suggests a role of the Spirit in the reversal of the darkening of the heart in Rom 1.21. The Spirit is also mentioned in a formulation that refers to the exercise of the vocation of Christ-followers in Rom 7.6, and which refers to the Spirit as an enabling condition of this vocation; this is clear from the contrast with σάρξ which is seen in Rom 7.5–6 as something that makes this vocation impossible and even produces its opposite. In Rom 8.5–6, Paul draws on a similar contrast between σάρξ and πνεῦμα to explain the role of the Spirit for genuine humanness.<sup>167</sup> He has already recast the vocation of Christ-followers in language that recalls Rom 6.4 but substitutes the Spirit in Rom 8.4, where he contrasts a περιπατεῖν κατὰ σάρκα with a περιπατεῖν κατὰ πνεῦμα. In Rom 8.5, he contrasts two kinds of existence and correlates two ways of thinking with these two kinds of existences. Those in Christ are addressed as οἱ κατὰ πνεῦμα [ὄντες] and it is said of them that they think what the Spirit thinks (τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος [φρονοῦσιν]). Romans 8.6 states that the content of this thinking, the φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, is ζωὴ and εἰρήνη.<sup>168</sup> Paul does not spell out how he thinks the Spirit effects this change,<sup>169</sup> but it is clear that he assumes that part of what it means to be a renewed human being is to have one's thinking renewed and brought into alignment with the Spirit, who is in some way involved in this transformation. It is the same transformation that is in view in the renewal of the mind in Rom 12.2, which is one of the conditions in which the corrupted thinking has been reversed in Christ and, in some way, through the Spirit. That the object of this φρόνημα is ζωὴ suggests that it enables one to think about what one should do in a given situation, such that one produces, by one's action a sign of "eschatological" life. This parallels, as we will argue, the δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12.2 which is based on the renewed mind.

A similar involvement of the Spirit in the present sign production may also be implicit in Rom 8.9–11, where Paul describes the role of the Spirit in the future resurrection of those in Christ. But in the light of our analysis of the interrelated senses of life and death we have discussed, it may not seem implausible to suggest that in the dense formulation τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην, Paul is hinting at the role of the Spirit in the new life of Christ-followers, which aims at displaying δικαιοσύνη (life for the sake of δικαιοσύνη): because through the Spi-

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**167** For a history of research on this contrast and an exploration of Qumranic parallels see Frey 1999.

**168** But cf. Rom 8.27.

**169** For an ontological model relating the person's self and the Spirit see e.g. Vollenweider 1996. For an attempt to explain how the Spirit and the mind work together in discernment, see Munzinger 2007.

rit people are on the way to resurrection, they can produce signs of “resurrection” in the present. Their actions in their bodies, which are mortal, yet are indwelt by the Spirit and its life, can become powerful signs of new creation.

#### 5.4.2 Rom 8.17–30: Signs of the new creation

We conclude our reading of Romans 1–8 in terms of genuine humanness with Rom 8.17–30. We will only have space briefly to sketch how Paul, in this passage, speaks about the recovery of genuine humanness in dynamic vocational relation to the cosmos. Human beings are presented as being called in the Spirit already – in suffering and prayer – to be the people through whom the signs of new creation are coming to birth. And when they will be raised from the dead, this will be the moment at which the whole creation will be delivered.

Our reading finds support in Paul’s use of glory language.<sup>170</sup> Christ-followers who are suffering in the present are assured they will also be glorified with Christ in the future (Rom 8.17). The present sufferings are contrasted with a future moment of glory, which will be revealed in and through them (τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς [Rom 8.18]).<sup>171</sup> This refers to the future moment at which those in Christ will be raised from the dead, as Rom 8.23 makes clear (the ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν is not the end of the body, but refers to what happens when it is raised; cf. Rom 8.11). This same moment is marked by the δόξα τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 8.21). The resurrection of Jesus was itself a supreme moment of δόξα (Rom 6.4),<sup>172</sup> and so the moment of their resurrection will be one in which glory is fully revealed. At that moment they will have fully become σύμμορφοι τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (Rom 8.29), being raised like him. This will also be the moment when creation is set free from its bondage to decay (Rom 8.21). The freedom of creation is one which is attendant upon the δόξα τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom 8.21) – glory, it seems, is only predicated of God and human beings. In human beings, through the Spirit, the signs of the new creation are already coming to birth, but in the present these signs op-

**170** For a similar argument, based on an analysis of Paul’s glory language in Romans in the light of traditions such as Ps 8, see Goranson Jacob 2018.

**171** It is better to take εἰς ἡμᾶς to indicate not those who receive the revelation but the medium in which it is displayed.

**172** The phrase διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς in Rom 6.4 should probably be construed as indicating the accompanying circumstances of the resurrection of Jesus. For such a reading, cf. Wolter 2014, 374: “In der Auferweckung Jesu manifestiert sich Gottes Herrlichkeit und wird als solche für die Menschen wahrnehmbar.”

erate in a mode of hope (Rom 8.24). It is in prayer (Rom 8.26–27) and even in sufferings (Rom 8.17–18) that the groaning of a new creation coming to birth finds expression as signs. In producing such signs they are taking up their place in a cosmos dynamically transformed until they will, as Rom 8.30 states in retrospect, be glorified. Then they will have become signs of the glory of God by being genuinely restored human beings.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Based on the findings in this chapter, we can conclude that Romans really is about salvation *and* being genuinely, vocationally thinking human beings within the cosmos.<sup>173</sup> For Paul, the form that genuine humanness takes evolves in dynamical relation to God's revelation and consists in fulfilling a vocation to produce signs of the understanding of who God is in the cosmos such as he has made himself known. Through the liberation which Christ has brought human beings have been restored to being able to think clearly about the significance of Christ's death and resurrection and have been enabled to display this appropriately in the actions of their body. Human beings are called to produce signs of δικαιοσύνη. Paul has explained the vocation of those in Christ as producing signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ by means of their body. As we shall see, he will say in Rom 12.1 that this is their vocation as human beings.

## 5.6 Paul's own sense of a vocation

Within Paul's overall argument about the vocation of human beings as such, addressed explicitly to Gentiles, but (on the grounds of thinking of those in the messiah as a renewed humanity) as including, in principle, all humans, Paul is very much aware of his own personal vocation, his own ἔργον, his own τόξις, to borrow the language of Epictetus.<sup>174</sup> Reading Romans as about genuine humanness makes excellent sense of how Paul describes his own vocation, particularly in the frame of the letter, Rom 1.1–15 and Rom 15.14–31, for which we look here at Rom 1.1–7 and Rom 15.16 in particular.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Human beings are rescued so that they can be genuinely human. Salvation is fully integrated with "genuine humanness".

<sup>174</sup> 1.16.20 (see chapter 4).

<sup>175</sup> But also within the letter, for instance at Rom 11.13–16.

Paul introduces himself, right at the start of the letter, as a servant of the messiah, and designates his own function as being a called apostle for the good news of God (εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ [Rom 1.1]). He describes the content of the good news and how it relates to the promises within Israel's scripture, focusing both on the messiah and his resurrection (Rom 1.2–4). The messiah is presented as the one who charged Paul with his task (δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν [Rom 1.5]).<sup>176</sup> This task is explained as being about the promotion of the “obedience of faith” among Gentiles (εἰς ὑπακοήν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν [Rom 1.5]). The letter addresses itself to Gentiles and includes them thus in the purview of his calling (Rom 1.6). As it does so, it designates them as κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 1.6, cf. 1.7) and thus applies to them the same language with which he introduces himself (Rom 1.1), repeating also the way in which this “calling” comes about through Jesus, the messiah (cf. Rom 1.5). We should point out that it is not because Paul uses καλεῖν language and because it so happens that the language of “calling” and “vocation” have established themselves as customary translations that we conclude that Paul operates with the idea of a human vocation. But once we read Paul, based on a hypothesis required, we think, for an explanation that makes sense of Paul's use of reason language in Rom 12.1, as interested in a vocation for human beings, and applying it in a particular way to those “in Christ”, then the calling language, which is often simply taken to refer to the moment people begin to belong to Christ, takes on a sharper meaning, as referring, not only to that moment but also to the task attendant upon it. Just based on the prescript (Rom 1.1–7), we may already note how Paul describes both himself and those to whom he writes in terms of a task which is based on an event involving Jesus, the messiah of Israel. Paul's task is different from their task, it seems, insofar as it is his task to be concerned in a particular way with their task (see below), but both issue from what has happened to Jesus, the messiah. We note also already here a striking similarity with the Epictetus passage we studied in the last chapter: Epictetus described the vocation of every human being with the image of singing a hymn to the divine, identified himself with this task (ἔργον), and included within its scope the task of exhorting others (παρακαλεῖν) to this same task. On our reading, Paul vis-à-vis the Gentiles is in a similar position: his task as a human being is his personal task to exhort all human beings, but especially Gentiles, to fulfil their task as human beings, which takes the form of an “obedience of faith” (Rom 1.5), towards the messiah.

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<sup>176</sup> The plural refers to Paul alone.

Further, Paul directly expresses his own sense of vocation in relation to Gentiles, and their task, in Rom 15.16. As he did in Rom 1.5, Paul once more connects the divine grace (Rom 15.15) to his personal calling (Rom 15.16). He calls himself a minister (λειτουργός) of Jesus the messiah concerning the Gentiles (εἰς τὰ ἔθνη) and as someone in priestly service of the gospel of God (ἱεραουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ). This suggests that he sees himself in an elevated role, in the manner in which it is more respectable to be a priest officiating at the temple in Jerusalem than merely to bring something to be offered. The point, however, is not simply a claim to status. Rather, it is a way in which Paul can clarify his own vocation and at the same time connect it to how he sees their calling. His own singular history is that of a “zealous” Jew who has won through to a fresh view of the role of Gentiles as a result of the Christ event. The Christ event has changed the conditions for Gentiles and his personal task as a follower of the messiah which he has understood in this new way is to exhort them to take up the way of life thus opened up for them. This is clearly expressed in the purposive clause (ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορά τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος). Though many interpreters take the προσφορά τῶν ἐθνῶν to be construed as an objective genitive,<sup>177</sup> the words and context suggest that it makes better sense to take it subjectively: the Gentiles are offering something, along the lines of Rom 12.1b, and Paul sees his own role as that of a priestly minister responsible for making it succeed (he is ἱεραουργοῦντα precisely in order that the offering brought by the Gentiles themselves may be acceptable, εὐπρόσδεκτος). It would not be the language of Rom 15.16 itself but the contextual space defined by the letter (including Rom 12.1) which suggests that the offering brought by the Gentiles is one which can be described as a giving of themselves or of their bodies. The Gentiles who have reclaimed the genuine humanness available in the gospel in Christ and by the Spirit are now at last able to offer an acceptable service to God. This is how the reversal of Rom 1.18–32 becomes complete.

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177 So e.g. Dunn 1988b, 860; Fitzmyer 1993, 712; Jewett 2007, 907; Reichert 2001, 88.

## 6 Rom 12.1–2 as an exhortation to genuine humanness

In this chapter, we propose a novel explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 and show how it works exegetically in Rom 12.1–2. The key to our solution lies in the recognition of the relevance of Epictetus 1.16 as a parallel to Paul’s use of λογικός in Rom 12.1. Scholars have long seen the importance of Epictetus 1.16 as a parallel to Rom 12.1. But because they have not usually read Epictetus 1.16 as being about genuine humanness and the human vocation, they have not determined the pertinence of the parallel in the way we propose here. In Epictetus 1.16, λογικός specifies the distinct human capacity on which a human vocation within the cosmos is based. It is in this sense, we argue, that Paul uses the language of λογικός, because he wants to make a claim about genuine humanness and the human vocation.

The goal of this chapter is to detail this claim and show how it works exegetically in Rom 12.1. In the next chapter we will show the implications this reading has for the function of Rom 12.1–2 as a transition between Rom 1–11 and Rom 12–16, and in particular as an overture to Rom 12–15.

Before we begin our argument, it will be useful to cite the text of Rom 12.1–2 and to indicate how we shall refer to it:

- 12.1a παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ
- 12.1b παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ,
- 12.1c τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·
- 12.2a καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,
- 12.2b ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς
- 12.2c εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,
- 12.2d τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

The steps required for our argument in this chapter are the following:

First, we will show, based on an analysis of the syntax of Rom 12.1, that Rom 12.1c is a comment upon Rom 12.1b, and that Rom 12.1b is a description of an action to which Rom 12.1a exhorts; this is obvious but has important consequences (section 6.1).

Second, we will show that Rom 12.1b draws on the *παρίσταναι* language of Rom 6 to create a cultic metaphor which is used to describe the action to

which Paul exhorts as a sign production<sup>1</sup> in the sense he has explained in Rom 6 (section 6.2).

Third, we will show that Rom 12.1c (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν) has the effect of saying “this is your genuinely human vocation” (section 6.3).

Once we have done this, we further consider how Rom 12.2 coheres with our interpretation of Rom 12.1 (section 6.4).

## 6.1 The syntax of Rom 12.1 as criterion

In this section, we show that the syntactic structure of Rom 12.1 falls into three principal parts:<sup>2</sup> Rom 12.1a marks Rom 12.1 as an act of exhortation to a certain action; Rom 12.1b is a description of that action; Rom 12.1c is a comment upon that description of an action. We shall then point to a consequence for the interpretation that follows from this simple observation. It provides a strong argument, for instance, against Scott’s interpretation of the λογικὴ λατρεία.

The analysis of the structure of Rom 12.1 is based on the following points. The infinitive παραστήσαι is directly dependent upon the verb παρακαλῶ. παρακαλεῖν can be used to express a range of meanings but, with an infinitive depending on it, it is clear that its meaning must be a summons to an action, here an encouragement, an invitation or an exhortation.<sup>3</sup> As we have seen in Epictetus 1.16.21, where Epictetus uses παρακαλῶ as well, it is a suitable verb to be used in a protreptic appeal. παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν describes the action to which Paul exhorts his hearers. The phrase διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ probably indicates the basis on which Paul makes his appeal (the mercy of God has brought Paul to the position he is currently in to make such an exhortation).<sup>4</sup>

As most scholars recognise, Rom 12.1c is in apposition to Rom 12.1b as a whole (not to θυσίαν).<sup>5</sup> As this will be important later, we shall briefly expand

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1 We repeat here the definition of “sign production” which we use, in Paul, for “actions performed in such a way as to signify, embody and express the truths and meanings of the Christ event” (see section 1.4).

2 We are indebted to the analysis of Reichert 2001, 228–229.

3 Cf. LSJ, s.v.

4 So Wolter 2014, 250. Others connect the “mercies” with Paul’s exposition in the preceding chapters and make it the “foundation” of the act of παραστήσαι (so for instance Barclay 2015, 508). Further options are discussed by Reichert 2001, 229 n. 31.

5 So e.g. Cranfield 1979, 601; Reichert 2001, 229 n. 33. Against, for instance, Seidensticker 1954 who sees it as in apposition to θυσία (interpreted as referring to a ritual act rather than as that which is offered in such an act).

upon this point. The most recent English grammar of ancient Greek defines an apposition as follows: “Apposition is the placement of two words or word groups parallel to each other without any coordinating particle ..., with one, the ‘appositive’ defining or modifying the other.”<sup>6</sup> Rom 12.1c, as an appositive, is in the accusative, just as would be expected given the assumption that it modifies an entire clause.<sup>7</sup>

The consequence of this analysis is that Rom 12.1b is the topic, upon which the appositive 12.1c makes a comment, and not the other way round.<sup>8</sup> And given that Rom 12.1a marks an exhortation, it follows, that the comment which is made upon the action to which Paul exhorts should also contribute to the exhortation. Indeed, Rom 12.1–2 is a well-structured passage which appears at an important transitional moment in the letter, so it would be highly unlikely for Paul to use Rom 12.1c for a digression which does not serve the communicative purpose of exhortation. This should lead us to expect that Rom 12.1c offers a motivation for the action to which Paul exhorts, or confers a positive valuation upon it. This criterion – that Rom 12.1c should help motivate Rom 12.1b – is not met by Scott’s interpretation, for instance, in which Rom 12.1c merely describes the action Rom 12.1b as involving processes of reasoning.<sup>9</sup> This criterion also makes those interpretations less likely which see Paul using Rom 12.1c mainly to create a polemical contrast with the cults of Rome or Jewish temple worship.

This criterion should be met for any interpretation of 12.1b and Rom 12.1c. With this we turn to the interpretation of Rom 12.1b.

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**6** CGCG, 26.24.

**7** Cf. CGCG, 30.19: “When an appositive is added to an entire sentence or clause, it normally stands in the accusative.”

**8** As noted by Reichert 2001, Wolter 2019. This point is missed, for example, by Thorsteinsson 2010, 138: “Paul here [i.e. Rom 12.1, SD] defines the audience’s ‘reasonable worship’ ... in terms of an ‘offering’ their bodies as a ‘living sacrifice’ ... to God.” Paul is *not* saying: “Let me now tell you what your reasonable worship is: it is offering your bodies as living sacrifice.” He is encouraging an action, on which he then makes a comment; he is not establishing a topic, on which he then makes a point.

**9** Rom 12.1c needs to be something that expresses value and something eminently positive in order for the encouragement (παρακαλεῖν) to be effective. Scott’s interpretation fails to meet this criterion, because making a statement about the fact that the believers’ ethical decisions involve “reasoned argument” makes little sense as something that supports Paul in his exhortation or appeal.

## 6.2 Present your bodies as a living sacrifice: The interpretation of Rom 12.1b

In this section, we seek to show that the action to which Paul exhorts in Rom 12.1b is a sign production which uses the body to display the understanding of God that has been revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ. Because this understanding involves the belief that in Christ a new creation has been inaugurated, we might also refer to this as producing signs of the new creation. Similarly, because these signs are supposed to articulate and embody what the εὐαγγέλιον proclaims, we might refer to it as producing signs of the good news.

Thus, our reading of Rom 12.1b involves recognising a distinction between the identification of the referent of the action and the description of that action. The referent of the action is rather broad, namely the entire way of life in the communities of Christ-followers, such as it conforms to Paul's ideal, which he presents in Rom 12.3–15.13 and to which Rom 12.1–2 functions as the overture. But Paul's way of describing the action – by means of a cultic metaphor involving *παρίσταναι* language – does not only refer to an action, but also says something about this action. We propose that what this description amounts to is that these actions function as signs of new creation, of the good news, of genuine humanness. That is, these actions, whether “ethical” acts or acts of worship (in the narrow sense), have a “missional”<sup>10</sup> function: they are signs which communicate something about who God is and what he has done in the Christ event.

This reading rests squarely on the links between the *παρίσταναι* language in Rom 12.1 and in Rom 6. As we have shown (in section 5.3.2.2), Paul has deliberately crafted this language in Rom 6 to explain that the significance of the Christ event should find expression in the actions of the liberated body. That is, he uses it to explain that the actions of Christ-followers in the present should be signs of genuine humanness, signs that display the *δικαιοσύνη* such as it has been revealed in Christ. And this explanation is what Paul's language used in Rom 12.1b recalls.

While Rom 6.13, 6.16, 6.19 used *παρίσταναι* language to construct a metaphor involving the domain of warfare or slavery, Rom 12.1 uses it to construct a cultic or sacrificial metaphor.<sup>11</sup> But in both cases the body or members are to be employed in actions which involve an element of sign production: in Rom 6 this el-

<sup>10</sup> On our use of “missional”, see section 1.4.

<sup>11</sup> For texts in which *παρίσταναι* is used in sacrificial contexts, cf. Cranfield 1979, 598 n. 4 (though his conclusion from the evidence is unwarranted).

ement of sign production is indicated by the use of δικαιοσύνη (and ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας or ἁγιασμός); in Rom 12.1 the sign aspect is expressed by the use of the predicative complement θυσίαν: the action of presenting your bodies *as a (living) sacrifice*.

The further attributes of θυσία, namely ζῶσα, ἁγία, εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ serve to underline this aspect and support our interpretation of Rom 6 and Rom 12.1b as explaining sign production. While the attribute ζῶσα does serve to distinguish the θυσία from one for which the victims are killed, it does not stretch the bold metaphor to suppose that it also points to the new “eschatological” life which has been given to Christ-followers (cf. Rom 6.4, 6.11, 6.13). The attribute ἁγίος in 12.1b recalls the ἁγιασμός in Rom 6.19, 6.22, which we have also explained in terms of sign production.<sup>12</sup> The third attribute, εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ, is often used for behaviour with which God is pleased, but is almost never used for sacrifices, so that at this point Paul’s “sacrificial” metaphor is mixed with language used to describe the life which is characterised by the cultic metaphor.<sup>13</sup> But in all three cases, these attributes point to the effect of the right action: it produces a sign in which something becomes “visible”, both to other human beings and before God.

The point we need to stress, however, is that Paul’s use of a cultic metaphor in Rom 12.1b does not by itself imply that he is speaking about the “true cult”, or, to put it differently, that he is concerned, at this point in the letter, with contrasting the worshipping practices of Christ-followers in their gatherings with pagan sacrificial practices. Of course, Paul does think that the presence of the Spirit in Christ-followers amounts to something which far surpasses any supposed numinous presence at a pagan temple. But using a metaphor from the domain of cult does not necessarily mean that a speaker is thereby making a point about cult.

Rather, Paul is referring to the entirety of Christ-followers’ existence, which includes worship and ethical action, in such a way as to emphasise its missional effect. That Paul is concerned with such a missional aspect in Rom 12.1 has been noted by Reichert,<sup>14</sup> though she bases this observation on a doubtful interpreta-

<sup>12</sup> This is further supported by Wolter’s observation, with reference to texts such as Deut 7.6, that ἁγίος is used to mark how Israel’s identity as elected people is expressed in their way of life (2019, 251).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Wolter 2019, 252 (noting a few exceptions).

<sup>14</sup> Reichert 2001, 244: “Die leibliche Selbstübereignung der Adressaten and Gott [her paraphrase of Rom 12.1b, SD] ist als ein Geschehen begriffen, dem von sich aus Mitteilungskraft eignet.”

tion of Paul’s language of λογικός in Rom 12.1c,<sup>15</sup> and she wrongly assumes that the missional aspect excludes action.<sup>16</sup>

It is especially tempting for interpretations that see λατρεία in Rom 12.1c as referring to “religion” to mistake the cultic language used to make a point in Rom 12.1b for the point itself. Having said that, it may very well be the case that Paul finds thinking about the purpose of human beings in terms of priestly service a very fruitful approach. And such resonances may even be implied by his use of cultic language. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the intratextual links to Rom 6 make it likely that what he is primarily speaking about in Rom 12.1b is the entirety of Christ-followers’ existence as missional, as producing signs of the new reality which has been inaugurated in Christ’s death and resurrection.

Thus, we conclude that the action to which Rom 12.1b exhorts is a sign production, which uses the body for actions that function as signs of the new reality which has been inaugurated in the messiah. Hence it refers both to a “messianic” existence and to its missional effect. It is upon this description of the action that Paul comments in Rom 12.1c, using the language of λογικός in a way we will now seek to explain.

### 6.3 Rom 12.1c: “This is your truly human calling”

In this section, we seek to show that Rom 12.1c has the effect of saying “this is your truly human vocation” as a comment upon the action to which Paul exhorts in Rom 12.1b. Thus the language of λογικός is used by Paul in a way which, in combination with λατρεία, amounts to the concept of a “human vocation”, in the sense of the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition we have investigated in chapters 3–4. If this interpretation is on target, Rom 12.1 could be paraphrased as: “I exhort you use your (liberated) bodies to produce signs (of the new creation, the good news, the δικαιοσύνη revealed in the messiah Jesus), which is your genuinely human vocation.” Thus Paul would be saying in Rom 12.1, by an allu-

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<sup>15</sup> Reichert renders λογικός as “sprechend” (though the texts she adduced only support the meaning “sprachlich”), and thus paraphrases the λογική λατρεία as a “‘sprechender’ Gottesdienst, der sich Aussenstehenden gegenüber bemerkbar macht” (2001, 244). This sense would fit better with Rom 12.1b.

<sup>16</sup> When she claims that Rom 12.1 is not about “ein intentional anzusteuernendes ‘Tatzeugnis’” but only about “die der Welt kommunikativ zugewandte Seite gemeindlicher Existenz” (2001, 245).

sion to a philosophical tradition about human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα,<sup>17</sup> that the vocation of Christ-followers is the genuinely human vocation.

To argue for this interpretation, the following steps are required: First, we need to show that λατρεία in Rom 12.1c is used to speak about a service to God as a vocation (section 6.3.1). Second, we have to establish the sense of λογικός in Rom 12.1c (section 6.3.2). Third, we have to show that the adjective λογικός modifies the action noun λατρεία in such a way as to point to its subject (section 6.3.3).

### 6.3.1 That λατρεία in Rom 12.1c is used to speak about a service to God as vocation

In our first step, we show that λατρεία in Rom 12.1 is used to speak of service-to-God in such a way as to suggest the idea of a vocation (such as we have defined it).<sup>18</sup> λατρεία is an action noun which designates something which a group of people or an individual (the “subject”) is doing either once or several times or habitually in fulfilment of a charge which the subject understands to have been laid upon it by God (or a god<sup>19</sup>).<sup>20</sup> Many of the actions in view could be cultic in the proper sense: an offering at a temple performed by a priest, or an offering brought by someone to a temple and a priest, or an act of “worship” (prayer, vows etc.) by the subject performed in a designated, often cultic, setting. Thus, λατρεία is often translated as “worship” (in a narrow sense).<sup>21</sup> But it

<sup>17</sup> The fact that they are still “mortal” is not in tension with the “living sacrifice”; cf. our discussion in section 5.3.1.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. section 1.4.

<sup>19</sup> We will simply speak in the following of God, even where we could add “a god” or “a deity” to refer to the broader cultural context.

<sup>20</sup> GE, s.v., distinguishes the following senses: first, the “condition of a servant, servitude, slavery” and figuratively, the “tasks or duties of life”. Second, “service rendered to the gods, veneration, cult”, where it is noted that the construction is usually with a genitive indicating the deity (θεοῦ or θεῶν). Note that for Rom 12.1, GE notes the sense “service rendered to God with one’s own life” (though it paraphrases it, wrongly, in our view, with “spiritual service”). This could be taken in two senses: either in a merely ethical sense, in which a decently moral conduct is one’s service to God, or, as we interpret it, in a vocational sense, that is, as a life oriented to a specific task, which to fulfil is what one’s service to God with one’s life is about, namely a missional existence that produces signs which proclaim the good news and the inauguration of new creation.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Cranfield 1958, 387 for an example of distinguishing three different senses of “worship” in English: “(i) to denote a particular element of what is generally referred to as worship, namely, adoration; (ii) to denote generally the public worship of the religious community gathered together and also the private religious exercises of the family and the individual; and (iii), in

could also be used to refer to actions performed in obedience to God or understood to conform to the “will” of God which are not in the proper sense cultic but are simply seen as right and demanded by God. This could include ethical behaviour broadly (virtue) or be more specially understood as the task in life of a subject. But it is hard to distinguish these referents (we mean properly cultic or more broadly ethical acts) sharply: first, because the right kind of relation to the divine as an ethical act includes the proper cultic actions, however transactional or not they might have been understood or felt to be; and second, because the language and valuations associated with the cultic practices in the narrow sense can easily be transferred to non-cultic actions, such that ethical actions become described in language which properly would belong to the cultic domain. This widens the meaning of the language and casts these actions as similarly relating their subject to the divine as the cult proper would be understood to be doing. Hence λατρεία can also be used to refer to some charge which is more comprehensive in terms of how much of the life of its subject it demands. When someone sees her task in life as a λατρεία to God, then she figures the sum of her actions, ranging over non-cultic ones in the proper sense and cultic ones in the proper sense, as a service to God, and sees it as in some respect similar to those cultic actions in the narrow sense. Understood in this way, λατρεία becomes a way of speaking about a vocation: something which God demands from a subject, a task which needs to be discharged regularly or as an overall project to be achieved, and which constitutes a goal or end for this subject, to which other actions are subservient.<sup>22</sup>

### 6.3.1.1 The example of Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*

A famous example in which λατρεία is used for such a vocation can be found in Plato’s account of Socrates’ speech at his trial. Socrates describes his own examination of the Athenian citizens as a service to the god (τοῦ θεοῦ λατρεία).<sup>23</sup> In his case, the god in question is Apollo, who answered to Chaerephon’s request at the

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a still wider sense, to denote the whole life of the community or of the individual viewed as service of God.”

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the texts in which the end is defined as that to which all other things refer, e.g. in Cicero, *Fin.* 1.29.11–14 (*extremum et ultimum bonorum, quod omnium philosophorum sententia tale debet esse, ut ad id omnia referri oporteat, ipsum autem nusquam*), cf. also 1.42.5–9, 3.21 and frequently; in Aristotle, cf. e.g. *EN* 1101b 29–31.

<sup>23</sup> Plato, *Apol.* 20d–23c; *DL* 2.37. Epictetus would also have been aware of this (Long 2002, 55). Note also Epictetus’ use of λατρεύειν to describe the mission in which the ideal Cynic has been sent from Zeus (Κυνικῶ δὲ Κάισαρ τί ἐστίν ἢ ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἄλλου ἢ ὁ καταπεπομφώς αὐτὸν καὶ ᾧ λατρεύει, ὁ Ζεὺς [3.22.56]). On this idea, cf. Ierodiakonou 2010.

oracle of Delphi whether there is anyone wiser than Socrates with “no”, which lead Socrates on a mission to refute that statement by finding someone wiser. This was the beginning of his examination of the citizens of Athens with bothersome questions about definitions of virtue and refutations of only apparent knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the action referred to by a λατρεία is in itself not cultic (talking to people in the market square). Rather, it is something that has occupied Socrates (as presented in the literary sources) for a good deal of his life, and it is something which seems so intensely important to Socrates that he would rather die than end this activity and shut up. It is something that he understood to be the task with which he was charged by the god. The total life of Socrates was devoted to his mission, and this includes acts that are cultic proper, such as offerings.<sup>25</sup> However, at its core, it includes actions that are perhaps ethical but, more than that, serve an end to which he feels “called” and from which not even the threat of death would have him shrink back.

This example clearly demonstrates that λατρεία could be used to refer to a vocation, in this case of a particular human being. When combined with a word that can be used to speak about what makes humans distinct, in a context where capacity is assumed to be an indicator for proper function, and the role of the human being as such, we suggest that λογική λατρεία would make good sense on the grounds of language use and of the relevant cultural knowledge as a way of speaking of a service to God which is appropriate for human beings as such, as the beings that they are assumed to be (in a broadly shared ancient view), namely those beings capable of λογός, reason and speech, that is, as the λογικοί they are.

### 6.3.1.2 Paul’s use of λατρεία and λατρεύειν as confirmation

This reading is supported by the use of λατρεύειν and λατρεία in Romans and in Paul elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> In Romans 1.9, Paul uses λατρεύειν to describe his own specific

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Apol.* 28e (τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τάπτοντος, ὡς ἐγὼ ψήθην τε καὶ ὑπέλαβον, φιλοσοφοῦντά με δεῖν ζῆν καὶ ἐξετάζοντα ἑμαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους). Epictetus, who as we have seen, describes his own τάξις in Epictetus 1.16, is aware of this passage, as he alludes to it in Epictetus 3.21.19; on which cf. Long 2002, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Which Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* is at pains to show Socrates scrupulously observed. Cf. also the cock owed to Asclepius in the *Phaedo* (118a).

<sup>26</sup> The verb λατρεύειν is used by Paul in Rom 1.9, 1.25 and Phil 3.3; the noun λατρεία in Rom 9.4. Betz 1991 argues that in Romans Paul attempts “to define his version of the gospel message as ‘religion’” (317). Central to his argument are the occurrences of λατρεύειν and λατρεία in Romans, which Betz claims function as “key terms” (319); he renders ἡ λογική λατρεία with “the reasonable religion”. Betz is basically right to emphasise that λατρεία is a “comprehensive

activity and service to God.<sup>27</sup> We have argued that Paul understands his own ministry as an apostle to be a paradigm for the service to which all Christ-followers are called. His might be a particularly intense form of that calling – but that merely shows more clearly in his case what would or should be true of others too (albeit perhaps in less intense form). This point is further supported by the consideration that Paul writes to the Romans in order to win them for a future collaboration, and this would work best if they lived with a similar sense of their proper task. The statement is qualified by two prepositional phrases, ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου and ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. The latter identifies his own specific ministry as being about the good news of God’s son. The good news (Rom 1.2–4) is part of Paul’s stated vocational self-understanding (Rom 1.1); Paul’s thesis statement describes what the good news does (Rom 1.16–17) and much of Romans is in fact a discussion of his understanding of the good news and how it relates both to himself and to the Romans. It is clear that Paul has a strong personal sense of a vocation. Our reading proposes that he also has a high sense of the vocation of the Roman Christ-followers, and it is equally one ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (to which he wants to encourage them with his overall letter).<sup>28</sup> In fact, when he speaks of λογικὴ λατρεία in Rom 12.1, it is this service which he has in mind.<sup>29</sup> It is not entirely clear how to understand the first phrase ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου, but the personal pronoun μου makes it certain that the reference is to the human spirit and not to the holy Spirit. Nevertheless one should not draw a hasty analogy between λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου and the λογικὴ λατρεία as both referring to a spiritual cult, i.e. one involving mostly mental acts.<sup>30</sup> The phrase ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου probably simply expresses the intensity of his commitment. Paul would be saying: I am committed to this service with all of my being.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, such

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concept comprising ritual worship and ethics” (320), but he completely misses the dimension of a task in life, even as he stretches the meaning of terms in statements such as, regarding Rom 1.9, Paul’s “worship is also identical with the preaching of the gospel” (321). Cf. the critical remarks of Reichert 2001, 245 n. 102.

**27** God is explicitly mentioned (ὁ θεός, ὃ λατρεύω).

**28** Paul’s sense of how his own vocation differs from that of other Christ-followers comes through clearly in Rom 15.16.

**29** Though at in Rom 12.1 this comes through via the comment that 12.1c makes upon 12.1b (which describes, as we have argued, the sign production of the good news).

**30** This is clear from the fact that the service also has to do with the good news, which requires communication to others and is outward focused. Differently, Betz 1991, 320 n. 13.

**31** This case is thus different from Phil 3.3 where Paul characterises the Christ-followers’ “we” as those who πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες, in contrast to the outward focus of those who boast in the flesh. (The latter contrast may be similar to that used in Rom 2.29.) Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.300 (λατρεύειν αὐτῷ μὴ παρέργως ἀλλὰ ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ πεπληρωμένη γνώμης φιλοθέου) for a compa-

a reading fits with the total commitment to which Rom 12.1b encourages. Thus, the language of λατρεύειν in Rom 1.9 fits very well with our interpretation of a service to God which is the task in life or vocation of its subject.<sup>32</sup>

In Rom 1.25, the language of λατρεύειν is used negatively to characterise a failure on the part of the humans described in Rom 1.18–32.<sup>33</sup> It is semantically parallel to σεβάξασθαι,<sup>34</sup> which seems at first to suggest that the sense might be more nearly worship (in the narrower sense) rather than service (in the more comprehensive sense). Also, the context of idolatry in Rom 1.23 seems to support this reading. On the other hand, it seems too specific to take actual nature worship as the topic of the verse. If Paul wants to characterise comprehensively the wrong behaviour of humans he could also synecdochically pick out one characteristic aspect of their behaviour, one which is perceived to have ramifications for all aspects of life, such as worship of the one God would have been for Jews.<sup>35</sup> Thus, right worship<sup>36</sup> can stand *pars pro toto* to express the overall orientation of a life. Further, given that life as a whole can sometimes be described as a service to God, the failure of such a life could easily be expressed as a false kind of worship. In fact, λατρεύειν τῷ κτίσαντι, the positive counterpart to what is negatively expressed in Rom 1.25 (τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα), can easily work as a comprehensive formula for the human calling in a Jewish monotheistic perspec-

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table statement, in which the intensity of dedication is expressed in similar terms, although Philo quotes and then paraphrases Deut 10.12 (λατρεύειν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου). Cf. also Deut 6.5 (ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου).

**32** Reichert gets Rom 1.9 right, when she summarises that “λατρεύειν meint in Verbindung mit ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ein aktives und intentional ausgerichtetes Verkündigungshandeln, mit dem der Verfasser seiner Bestimmung entspricht” (2001, 123), but she unhelpfully drives a wedge between Paul’s *Verkündigungshandeln* and the λατρεία of the communities to which Paul writes, in which she sees “kein intentionales Verkündigungshandeln ..., sondern den kommunikativen Effekt der sich mit der Übereignung von Weltsegmenten an Gott verbindet” (246). The notion of a sign production of the good news which describes what the vocation consists in can avoid these false alternatives.

**33** The following discussion of the use of λατρεύειν in Rom 1.25 goes over similar ground we have covered in our exegesis of Rom 1.18–32.

**34** Though one would expect σεβάξασθαι to be accompanied with an accusative indicating the object of reverence. The construction is a zeugma.

**35** It may well be the case that such a comprehensive characterisation of a way of life by a manner of worship may work better with monotheism.

**36** Worship in a cultic setting would be the paradigmatic example in Jerusalem. In the diaspora, it might be worship at synagogues.

tive.<sup>37</sup> Such a broader construal of λατρεύειν in Rom 1.25 (i.e. as concerning an overall way of life characterised by one of its dominant aspects, namely worship in a narrower sense) also makes sense of the broad reading of μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, which equally can be understood as both applying merely to the question of the one God and the many gods, or as once more about that which could be known about God (τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ [Rom 1.19]) and which should have formed the basis for the right sort of human response. It is then to be understood in a similar manner as in Rom 1.18: those who hold down the truth through wrongful behaviour (τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων [Rom 1.18]) and in this manner incite the ὀργὴ θεοῦ are not merely charged with improper behaviour in matters of cult, shrine or “religion”. Rather, they are cast as being comprehensively in the wrong, both with regards to God and humans, with the latter as following from the former. This view is not undermined by the context of Rom 1.24, which seems more specific with regards to illicit sexual behaviour. For the link between Rom 1.24 (αὐτοῦς) and Rom 1.25 (οἵτινες) does not have to be construed as causal<sup>38</sup> but simply means “as many as” or even “those who”. Thus, one does not have to read Rom 1.24–25 as saying there was a consequence for one aspect of life (sexual desire) because of what happened in another (worship in the narrow sense), but can rather more plausibly see it as saying: these humans were given up to their desires (of which the sexual variety would be one notable kind), they who were serving the creature, and thus remaining at the level of sense perception and gratification of bodily and material desire. They were not doing what humans should do and what their specific capacity, the ability to think, might have allowed them to do, but merely operated at the creaturely level, not rising above desires characteristic (according to stereotypes used in some ethical discourse) of animals.<sup>39</sup> Paul might also have specific scriptural traditions in mind which link idolatry and sexual behaviour.<sup>40</sup> But even if one can detect and make good sense of more restricted kinds of action being referred to here, it is clear from the larger

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**37** As we have argued (section 5.2.3). Cf. also the statement of Nebuchadnezzar about praising the creator in Dan 4.37 LXX (αἰνῶ τῷ κτίσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν), after a heavenly messenger told him to serve the God of heaven (δοῦλευσον τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ [Dan 4.34 LXX]).

**38** As the NRSV does (“because”).

**39** Cf. e.g. Epictetus 2.9.

**40** Cf. for instance the Phinehas episode in Num 25, where divine anger is kindled (25.3) by Israelites cultically venerating (25.3) the Baal of Peor, and where an Israelite and a Midianite woman are killed in their tent in flagrante delicto (25.6–8). Cf. also Solomon’s many wives leading him to worship other gods in 1 Kings 11.1–8, as a narrative elaboration of the warning given in Exod 34.16 (cf. 1 Kings 11.2).

context that a comprehensive behaviour is in view. Many scholars now point to the parallels between Rom 1.18–32 and Rom 12.1–2, and it is now regularly proposed to contrast the negative ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα in Rom 1.25 with τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν in Rom 12.1.<sup>41</sup> Yet if we do not suppose that the topic in both is merely the behaviour towards the true God at special occasions but a characterisation of the overall life of humans, which includes “religious” or cultic action as a part, then one can understand both references in a sense that is closely related (even though in Rom 1 the point is stated negatively).

In Rom 9.4, the noun λατρεία appears as part of a list (Rom 9.4–5) of honourable characteristics of Paul’s fellow Israelites. Paul is thereby describing the Jews such as they are in the present, and in this case the reference of λατρεία would likely bring to mind the temple service at Jerusalem and the cultic worship offered there, being the dominant focal point of Israel’s worship. On the other hand, it is once more possible to understand λατρεία here as more broadly characteristic of an entire way of life than its immediate referent, worship, would suggest, and in this way to confirm our reading of λατρεία as service to God. This is so, first, because λατρεία is the only item in the list that directly refers to a human action and response. Thus, it alone stands in for the reference to the entire way of life understood as characteristic for the elected people of God.<sup>42</sup>

But also, second, because all the other items in the list point to events in the scriptural past,<sup>43</sup> and this would make it plausible to expect for λατρεία a wider scriptural resonance as well. In the Greek traditions of Israel’s scripture, especially the use in the Exodus narrative stands out. There is a recurrent motif in the story about how Moses is the one who is God’s agent in leading the people of Israel out of the desert, namely that this is done in order for them to “worship” or “serve” their God in the desert. Thus, when Moses is commissioned to this task in the scene at the burning bush and hesitates, expressing doubts about his suitability, God replies that he will be with Moses, and that the sign that he sent him will be that they will worship God at that very mountain (λατρεύετε τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ [Exod 3.12]). While the immediate referent in view seems to be cul-

<sup>41</sup> As we noted in section 5.2.

<sup>42</sup> So also Wolter 2019, 35 who understands the λατρεία in 9.4 as a “komprehensive Umschreibung dessen, was Gott von dem Volk einfordert, das er sich erwählt hat”.

<sup>43</sup> αἱ διαθήκαι refers to the covenants with Abraham (Genesis) and Moses, νομοθεσία refers to the giving of the law narrated in Exodus and Deuteronomy, ἐπαγγελία refers to the promises made to the patriarchs, who follow in the list (οἱ πατέρες); the case of ὁ Χριστός τὸ κατὰ σάρκα is perhaps slightly different. This list thus seems to flag up main topics Paul has discussed so far: Abraham (Rom 4), the Torah (Rom 7), sonship (Rom 8).

tic acts such as animal sacrifice,<sup>44</sup> these acts are not merely incidental, but expressions of what the entire way of life of liberated Israel is about. This can be clearly seen in the recurrent motif of the “reason” offered to Pharaoh, in the name of YHWH, why he must let the Israelites go, namely in order for them to worship and serve him: Ἐξαπόστειλον τὸν λαόν μου, ἵνα μοι λατρεύσῃ (Exod 4.23).<sup>45</sup> If this is taken to be a statement of the purpose of their liberation, then it is also a statement about the purpose of their liberated way of life. This way of life is characterised as being such that it allows for the worship in the stricter sense to take place, but also, as a whole, is oriented toward serving the God thus worshipped. Thus, there is in the Greek tradition of Israel’s scripture, with which Paul was intimately familiar, a prominent association of the language of λατρεύειν with the purpose of the entire liberated existence of the people of God.

This is further confirmed, outside of Exodus, for instance, in the use of λατρεύειν in Deut 10.12, which, echoing the language of the Shema, expresses comprehensively what Israel must do once it has entered the land.<sup>46</sup> Detecting a reference to the present temple cult in Jerusalem in Rom 9.4 is not, then, at variance with such scriptural resonances: part of the legitimising function of the

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**44** As can be seen in the instruction in Exod 3.18 that Moses should tell the elders that the purpose of their journey to the desert is in order to offer sacrifice (ἵνα θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν). Cf. also the words of Pharaoh in Exod 8.4 (καὶ ἐξαποστελῶ τὸν λαόν, καὶ θύσωσιν κυρίῳ).

**45** Cf. similarly Exod 7.16, 7.26, 8.16, always with λατρεύειν. The context of Exod 10.25–26 makes it clear that there the immediate referent of λατρεύειν is the offering of animal sacrifices. For our purposes, however, it is important to note two levels of meaning: the immediate referent, which here is cultic sacrifice, and a broader reference to a way of life and its purpose characterised by these cultic acts as particularly important focal points. It is precisely the latter level of meaning on which Paul draws for the meaning of λατρεία in Rom 12.1. Cf. also Deut 28.47–48, where the contrast between not worshipping or serving God (οὐκ ἐλάτρευσας κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου [28.47]) and serving one’s political enemies (λατρεύσεις τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου [28.48]) is expressed in a manner that exploits the semantic range of λατρεύειν. But also here the verb is used comprehensively to characterise the manner of living as one of disobedience. Cf. also Deut 10.12.

**46** What it must do: τί κύριος ὁ θεός σου αἰτεῖται παρὰ σοῦ (Deut 10.12). Other verbs used in Deut 10.12–13 are best understood not as indicating parts of a whole but rather as profiling aspects of an entirety (φοβεῖσθαι κύριον [cf. in Proverbs], πορεύεσθαι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ, φυλάσσεσθαι τὰς ἐντολάς κυρίου). The verb ἀγαπᾶν is used in the Shema (Deut 6.5) and qualified there by ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς δυνάμεώς σου. In Deut 10.12, it seems that the verb λατρεύειν is “inserted”: ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν καὶ λατρεύειν κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου. This suggests that it can be used comprehensively to characterise the relation to God to which Israel is called.

Pentateuchal narrative is precisely to establish how the liberated people wander in the desert and worship in a mobile shrine, until the temple at Jerusalem becomes the exclusive central place for Levitical sacrifice, and thus becomes the focal point of the Jewish way of life and its *raison d'être*.<sup>47</sup> Paul is positive about this Jewish λατρεία in Rom 9.4, which makes it implausible to read him as engaged in polemics against Jewish cult in Rom 12.1.

Thus, to summarise, we find that Paul's use of λατρ-language in Romans (outside of Rom 12.1) makes it plausible that he can use λατρεία in a manner which comprehensively refers to a way of life oriented towards a particular purpose, which focally includes but is not restricted to acts of worship in a stricter sense, but is precisely understood in such a manner as to draw together the meaning and purpose of the entire way of life. In this way it becomes one of the ways in which Paul can speak of a vocation, a purpose of existence. We argue that in Rom 12.1, in combination with λογικός, the result is a reference to the human vocation, whose fulfilment is claimed as a possibility in the life of those to which the letter addresses itself.

Our interpretation of λατρεύειν is also supported by the way it is used in Phil 3.3, the only other occurrence of the verb in Paul. In a sharply polemical context, he claims for a Christ-followers' "we" that includes mostly Gentiles (who will have been uncircumcised) that they are the circumcision (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἔσμεν ἢ περιτομή), and characterises them further as those who serve or worship in the spirit of God (οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες).<sup>48</sup> It is clear that this designation serves as a contrastive identity statement. This makes it plausible that it is a more comprehensive statement than something to do with what happens, for instance, when the Philippian Jesus-followers gather for a meeting.<sup>49</sup> Insofar as circumcision functions as *the* male identity marker within ancient Judaism and thus as a precondition for closer access at the Jerusalem temple, it is noteworthy that "circumcision" in a figurative, and presumably, a "true", sense, is claimed for such as are then characterised by a mode of worship or service. The πνεῦμα θεοῦ clearly is the spirit of God; what is less clear is whether Phil 3.3 says that the spirit of God is worshipped (as the dative would normally lead one to expect, but which is unusual as a statement) or that the service is enabled and performed through the spirit of God. The latter is more likely because the contrast seems

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. for instance the reference to Jerusalem, expressed generically to guard against "anachronism", in Deut 14.23 (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, ᾧ ἂν ἐκλέξηται κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐπικληθῆναι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκεῖ).

<sup>48</sup> Textual variant: θεῶ.

<sup>49</sup> This is supported by the parallelisms with καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ and οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες in Phil 3.3.

to be similar to the contrast with circumcision such as one finds in Rom 2.25–29: those who, enabled by the Spirit, live in such a way that they serve God, fulfil that for which circumcision may be the outward sign. In Phil 3.3, then, λατρεύειν is used to refer comprehensively to the life of those in Christ and to cast it as either a service (implicitly to God) in a mode enabled by God’s spirit, or, with an alternative construal, as “worship”, where “worship” functions synecdochically, characterising all their actions by means of an important subset. Phil 3.3 by itself does not contain clues that a vocation is in view, but the larger context of the letter makes it clear that Paul thinks about the Christ-followers in Philippi in such terms.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Paul’s use of the word in Phil 3.3 does not of itself indicate a vocation, but rather a service to God which focally contains acts of worship and is important for the articulation of identity.

Thus, we conclude that the Pauline use of λατρεύειν and λατρεία supports the reading of λατρεία in Rom 12.1c as comprehensively referring to a service to God, which includes but is not restricted to acts of worship in a narrow sense. Further, it is open to a framing of a life characterised by such service to God as being in its entirety a service to God or worship – that is, as a response to God which brings the best human beings can offer before him.

### 6.3.1.3 A further confirmation from a passage in Philo

We have seen that the language of λατρεύειν can be used to speak about a service to God in such a way as to express the idea of a vocation. There is a passage in Philo’s *De specialibus legibus* that uses the language of λατρεύειν in a manner that confirms this, but also combines it with the idea of genuine humanness and applies it exclusively to a group, namely Israel. Philo describes an address to the human mind (διάνοια) which identifies, in a paraphrase of Deut 10.12, what is demanded of human beings – not now in the manner of law (προστάξεις καὶ ἀπαγορεύσεις [*Spec.* 1.257]) but in terms of advice and admonition (ὑποθήκας καὶ παραινέσεις [*Spec.* 1.257]):

And this is just to love Him as a benefactor (ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν ὡς εὐεργέτην), or failing this to fear Him at least as a ruler and lord (φοβεῖσθαι γοῦν ὡς ἄρχοντα καὶ κύριον), and to tread in every way that will lead you to please Him, to serve Him not half-heartedly (λατρεύειν αὐτῷ μὴ παρέργως) but with your whole soul filled with the determination to love Him (ἀλλὰ ὅλη τῇ ψυχῇ πεπληρωμένη γνώμης φιλοθέου) and to cling to His commandments and to honour justice. (Philo, *Spec.* 1.299)<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Cf. for instance Phil 1.27.

<sup>51</sup> Transl. in this section H. Colson, adapted.

Philo aims to show that these commandments are not hard or laborious to fulfil (echoing Deut 30.14), because the assent of the mind is sufficient (ἐπινεῦσαι μόνον δεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν) to do so. Within the vast expanse of heaven and earth, God has chosen for himself a special people:

ἀλλ' ὅμως καὶ ἐξ ἅπαντος ἀνθρώπων γένους τοὺς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπους ἀριστίνδην ἐπιλέξας εἴλετο καὶ προνομίας ἤξιωσε τῆς πάσης, ἐπὶ τὴν θεραπείαν καλέσας ἑαυτοῦ.

Yet out of the whole human race He chose as of special merit and judged worthy of pre-eminence over all, those who are in a true sense humans, and called them to the service of Himself. (Philo, *Spec.* 1.303)

This passage is significant, first, because it explicitly uses the motif of genuine humanness (τοὺς πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπους) and applies it to the elect people of God (Philo usually applies it to the mind alone). Second, because it uses the language of a service to God and presents it as a calling (ἐπὶ τὴν θεραπείαν καλέσας ἑαυτοῦ).<sup>52</sup> We note that the fact that “calling” language (καλέσας) is used is certainly fitting for the idea of a human vocation but not a requirement for us to detect our concept of a vocation. While Philo used the verb λατρεύειν above, in this passage he uses θεραπεία to express such an idea. Furthermore, this passage is especially important in that it shows explicitly how genuine humanness and the idea of fulfilling a vocation can be coupled.

#### 6.3.1.4 Conclusion for λατρεία

Thus, we conclude that the language of λατρεία and λατρεύειν can be *one* of the ways in which Paul speaks of a service to God which corresponds to a calling. It depends on context and upon other qualifications whether we end up with the idea of a singular vocation (such as the one of Socrates<sup>53</sup>) or of a particular group (such as the example from Philo we have just discussed) or, as we argue for Rom 12.1, of a human vocation, a calling that is incumbent upon human beings as such (even if it is directly applied, in the context, only to the group addressed, and not to all humans). Such a service is more than merely “the believer’s ethical sacrifice”,<sup>54</sup> because while it involves effort and right conduct, the focus is on what the right action is for and what end it serves. Paul’s idea in Romans is that human beings have a role in the wider cosmos, and that the Christ event

<sup>52</sup> Cf. also Philo, *Somn.* 1.161 (discussed in section 2.2).

<sup>53</sup> Even if Socrates has become exemplary for others, on which cf. Döring 1979; for Epictetus, see Long 2002, 67–96.

<sup>54</sup> As Scott 2018 simply takes for granted (e.g. 531).

has brought about a change of conditions, such that there is now a mode of being human in which this role can be fulfilled. This role is their proper task *as human beings* and if they fulfil it, they display the genuine humanness which has been revealed in Christ, and, by virtue of their union with him, also becomes a possibility for them. Within the ancient encyclopedia, the force of a “human calling” becomes explicit in combination with the adjective λογικός.

### 6.3.2 That λογικός refers to the specifically human capacity on which a vocation is based

In this section we propose that the vocational sense of λογικός as used by Epictetus 1.16 offers the best parallel for the sense of λογικός in Rom 12.1. We argue that the word points to the human endowment with reason as that which makes humans human<sup>55</sup> and to their distinct capacity, on which a role within the cosmos is based.

While sometimes λογικός can be used for someone reasoning well as opposed to the sense in which every adult human being is endowed with reason,<sup>56</sup> here the sense refers to the distinctly human capacity. Yet given a protreptic and vocational context, this endowment is also the basis for an aspiration to use it well. For the Stoics, reason within human beings is a divine form, but it is given in a precarious manner, as Forschner describes well: “Im Menschen ist das göttliche Prinzip in seiner höchsten Form als selbstbewusste und selbsttätige Vernunft individuiert” but “er ist [beziehungsweise] hat diese seine göttliche Form in einer Weise, die ihm selbst aufgegeben ist, und die sich selbst unterbieten, deprivieren und verfehlen kann.”<sup>57</sup> Thus, it designates both something on which a calling is based and a norm to which one should aspire.

We have identified two important ideas within ancient thought that are needed in our explanation of what Paul does when he uses reason language in Rom 12.1. The first idea is that reason is the human proprium. The second is that human beings have a task within the cosmos based on their proprium.

Ancient thinkers who hold that human beings have such a task differ in their view of what this task consists in and they use a variety of language and imagery for both. We need to distinguish language used to describe what the task consists

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<sup>55</sup> Both in the classificatory sense and in an aspirational sense.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the second and the third senses discussed in section 2.1.1. For a similar distinction, see Aristotle, EN 1.7 (the lyre player and the good lyre player).

<sup>57</sup> Forschner 2018, 185–186.

in from language which is used to state *that* human beings have such a task (or which identifies certain actions as that task).

This distinction is crucial for explaining how our interpretation of ἡ λογικὴ λατρεία in Rom 12.1 differs from other interpretations. For other interpreters, too, rightly point to Epictetus' use of reason language in 1.16 as a parallel to Paul's use of it in Rom 12.1, but understand the parallel differently.<sup>58</sup>

We will now show how this distinction applies to both Rom 12.1 and Epictetus 1.16.20 – 21. Here are the relevant passages:

Epictetus 1.16: νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι· ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν. τοῦτό μου τὸ ἔργον ἐστίν

Rom 12.1: παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζώσαν ... τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν.

In the Epictetus passage, we see three units. The first (νῦν δὲ λογικός εἰμι) refers to the specific human capacity on which a task in the cosmos is based. The second (ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν) is a description of what this task consists in (and which amounts to a sign production). The third (τοῦτό μου τὸ ἔργον ἐστίν) identifies the action described as the task (based on the specific capacity);<sup>59</sup> it implies *that* there is such a task.

In Rom 12.1, the same three elements are present. The description of what this task consists in (παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζώσαν),<sup>60</sup> the human capacity on which the task is based (λογικὴν),<sup>61</sup> and the language used to identify this description as the task (λατρείαν).

In our analysis of Rom 12.1, Paul's use of λατρεία implies *that* human beings have such a task. This means that we see λατρεία primarily as a parallel to ἔργον, rather than to ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν (which is parallel to παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα).

The Epictetus parallel is usually read differently, such that λατρεία in 12.1 is compared with ὑμνεῖν τὸν θεόν, both taken to be ways of speaking about worship. Viewed in this way, Epictetus 1.16 is an example of a text in which the language of λογικός is linked with worship; it is cited for the "idea that worship should conform to reason".<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Cranfield 1979, 602; Dunn 1988b, 711. Byrne 1996, 366 seems close to our reading, though the statement is too brief to tell.

<sup>59</sup> To be more precise the words με δεῖ do not belong to the description, but to the identification with the human task.

<sup>60</sup> Which we have argued amounts to a sign production.

<sup>61</sup> How the adjective can actualise this meaning in Rom 12.1c will be shown in section 6.3.3.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Jewett 2007, 730.

As an example, we will discuss how Wolter, in the recently published second half of his commentary on Romans, uses Epictetus 1.16.20 to explain what Paul means by λογικὴ λατρεία. For Wolter, Paul’s use of the language of λογικὴ λατρεία in Rom 12.1 draws on a widespread concept of Stoic origin, whose core idea is that the entire cosmos is ordered and permeated by a divine principle of reason.<sup>63</sup> He cites texts that describe God as λογικός and humans as endowed with reason (including Epictetus 2.9.2). Further he cites texts that we have discussed above as describing the idea of a human purpose within the cosmos (Marcus Aurelius 2.16), which he summarises as

Für ihre Lebensführung ist den Menschen darum aufgegeben, dass sie sich der “vernünftigen” Ordnung anpassen, die der Welt eingestiftet ist.<sup>64</sup>

It follows from these ideas, according to Wolter, that

die Gott gemäße Gestalt der Verehrung einen Kult verlangt, der nicht aus dinglichen Opfern besteht, sondern dem Logos-Charakter Gottes dadurch Rechnung trägt, dass er ebenfalls Logos-Gestalt annimmt.<sup>65</sup>

As a footnote to this statement Wolter refers to Epictetus 1.16.20, which he quotes with the following translation (and Greek text elements):

Wäre ich eine Nachtigall, würde ich tun, was der Nachtigall gemäß ist. Wäre ich ein Schwan, was dem Schwan gemäß ist. Jetzt aber bin ich λογικός; Es obliegt mir, Gott zu preisen (ὕμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν).<sup>66</sup>

Based on these observations, Wolter explains Paul’s use of λογικός in Rom 12.1 as describing a “Gottesdienst, der ohne dingliche Opfer auskommt”.<sup>67</sup>

It will be useful to discuss the ways in which Wolter’s use of Epictetus 1.16.20 differs from ours in the explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1c. We will now sketch out the stated and implied assumptions of Wolters explanation and contrast them with ours.

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<sup>63</sup> Wolter 2019, 253.

<sup>64</sup> Wolter 2019, 254.

<sup>65</sup> Wolter 2019, 254.

<sup>66</sup> Wolter 2019, 254. Note that Wolter’s translation of ἐποίουν τὰ τῆς ἀηδόνης as “würde ich tun, was der Nachtigall gemäß ist” subtly differs from Hard’s translation “I would perform the work of a nightingale”, which by way of paraphrase better foregrounds the contextual nuance. Wolter’s translation is similar to that of Cranfield 1979, 602.

<sup>67</sup> Wolter 2019, 254.

(1) For Wolter, the λατρεία in Rom 12.1 predicates a “religiöse Praxis”<sup>68</sup> and thus identifies (or at least further circumscribes) what it is that should be done (corresponding to “what the task consists in”, in the distinction drawn above). Our interpretation takes λατρεία to refer to the fact that there is such a task, a calling, a vocation, without a specific restriction to the domain of actions we might class as “religious”.<sup>69</sup> Thus λατρεία describes a service to God, which may consist of ethical actions or of acts of worship (in the narrow sense), but which does not serve here to circumscribe the field of action. It qualifies a certain conduct as done in view of God, but does not restrict it to “religious” acts.

(2) When Wolter reads Epictetus 1.16.20 as a parallel to Rom 12.1c, he assumes that Epictetus speaks about what true worship (“religion”) looks like. Thus, he sees Epictetus use the language of λογικός in connection with “the right kind of worship”. This reading rests on taking ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν (1.16.20) as being parallel to λατρεία in Rom 12.1c. And it understands ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν as describing the form worship must take if it is to be appropriate (“Given that I am λογικός, the appropriate form of worship for me must be praising”). For Wolter, Epictetus 1.16.20 associates the language of λογικός with language that refers to religious behaviour (ὑμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν θεόν), and thus speaks about the religious praxis that befits a certain λογικός nature; in the light of the parallel as so understood Paul also speaks about religious praxis (λατρεία) and uses the language of λογικός to characterise religious praxis that is appropriate. What makes it appropriate, in Wolter’s interpretation, is that it is a cult whose form respects the λογικός nature of God (in the end: not involving physical sacrifice).<sup>70</sup>

We note that there is a slight mismatch in Wolter’s use of Epictetus 1.16.20 as a parallel, in that he takes the parallel to support the idea that proper worship befits God’s nature as λογικός, whereas Epictetus speaks of his own nature as λογικός. But presumably, in having cited some of the passages which show that for the Stoics, human and divine reason are linked, and that proper human conduct must conform to the nature of the whole and to their own nature

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<sup>68</sup> Wolter 2019, 255.

<sup>69</sup> In his comment on the meaning of λατρεία in Rom 9.4, Wolter is closer to our own meaning when he writes that it is a “komprehensive Umschreibung dessen, was Gott von dem Volk einfordert, das er sich erwählt hat” (Wolter 2019, 35). The concrete examples for what is included under this description, namely not only the temple cult but die “Gesamtheit von Israels exklusivem Ethos”, which includes cultic sacrifice, keeping feasts and holidays, fasting and praying (Wolter 2019, 35), give an indication of what he counts as “religiöse Praxis” (Wolter himself refers back to this passage in his commentary).

<sup>70</sup> See the quotation above.

(DL 788), Wolter thinks that this difference can be neglected.<sup>71</sup> And perhaps it would not amount to very much, if one could safely assume that Paul shared the Stoic metaphysical view that divine reason and human reason are substantially linked.<sup>72</sup> But that assumption is implausible, and Wolter seems to distance himself from ascribing the metaphysical implications about immanent world reason and human reason to Paul when he writes that Paul only draws on the language in which the Stoic view would have been formulated (“unter Rückgriff auf die Sprache jener Vorstellung”).<sup>73</sup>

But as we have shown in chapter 4, the context of Epictetus 1.16 and the details of 1.16.20–21 make it clear that Epictetus is speaking about the human calling and not simply about worship. And thus the sense of λογικός in Epictetus 1.16 should be taken to describe the subject of the human vocation in respect of its enabling capacity. If this is, as we argue, the sense in which Paul uses it, then we need to explain how the word λογική in λογική λατρεία can point to the subject of the λατρεία, which is what we do in the next section.

### 6.3.3 That the combination with λογικός highlights the human subject of λατρεία

In Rom 12.1c the action noun λατρεία describes a service to God which is a vocation. This action is modified by the adjective λογικός. Any interpretation of Rom 12.1c needs to make a decision in what way it takes the adjective to modify the noun. Most interpretations are not thematically aware of this step and in this way they have missed an option which we propose as a solution. An adjective can modify a noun in many ways – comparable to a genitive attribute for which exegetes have developed an array of categories in which they then frame their disputes (subjective, objective, partitive and so on). As one can witness in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, for instance, even if there would be agreement on the correct label for the genitive, the debate would not be settled, because there is still room for divergent interpretations. But the point is that something

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<sup>71</sup> Dunn similarly combines these elements when he explains “As such it [namely the word λογικός, SD] marks out what is appropriate to man, in distinction from beasts, and what relates him to God” (Dunn 1988b, 711).

<sup>72</sup> The interpretation of Thorsteinsson seems to come close to assuming this (Thorsteinsson 2010, 142–143).

<sup>73</sup> Wolter 2019, 255 (though he does not spell out how this statement relates to the material he cited earlier). Cf. for a similar move, though in service of a different interpretation, Reitzenstein 1927, 331.

similar happens with adjectives<sup>74</sup> and this needs to be made explicit for a proper explanation of Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1.

### 6.3.3.1 What adjectives can do to action nouns

In Rom 12.1c, the adjective λογικός attributively modifies the noun λατρεία. But it can do this in different ways, as the following reflection shows.

An action can be characterised in several ways, corresponding to its possible semantic roles. Thus, an action has a subject, is performed in certain circumstances (place, time, occasion), in a certain manner, can have a direct object, can be done for a certain purpose, for the benefit or disadvantage of someone else, and so on. If an action is expressed by means of an action noun, then an adjective could, in principle, describe any of these aspects (e.g. “friendly fire”, “parliamentary scrutiny”).

The point we are making here is that an adjective which modifies a noun expressing an action could semantically describe any of the semantic roles involved in an action, or the consequences, circumstances, and the manner of the action.

An action can also be compared, evaluated, approved or criticised from an external standpoint; more generally, by means of an adjective a broad range of statements could be made about the action. This applies directly to the interpretation of the term λογική λατρεία. For λατρεία is an action noun<sup>75</sup> and thus we could theoretically expect the characterisation of λατρεία by means of this adjective to tell us about any of the semantic roles implicit in the λατρεία<sup>76</sup> or the mode of action or some judgement about the action by the speaker (and there could be a combination: an indirect characterisation of an action by means of a direct characterisation of one of the semantic roles of the action).<sup>77</sup>

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74 In fact, often what one might say with an adjective relating to a noun could also be expressed via a genitive form of the noun (e.g. brotherly love is the love of a brother).

75 The noun refers to an action. The grammatical category *nomen actionis* needs to be distinguished from the term action noun in some contexts: we use *nomen actionis* to designate a class of word formation (nouns ending in -ία for instance), which nouns may often be action nouns, but not necessarily so (if the meaning of a term that used to be an action noun still has the lexical form of a *nomen actionis*, but can be used in ways other than to express an action).

76 Sometimes also called syntactical roles in different theoretical contexts.

77 For example, in the Didache (6.3) the phrase λατρεία γάρ ἐστι θεῶν νεκρῶν clearly serves negatively to qualify eating meat offered to idols. It does so by negatively characterising the recipients of such a λατρεία as dead (νεκρός). This is not quite the same as an adjective modifying the noun directly. But one could readily understand the phrase λατρεία νεκρά, in a discourse

We will show this point by offering several concrete examples in which an adjective modifies the action noun *λατρεία*. An example in which an adjective expresses a third-party judgment of an action can be found in the mouth of the choir in Euripides’ *Troïades*:

μάταν ἄρ’, ὦ χρυσέαις ἐν οἰνοχοαῖς ἄβρα βαίνων, Λαομεδόντιε παῖ,  
Ζηνὸς ἔχεις κυλίκων πλήρωμα, καλλίσταν λατρείαν.

It is for nought, son of Laomedon, you that go with delicate step amid the ewers of gold, that you have the office of filling Zeus’ cups, service most noble. (Euripides, *Troïades* 820–823)<sup>78</sup>

This example is illuminating. The choir poetically addresses the cupbearer of Zeus, Ganymede, describes what his office includes as tasks, the filling (πλήρωμα) of the cups, but calls this service ultimately pointless, despite its being “most noble” (καλλίσταν). We note the syntactic parallels with Rom 12.1: there is a direct address (Λαομεδόντιε παῖ, cf. Rom 12.1a ἀδελφοί), and the appositive καλλίσταν λατρείαν modifies the entire preceding clause, identifying the description of the task as an office, while at the same time offering a comment on this office by making a positive value judgment.<sup>79</sup>

An example in which the adjective indicates the person for the sake of which the service is performed (the recipient of the worship or the one for the benefit of whom the service is performed) can be found in Euripides’ *Phoenissae*. The choir, consisting of Phoenician maidens, who have been dedicated by the inhabitants of Tyre to the temple of Apollo in Delphi, speaks, using the first person singular, about how it has entered into the service of Apollo (Φοῖβω λάτρις ἐγενόμαν [221]) and a few lines later again refers to the service of Apollo (in the objective sense) with the phrase Φοιβείαισι λατρείαις (225). Thus, the adjective Φοίβειος here modifies the noun *λατρεία* in such a way as to point to its object or recipient

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where this is already established, being used as a shorthand for a *λατρεία θεῶν νεκρῶν* for instance. For a positive characterisation one could point to Gregory of Nyssa, *De pythonissa ad Theodosium episcopum*, 107 (ed. Hörner) where one finds the phrase τῆ τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ *λατρεία*.

**78** Transl. D. Kovacs, adapted.

**79** A negative example would be the “ignoble service” (ἀγεννη *λατρείαν*), which expression Lucian (*Apologia* 4) uses to criticise the contradiction between life and doctrine in someone who once in writing had condemned what he then in old age chose for himself, namely to fall for the power of a rich man.

(the subject of the service being the maidens). The case of an adjective derived from a name makes it particularly easy to spot.<sup>80</sup>

An example where the λατρεία is modified by an adjective that points to its subject and characterises the λατρεία can be found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus vincitus*, where the punished Prometheus replies in a heated exchange to the messenger of Zeus, Hermes, that he prefers his own unfortunate situation to the service in which Hermes is engaged (τῆς σῆς λατρείας τὴν ἐμὴν δυσπραξίαν, σαφῶς ἐπίστασ', οὐκ ἂν ἀλλάξαμι' ἐγὼ [966–967]). Here the possessive adjective σός points to the subject of the λατρεία.<sup>81</sup>

An example in which there is a modification of λατρεία which explicates in what kind of acts it consists can be found in 3 Maccabees 4.14, where the hard labour is expressed by the phrase τῶν ἔργων κατάπονον λατρείαν. This is somewhat pleonastic, as already λατρεία can mean hard labour. However, adding “wearisome” (κατάπονον) further describes the quality of these acts that make up the λατρεία, namely that they are taxing for those who perform them.<sup>82</sup> Implicit in this is of course a negative valuation.

An example in which the adjective serves to characterise the manner of the λατρεία, not concretely as to the actions involved, but for the purposes of an external comparison, is the phrase συμβολικῆς λατρείας in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.3.4, where Jewish worship is claimed to be a symbol of the “true piety” coming later in the form of Christian worship. Some interpretations of Rom 12.1c as a “spiritual worship” in effect would understand the way the adjective modifies the noun in a similar way.

Quite often the characterisation and the evaluation blend. Examples include the Sibylline Oracles 3.763 (φεύγετε λατρείας ἀνόμους, τῷ ζῶντι λάτρευε), where the unlawful worship practices are clearly something to be avoided and hence characterised negatively. The implicit contrast is with service to a living God.

An action can also be characterised by the attitude or emotions or the accompanying thought of the one who performs an action. An example would

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**80** While the adjective here serves to indicate for whom the service is, this would often be expressed by a noun in the genitive, e.g. in Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 56E (θεῶν λατρείαν). By contrast, in the (spurious) *Consolatio ad Apollonium* [Plutarch, 114D], bodily existence itself can be cast as a (labourious) service, from which one is to be freed, and for this a genitive is used, which could also indicate the one who is served (ἀπαλλαγίς τῆς τοῦ σώματος λατρείας).

**81** What this λατρεία consists in (being a faithful messenger to Zeus) is the basis of Hermes' sarcastic response, which trades on the meaning range of λατρεία in calling Prometheus' punishment of being bound to a rock a state of λατρεύειν, with the rock ironically cast as the recipient of the service (κρείσσον γὰρ οἶμαι τῆιδε λατρεύειν πέτραι ἢ πατρὶ φῦναι Ζηνὶ πιστὸν ἄγγελον [Aeschylus, *Prom.* 968–969]).

**82** The word ἔργον can itself be used to express hard work (e.g. Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.6.1).

be Philo, *Sacr.* 84, where knowing how to divide the genus virtue into the species of the “cardinal virtues” allows one to serve virtue “voluntarily” or “willingly” (ἐκούσιον ... λατρείαν “willing service”).

Thus, we have distinguished several different categories in which way may describe how the adjective λογικός can modify the noun λατρεία, and we have shown the need for such distinctions by means of examples.

### 6.3.3.2 How other interpretations map onto these categories

Before we discuss our own solution, we will point out how some of the solutions put forward by other interpreters map onto the categories developed in the preceding section.<sup>83</sup> The first variant is those who translate λογικός as “reasonable”.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the word is understood to function as a third-person evaluation of λατρεία, amounting to a statement that this act is “reasonable,” i.e. an act for which good reasons can be given, which is defensible, in keeping with reason and so on.<sup>85</sup> Interpretations which assume that the topic of Rom 12.1 is the true cult or worship, and see Rom 12.1c as a reflex of the fact that Christ-followers do not participate in the cult of the polis, would then see Paul as affirming that the practices which make up Christ-followers’ service are not something strange or silly, but rather “reasonable”.<sup>86</sup> Another variant is that this λατρεία is one which is “the rational and logical response to what Christ has already done in Christ”;<sup>87</sup> thus, one understands Paul to say with Rom 12.1c: this is the behaviour which follows from my argument so far.<sup>88</sup> Other interpretations see Paul as making a deliberate point about the body: “offering one’s body to God [is] the appropriate kind of worship”.<sup>89</sup> These take λατρεία to indicate a topical question (what is the right kind of worship) and Paul to hint at an answer in Rom 12.1b. The adjective λογικός here again functions as a third-party evaluative statement; in this

<sup>83</sup> Cf. our discussion in section 1.3.

<sup>84</sup> Discussed by Scott 2018, 517–519.

<sup>85</sup> Longenecker (2016, 921) understands “Paul’s statement ... in Rom 12.1 as follows: it is eminently reasonable, both intellectually and spiritually, for believers in Jesus ... to dedicate themselves wholly to God.”

<sup>86</sup> This is how Gupta 2010 seems to understand it: “worship that makes sense”.

<sup>87</sup> Hiebert 1996, cited after Scott 2018, 517 n. 104.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. the paraphrase “the worship to which our argument points” offered by Wright 2002, 705, though not fully affirmed (Longenecker’s quotation of Wright is misleading in this regard; moreover, it is not verbatim [2016, 920]).

<sup>89</sup> Wright 2002, 705 (by implication).

variant it is taken to be statement about what is genuine (“true, appropriate”), in implicit or even explicit contrast to other forms of worship.

The second variant understands λογικός to mean “spiritual, non-physical”.<sup>90</sup> Here Paul is seen as contrasting what Christ-followers do in their times of gathered worship with what happens in cultic worship involving the sacrifice of animals (as something material, physical, “bloody”) or some other offerings (non-bloody, but material).<sup>91</sup> Paul is characterising their worship as not involving such material offerings. Thus, in this variant the manner or mode of the exercise of the action is described as not involving material sacrifice. A clear example where the topic is indeed worship and where the mode in which this worship should proceed is thematised explicitly is Philo, *Spec.* 1.272:

And indeed though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices, the full and truly perfect oblation of noble living, as they honour with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Saviour, God, sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or lips, when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise (τῆ μὲν διὰ τῶν φωνητηρίων ὀργάνων, τῆ δὲ ἄνευ γλώττης καὶ στόματος, μόνη ψυχῆ τὰς νοητὰς ποιούμενοι διεξόδους καὶ ἐκβοήσεις).<sup>92</sup>

Though the concrete solution is different, in a similar manner Scott argues that λογικός describes the kind of acts of which the λατρεία consists,<sup>93</sup> namely that it is performed by actively reasoning. Scott claims as a result of his semantic investigation that “when human actions are called λογικός, they are consistently either performed by thinking rationally or guided by rational thought”.<sup>94</sup> For Scott the “believer’s ethical sacrifice” is characterised by Paul explicitly as worship that consists of acts that involve reasoning. Similarly, Keener takes the adjective to describe the manner in which the λατρεία is to be performed: “in Romans 12.1, the way one offers one’s body as a sacrifice to God is rationally, through reason – one’s mind dictates how the body will serve.”<sup>95</sup> In the same vein is Byrne’s proposal that the adjective tells us that the “worship” is “proceeding from that which is distinctive of human beings as rational, reflective creatures whose highest powers are engaged in the homage they bring to their Creator.”<sup>96</sup> We have thus shown how various other explanations of the λογική

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Scott 2018, 519–520.

<sup>91</sup> On the various types of sacrifice see Young 1979.

<sup>92</sup> Transl. H. Colson.

<sup>93</sup> Scott refers to the “believer’s ethical sacrifice”, to which the λατρεία refers back.

<sup>94</sup> Scott 2018, 517–518.

<sup>95</sup> Keener 2016, 152.

<sup>96</sup> Byrne 1996, 363.

λατρεία implicitly answer the question of how the adjective modifies the noun. This point is not usually considered by interpreters, but is important for our own proposal.

### 6.3.3.3 A novel proposal: λογικός indicates the subject of λατρεία

In this section, we offer our own solution, which involves a novel grammatical consideration. Our aim is to show how the vocational sense of λογικός such as one finds it in the Epictetus parallel (νῦν δὲ λογικός εἶμι [1.16.21]) or in the definition of a human being (ζῶον λογικὸν θνητόν) can be the relevant sense in Rom 12.1c.

We need to account for the fact that in Rom 12.1c the adjective λογικός attributively modifies the noun λατρεία, whereas in Epictetus 1.16.20 the word is used as a predicative complement (λογικός εἶμι) and in the definition of human beings, it is used attributively to modify a noun denoting living being (ζῶον).

This is where the categories we developed above come into play. We recall that the noun λατρεία is an action noun, designating an action with a noun for which the cognate verb would be λατρεύειν. As designating an action, the noun implies a subject of the action it expresses. In Epictetus 1.16, λογικός expresses the human subject in its specificity,<sup>97</sup> and in this sense, we suggest, is it also used in Rom 12.1c.

If the action noun is used to denote a concrete action in a particular instance (the killing of Caesar) one would expect a corresponding concrete subject (Cassius, Brutus and the others). If, on the other hand, the action noun is used to denote a typical activity, one would expect, correspondingly, the typical subject of that action. For example: the (Stoic) practice of anticipating potential misfortune (*praemeditatio futurorum malorum*)<sup>98</sup> would lead one to expect as subject of the action someone acquainted with Stoic philosophy.

We propose that λογικός in Rom 12.1c points to the (typical) subject of the action that λατρεία expresses: Paul uses λογικός as a way of speaking about what is characteristically human, their endowment with reason, and thus he indicates that it is the λατρεία (the vocation, that is the task to which the subject of the action is called) which befits all those who are λογικός, namely human beings.<sup>99</sup> No commentator known to me has seen this problem in these terms and hence none has proposed this kind of solution.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> As we have seen in section 4.4.2.

<sup>98</sup> For the term cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.29.

<sup>99</sup> The context makes it clear that human beings are in view, even if in ancient ontologies there is room for λογικά which refer to higher beings or stars, as we have seen in section 2.2.6.2.

The adjective λογικός thus modifies the noun by identifying the subject of the action and thereby points to the well-known peculiarity of human beings in ancient discussion, the basis, as the specifically human characteristic, for their specific role in the cosmos. In this way, it would define both the subject of the action and through this, also the action. And because λατρεία can be used, as we have shown, to refer to a service to God which is one's vocation in life, these terms come together, in our interpretation, to mean the "human calling" or "the human vocation", that life of service to God to which human beings are called.

There is an important aspirational dialectic in this: the λογική λατρεία is the service to which all rational mortal animals are called. But because a rational nature needs to exercise reason properly for it to realise that which it is meant to realise, the λογική λατρεία in a sense also marks the ideal to which these beings need to aspire, if they are truly to be λογικοί. We indicate this aspect in our translation by speaking of the "truly human vocation": it is a human vocation in one sense because it is a task that is incumbent upon all human beings, but it is a human vocation in another sense because only when they fulfil it or strive to do so, are they becoming the genuinely human beings they are meant to be.

#### 6.3.3.4 An example for the adjective λογικός indicating the subject of an action noun in Diogenes Laertius

We have thus proposed to read the adjective λογικός as indicating the subject of the λατρεία in Rom 12.1. But are there other clear examples in which the adjective λογικός modifies a noun attributively and the text gives indications that the noun relates to those beings who are λογικοί? An important example, not discussed in the commentaries, can be found in the seventh book of Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae philosophorum*, where the Stoic teachings are summarised. In his discussion of their logical teachings, Diogenes Laertius sets out to quote a section of Diocles of Magnesia's Ἐπιδρομή τῶν φιλοσόφων, which introduces several Stoic divisions of the φαντασία, distinguishing for instance between those which are αἰσθητικά and those which are not. The source then proceeds to another division of the φαντασία, which is the one that is relevant for our purposes:

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**100** That the adjective λογικός in Rom 12.1 points to human beings precisely as beings endowed with reason is noted, correctly in our view, by Fitzmyer 1993, 637–639, Byrne 1996, 362 and reflected in the translations of the JB and the NJB (though their resulting interpretation is different). It is also implicit, though as part of a very different interpretation in the paraphrase of Reitzenstein 1927, 329 ("λατρεία, welche dem πνευματικός eignet und wohl anstehet"), who assumes that λογικός is used to say what is meant by πνευματικός.

Ἔτι τῶν φαντασιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι λογικαί, αἱ δὲ ἄλογοι· λογικαὶ μὲν αἱ τῶν λογικῶν ζώων, ἄλογοι δὲ αἱ τῶν ἀλόγων. αἱ μὲν οὖν λογικαὶ νοήσεις εἰσίν, αἱ δ' ἄλογοι οὐ τετυχηκασιν ὀνόματος.

Another division of presentations is into rational and irrational, the former being those of rational creatures, the latter those of the irrational. Those which are rational are processes of thought, while those which are irrational have no name.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, the λογικαὶ φαντασίαι<sup>102</sup> are those of the λογικὰ ζωά. The text does not explicitly feature the phrase λογικαὶ φαντασίαι, and in this way an attributive modification of a noun by the adjective λογικός. But the predicative use of the adjective (εἰσι λογικαί), which attaches itself to the noun φαντασίαι (indicated by the genitive τῶν φαντασιῶν which indicates the genus of which a species is formed) and the repetition of the adjective in which the noun φαντασίαι is clearly implied in its omission as an ellipsis (λογικαὶ [sc. φαντασίαι] μὲν αἱ ...) makes it clear that the phrase λογικαὶ φαντασίαι is implied by the text (or would be the natural technical term to refer to this kind of φαντασία). Though in many senses of the word φαντασία its verbal force is negligible, at least formally it is a verbal noun of φαντάζομαι, an act, so to speak, of placing (or having placed) before the mind.<sup>103</sup> And thus, we have an instance here of an action noun (φαντασία) that is qualified restrictively by the adjective λογικός in such a way as to point to the subjects of the action which the action noun designates: humans as rational beings (λογικὰ ζωά), standing in contrast to “irrational animals” (ἄλογα ζωά). Thus we have here, we suggest, a grammatical parallel for the function of the adjective λογικός in Rom 12.1c.<sup>104</sup> It modifies the action noun λατρεία by binding it to its proper subject, namely, human beings: they are identified by the property which marks them as distinct from the other creatures.

### 6.3.3.5 Meeting objections to our proposal

It might be objected to our grammatical solution that in Rom 12.1c (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν) the possessive pronoun ὑμῶν already expresses the subject of the λατρεία. By way of answer we note that λογικός does not identify an individ-

<sup>101</sup> DL 751. Transl. R. D. Hicks.

<sup>102</sup> On “rational presentations”, cf. Inwood 1985, 57–59. According to Inwood, 276 n. 98, the reading here adopted is supported by Kerferd and Imbert, but against Long 1971.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. for this sense, LSJ, s.v. φαντάζω. The form is medio-passive.

<sup>104</sup> Another example is Aspasius, *In ethica Nicomachea commentaria* 18.1–2 (λείπεται δὲ [τὸ] ἔργον [εἶναι] τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ πρακτικὴ καὶ λογικὴ ζωὴ, τουτέστι τὸ ζῆν ὡς λογικόν), which, as we have seen, comments on Aristotle’s function (ἔργον) argument (the purpose of something is based on its peculiarity).

ual in its singularity or a specific group within a category, but refers to a typical subject, a class. This then also inflects the meaning of λατρεία, which is no longer a concrete action done at a specific point in space and time, but a basic task, a vocation.<sup>105</sup> It is precisely that task with which those are charged who are λογικοί, not in the sense of those who are particularly adept at the finer points of manipulating hypothetical syllogisms, but human beings generally. And this combination of a task that befits human beings as such is what is then identified as “yours”: this is your human calling, your service to God to which you are called as human beings.<sup>106</sup>

Another objection might be: would Paul have used this form to indicate the subject in such manner? Would he not have expressed such a point in the form τὴν λογικῶν λατρείαν instead of τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν? No, because, first, the phrase τὴν λογικῶν λατρείαν or τὴν τῶν λογικῶν λατρείαν would have been likely to be misunderstood as indicating the object of worship, that is, as a worship directed towards rational things or beings.<sup>107</sup> And second, if understood as a subjective genitive, this variant would interfere with the pronoun ὑμῶν in a way the formulation with the adjective does not, because it combines to form a concept, the human vocation as rational beings, which can then be ascribed to those addressed via the pronoun ὑμῶν.

There is a deeper dialectic at work here which has to do with the nature of a calling based on a certain capacity: a calling needs to be realised and only the realised form of a calling is that which truly deserves the name, towards which the realisation is striving. But the basis is the capacity (or at least the capacity to develop the [full] capacity) which identifies human beings as those endowed with reason, whether or not they fully live up to the calling which follows from this endowment (and thus are “fully human” or “truly human”). Thus, the wise man and the fool are both λογικός in the sense of the definition, but only the wise man is it also in fully realised actuality. In the same manner, the λογικὴ λατρεία, which, on our reading, Paul ascribes to the Roman Christ-followers as theirs for the taking, is such that it is both something which applies to them by virtue of their being the beings they are,<sup>108</sup> but also an aspiration and a norm to which they have to live up to, and only by having become those who do so, are they truly those who are λογικοί in the sense they are meant to be.

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**105** Of course, the fulfilment of the task *does* take place in space and time.

**106** The ὑμῶν in Rom 12.1c is a further problem for Scott’s reading: it is unclear why a statement that an action involves acts of reasoning should be called “yours”.

**107** For the construction with a genitive, cf. the above cited example (Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 56E).

**108** With the qualification we make below.

There are important differences between the Stoic conceptions and Paul’s when it comes to the human endowment with reason and what it means to fulfil the role in the cosmos based on it. First, it is not clear whether Paul subscribes, as the Stoics do,<sup>109</sup> to a view that reason is something which human beings only develop when they are about seven years old. But this would not matter in any case, as Paul does not have to share the specific assumptions that go with Stoic conceptions about the nature of rationality, either in humans or in that rationality which pervades the cosmos.

Second, for the Stoics, the human role in the cosmos, based on the endowment with reason, is something which can be fulfilled – insofar as the wise man who fulfils it is not merely an unreachable ideal – based simply on that endowment (and given the right instruction, training, helped by precepts), whereas for Paul, what is needed is a transformation of the subject by baptism and all that this entails.<sup>110</sup> Paul does not explicitly spell out how the conditions have changed such that human beings, in his view, now are able to fulfil it; how, that is, the holy Spirit or the “spirit of Christ” are necessary, or how the category of participation or a particular relation to the messiah, Jesus, is required.<sup>111</sup> He simply assumes that it is now possible to live in the required manner. But that does not mean that this transformation moves them away from the “natural” rationality, that which, within the ancient cultural encyclopedia Paul shares, makes human beings human. It means that it has now become possible to fulfil the aspirations to genuine humanness to which they were called all along.

#### 6.3.4 Conclusion: The λογική λατρεία as the human vocation

What our exegetical demonstration has thus shown is that the λογική λατρεία makes excellent sense in terms of the semantics of its terms and in their precise combination as a way of explicitly naming the idea of a “human calling” such that the purport of the statement in Rom 12.1c should be translated as something like “which is your human calling” (or: “your truly human calling”).

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**109** Cf. Frede 1994.

**110** Thorsteinsson gets at a similar point, when he writes: “Proper morality is seen, in [Stoic theology], as a consequence of God’s creation of humankind and the nature of that creation, and, in [Christian theology], as a response to God’s (recent) actions in the world on behalf of humankind” (2010, 141). However, Thorsteinsson understands Rom 12.1 purely in terms of moral behaviour.

**111** For an account in terms of “incorporation” into the messiah, cf. Wright 2013, 825–835.

### 6.3.5 Two remarks on our solution

Having stated this, we need to make two points of clarification. First: Our “translation” aims at showing something about the ancient cultural encyclopedia rather than the strict semantics of λογικός. With the paraphrase of λογική λατρεία as a “human calling” we are not making an isolated claim about the semantics of λογικός but we aim to bring out by means of a paraphrase some of the import of the language within the ancient encyclopedia. Our gloss points both to the ancient definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα and to the fact that the definition is often used to speak about the human role in the cosmos.<sup>112</sup> Because there is a strong link in the ancient encyclopedia between the endowment with reason and being human,<sup>113</sup> a link which is no longer as prominent in modern contexts, merely translating with some word involving “reason” would fail to bring out this aspect of meaning, which is precisely the one that makes best sense of what Paul is saying overall in Rom 12.1. Thus, if some English adjective expressing something to do with reason would also show strong link to ideas about a human role in the cosmos, then such a word might help in offering a useful translation. But there is not.<sup>114</sup> Where semantics overlaps with knowledge about the world or assumptions about it, one cannot simply translate. There needs to be awareness of the cultural encyclopedia and this might only be brought out by a paraphrase, which might look odd as a suggestion about the semantics of the word, but which is needed for understanding what is being said.

Thus, we are not wanting to say that λογικός semantically says nothing more than “human” in this context. There is always a reference to λόγος implicit in the use of the word.<sup>115</sup> But that reference might be secondary in terms of the mean-

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**112** As we have shown with regards to Epictetus 2.9 in section 4.2.

**113** As we have seen in sections 2.2 and 3.1.

**114** There is the additional fact that such an English adjective would also have to fit in the way it modifies the noun. Perhaps rendering “reason-endowed” might work to highlight the definition of human beings as animals endowed with reason. But it would only ever be applied to persons and not to actions and thus “reason-endowed service-to-God” would be strange.

**115** Thus, there *is* some truth in Scott’s claim that “λογικός never merely means ‘human’. To refer to human beings as τὰ λογικά in this sense [i.e. sense ii of his classification (cf. Scott 2018, 504), SD] is to highlight humanity’s capacity for reasoned thought as our defining attribute” (Scott 2018, 505–506). It is true that λογικός not only means “human” but also expresses the idea that reason is constitutive for the kind of beings that we are. But often it does so, as we have shown, precisely in discourse about the purpose of human beings and what they should aim to do. They are often defined in such a way in arguments about what their goal should be. The characteristic tasks they are meant to fulfil will perforce be such that without human

ing of λογική λατρεία. Scott wants to make the semantics the primary thing in getting at the meaning of λογική λατρεία, when he claims that Paul is thereby urging that the “believer’s ethical sacrifice” (as he calls it) should be understood to be one which involves acts of reasoning. His reading seems to presuppose that an adjective modifying a noun expressing an action could only ever characterise the action itself. This overlooks the fact that there is an important reciprocity between characterisations of actions and characterisations of their agents. Divine providence, for example, is both a providence of a higher quality than human providence and a providence whose subjects are divine. An action which is characterised as λογικός may be such that a precondition for its execution is the exercise of reason or even the capacity rightly to use it. Yet it may also be an action which cannot be fulfilled by a subject which is not λογικός, that is, one having the capacity for reason and thus in principle the capacity for using reason well. The attribution of the quality to the action is implicit. But in the case at the hand it is the subject of the action that is the crucial factor.

Second: Our novel grammatical proposal for how λογικός fits with λατρεία has the advantage of being able to vindicate in some measure the interpretation that the force of λογικός in Rom 12.1 is to do with a λατρεία that is “true” and “appropriate”, and hence that Paul’s use of reason language contributes an evaluative effect to the statement of Rom 12.1, even if, as Scott has rightly argued, the word itself is not used to make a third-person judgment on how “reasonable” an action is.<sup>116</sup> This is because the idea of a function of a being which depends on its specific capacity inherently elides the distinction between mere description and prescription, or fact and value. Thus, the understanding of “true worship” or “true service”, or better, “appropriate service” is in some measure warranted; namely, because it is a service which is appropriate for the kind of being that a human being is.<sup>117</sup> Those interpretations which emphasise this aspect have thus detected a nuance that really is there and should not be neglected.<sup>118</sup>

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thinking of some kind they would be impossible to achieve. However, speaking about “our defining attribute” is not undertaken merely out of an interest in classifications, as Scott’s account seems to suggest. Rather, the point is the vocation of human beings in the cosmos.

**116** Scott 2018, 517–518. Thus, though Scott does not make his point in this manner, λογικός is not used in the way in which, for instance, εὐλογος would be used (e.g. Thucydides, *Hist.* 6.76.2: οὐ γὰρ δὴ εὐλογον τὰς μὲν ἐκεῖ πόλεις ἀναστάτους ποιεῖν, τὰς δὲ ἐνθάδε κατοικίξειν [“For surely it is not reasonable to suppose that, while desolating the cities in their own country, they are resettling the cities of Sicily” (transl. C. F. Smith)]).

**117** This normative aspect is completely missed by Scott. It must be added, contra Wolter’s interpretation, that Paul is not saying that the *form* which worship has to take must be appropriate to the nature of God, humans, or both. Rather, his claim is that it is the appropriate vocation based on their nature (or restored “nature”).

## 6.4 Rom 12.2 in relation to Rom 12.1

Having explained our reading of Rom 12.1, our goal in this section is to show briefly how Rom 12.2 coheres with and supports our interpretation of Rom 12.1. For ease of reference, we quote the text again:

- 12.2a καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,  
 12.2b ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς  
 12.2c εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ,  
 12.2d τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

Our main point is that the exhortations in Rom 12.2a and 12.2b continue the line of exhortation in Rom 12.1b. Like Rom 12.1b, which we have shown to be about sign production, so also Rom 12.1a and 12.2b exhort to elements necessary for sign production. Romans 12.2c is presented as consequence of Rom 12.2b.

In Rom 12.2a–b there is a syntactical change from an infinitive dependent upon παρακαλῶ (as in Rom 12.1b) to imperatives. These imperatives, however, function as exhortations as well. The first one states what Paul’s hearers should not do, namely act in such a way that their behaviour conformed to that of ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, the present age. Implicit in this is the contrast with ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων, the age to come.<sup>119</sup> Paul’s use of συσχηματίζεσθαι, to form or pattern oneself after something,<sup>120</sup> here applied to “this age” corresponds well with our notion of a sign production of new creation: instead of displaying in their conduct the signs of this age and of the old humanity, Paul wants his hearers to produce signs of the new creation inaugurated in the messiah (though only the negative side is expressed: do not participate in the sign production of this age).<sup>121</sup>

The second imperative (Rom 12.2b) states something that Paul’s hearers should do. Its content is a transformation through the renewal of the mind.

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**118** However, the thrust is not the implication that other forms are “false”. Romans 12.1c is encouraging, protreptically, to the human calling, not commenting, first and foremost, on what others are doing (which comes into view only in Rom 12.2a).

**119** Cf. on the present age and the age to come the references collected by Keener 2016, 153 n. 90.

**120** συσχηματίζεσθε is a middle-passive form, but its meaning is not passive.

**121** In this interpretation, what Paul says here is very similar to what has been said in Rom 6 (for instance, in Rom 6.12). Keener similarly detects resonances with “new creation” here, when he writes with reference to Rom 12.2 that “Paul may evoke the new creation in Christ ..., which in the present includes a new worldview or approach to current reality” (Keener 2016, 154); though he rather underplays his hand when goes on to explain that this means “present actions and inactions must be evaluated in the light of their eternal consequences.”

The form μεταμορφοῦσθε is middle-passive, but that does not imply that the meaning expressed is passive. The parallelism with συσχηματίζεσθε suggests that the meaning is not passive, but rather direct-reflexive.<sup>122</sup> Thus one might translate this as “transform yourselves through the renewal of your mind.” This renewal has become possible through the change of conditions brought about in the Christ event (cf. Rom 6.1–11), and by the work of the Spirit (cf. Rom 8.5–6). It corresponds to a reversal of the process of corruption described in Rom 1.28. It is likely that Rom 6.11 describes the kind of process to which Paul alludes here: by thinking through their own identity in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection, they transform their thinking, and thus appropriate the new understanding of God that has become available.

This renewed understanding is then the basis for the restoration of the appropriate discernment (δοκιμάζειν) of what it is that God wants in a given situation (Rom 12.2c).<sup>123</sup> These right actions are described in Rom 12.2d as good and pleasing and complete. The δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12.2c is again a reversal of what is described in Rom 1.28. That the object of discernment is “what it is God wants” (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ) is further support for the idea of a human vocation (where divine intentionality is one of the criteria, as we have seen in section 3.2). Based on our interpretation so far, we then suggest that the δοκιμάζειν should be understood as vocational discernment. It is the determination, in a given situation of how best to produce the signs in which the vocation consists (Rom 12.1b). That is, the discernment is about how a particular action would produce a sign of the good news and of the new creation inaugurated in the messiah.

Our reading of Rom 12.12b and 12.2c then suggests the following explanation of how the renewal of the mind relates to the vocational discernment. The structure of the human vocation is a sign production based on an understanding of God in relation to the world. The renewal of the mind refers to a process of deeper appropriation of the new understanding of God that has become available, of the new creation launched in the messiah’s death and resurrection. The discernment is then about how to produce, in a given situation, the appropriate sign of new creation based upon this understanding.

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122 On direct-reflexive meaning cf. CGCG, 35.11.

123 On discernment see Munzinger 2007 (with a focus on the Spirit).

## 6.5 Conclusion

We have thus shown in exegetical detail how our proposed explanation of Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1 works. By alluding to philosophical traditions about the role of human beings within the cosmos based on their being λογικός, Paul presents the missional sign production of those in Christ as their truly human vocation. We have shown in detail how Epictetus functions as a parallel in terms of the idea of a human vocation. We have made this sense plausible in Rom 12.1 by a new grammatical consideration of how the adjective λογικός modifies the action noun λατρεία. We have further shown how Rom 12.1–2 coheres with this interpretation.

By arguing that Paul shares with the philosophers the idea about human beings as those endowed with reason and with a role in the cosmos based on this endowment, we have emphasised continuity with the philosophical tradition. However, as we have already seen in section 5.3, and will see in the next chapter, Paul's use of this idea goes significantly beyond the philosophical tradition in its eschatological and christological orientation. Paul sees the service which is appropriate to human beings as that of a missional existence – of understanding who God is and of producing appropriate signs.<sup>124</sup> In the next chapter we will show the implications our reading for how Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15.

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**124** In using the language of “service”, we may seem to focus more on one side of what should be considered to be a double movement – from God through humans to the world (“mission”) and from world through humans to God (“worship”). This double aspect is brought out well in Wright's statement that humans as God's image-bearers are called to be “summing up the worship of creation and reflecting his wise order into his world” (Wright 2013, 1509). Our emphasis on service as a human vocation is based on reading Paul in Rom 12.1 in the light of Epictetus 1.16 and 1.6. But since we use “service” comprehensively, it should be clear that both aspects are included. For our use of “mission” and “missional”, see section 1.4.

## 7 The vision of integrated (missional) existence in Rom 12–15

Romans 12.1–2 is the overture to Rom 12.3–15.13: it introduces and frames the way of life described in Rom 12.3–15.13.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we will, first, sketch how our novel explanation of Paul’s use of reason language in Rom 12.1 emphasises a new aspect in how Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15. Second, we will consider several passages in Rom 12–15 in which Paul uses language or ideas that resonate with the elements we have used in our explanation (an emphasis on vocation, on a new kind of thinking, on genuine humanness, and on sign production<sup>2</sup>).

This will require, for the first part, a discussion of the form and function of Rom 12–15, of how this material is framed by Rom 12.1–2, and of how interpreters attempt to integrate it with the rest of the letter (section 7.1), before we present our own proposal (section 7.2). In the second part, we will look at resonances in Rom 12–13 (section 7.3) and Rom 14–15 (section 7.4).

### 7.1 The form and function of Rom 12–15

Rom 12.1 marks a major shift in Paul’s argument, opening a new section, with a different character from the preceding argument.

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<sup>1</sup> Most interpreters agree on this point, with varying metaphors: Schnelle 2014 calls Rom 12.1–2 the “Überschrift des ethischen Hauptabschnitts” with a “leserlenkende Funktion” which defines a “Bezugsrahmen” in which to understand the statements that follow (606); for Seidensticker 1954 it is the “Motto für den folgenden Pflichtenkatalog” (256); for Wolter 2019 it is a “Präambel” (243); for Matera 2010, the “foundation for all that follows” (284); for Hahn 2017, the “preface to the pastoral counsel that follows” (212). Cf. further examples by Reichert 2001, 228; Jewett 2007, 724. An exception is Evans 1979, 33.

<sup>2</sup> That is “actions performed in order to signify, embody and express the meaning of the Christ event” (see section 1.4).

### 7.1.1 Paraenesis?

This judgment rests on observations about the form of Rom 12–15, which is often described as paraenesis.<sup>3</sup> Dibelius' characterisation has been influential: "einzelne Mahnungen, oft in Spruchform, lose aneinandergehängt, oder unverbunden nebeneinander stehend."<sup>4</sup> Dibelius further maintained that such rules or instructions as one finds in Rom 12–13 are not formulated for a specific occasion, but meet general needs of the early Christians; they are said to have "nicht aktuelle, sondern usuelle Bedeutung."<sup>5</sup> The function of paraenesis is generally agreed to be advice about matters of which those who are addressed are already convinced<sup>6</sup> and thus the content is often conventional or traditional; in addition the material is often expected to be arranged in random fashion.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes such form critical observations have corresponded with a relative lack of interest in Pauline ethics.<sup>8</sup>

### 7.1.2 Integration of "theology" and "ethics"?

While for Dibelius the ethical instructions were unconnected to the main exposition of the letter, for many scholars since it was vital to find some way of integrating Rom 1–11 and Rom 12–15. The relation between Rom 1–11 and Rom 12–15 has been described in various terms: as "theology followed by application",<sup>9</sup> or as a turn from "theological exposition" to "pastoral exhortation",<sup>10</sup> or from the "indicative" to the "imperative."<sup>11</sup>

Many scholars since claim that, for Paul, "theology" and "ethics" belong together and attempt to integrate them in some way. Thus, for instance, Dunn

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<sup>3</sup> Dibelius 1919, 71 (for Rom 12–13). Cf. for example Betz 1988, 215; Byrne 1996, 361; Matera 2010, 283. Wolter 2019, 245 n. 9 maintains the usefulness of the term against the criticism of Esler 2003, 53. On paraenesis, see also the contributions in Starr and Engberg-Pedersen 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Dibelius 1919, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Dibelius 1919, 70. Some interpreters have distinguished between "Allgemeine Paränese" in Rom 12.3–13.14 and "Spezielle Paränese" in Rom 14.1–15.13 (e.g. Käsemann 1980, 311).

<sup>6</sup> Matera 2010, 283.

<sup>7</sup> Thompson 2011, 10 summarises Dibelius' concept of paraenesis as "unconnected ethical advice."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dunn 1998, 628 n. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Dunn 1998, 626 (though he finds the distinction "misleading").

<sup>10</sup> Hahn 2017, 211.

<sup>11</sup> Bird 2016, 411, recalling the widely used schema established by Bultmann 1924. The distinction is now often criticised as inadequate (cf. the literature in Schnelle 2014, 597 n. 4).

maintains that Paul’s “theology was a living theology, a practical theology through and through”, such that the “application is inherent in the exposition itself” and the “imperative is the inevitable outworking of the indicative”,<sup>12</sup> for Matera, “Paul is the herald of a gospel in which theological and ethical issues are so closely related that it is difficult for the apostle to proclaim this gospel without pointing to its ethical implications,”<sup>13</sup> and the goal of Rom 12.1–15.13 is to show that the gospel is the “source of moral life.”<sup>14</sup> For Schnelle, transformation and participation in Christ are categories in which divine action and the human action can be integrated such that ethics becomes “die Entsprechung zum neuen Sein.”<sup>15</sup> However, such claims do not yet show how such an integration works and how it relates to concepts in the ancient encyclopedia.<sup>16</sup>

### 7.1.3 More than ethical advice?

To explain how such an integration might work, it is necessary to find a function for the actions which Rom 12 describes, which goes beyond mere “ethics” in the sense of right moral conduct. One such model is Wolter’s correlation between “ethos” and “identity”.<sup>17</sup> Any social group which wants to maintain its distinctive identity needs a distinctive ethos which displays its identity. Thus it is the function of such an ethos,

es den Angehörigen der Gruppe möglich zu machen, sowohl ihre Zusammengehörigkeit als auch ihre Unterscheidung von der Mehrheitsgesellschaft zur Darstellung zu bringen und damit die Gruppe erkennbar werden zu lassen und die soziale Kohäsion unter ihren Mitgliedern zu befestigen.<sup>18</sup>

Applying this model to Romans, Wolter suggests that Rom 1–11 can be read as a “Konzeptualisierung der christlichen Identität” and Rom 12,1–15.13 as a sketch, in several spheres of action, of “ethisch[e] Verhaltensweisen” in which Paul’s

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<sup>12</sup> Dunn 1998, 626, 630.

<sup>13</sup> Matera 2010, 161.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Thompson 2011, 120 sees Rom 12.1–15.13 as indication of “Paul’s concern for moral transformation”.

<sup>15</sup> Schnelle 2014, 597, 599–600. He even claims a “selbstverständliche Einheit von Glauben und Handeln in der Kraft des Geistes” (610).

<sup>16</sup> Though sometimes reference is made to Pindar’s γέννοι, ὅτις ἐσοὶ μαθών (*Pythia* 2.72), e.g. Dunn 1998, 630.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Wolter 2009; Wolter 2019, 244.

<sup>18</sup> Wolter 2019, 244.

hearers can express (“zum Ausdruck bringen”) this new identity, such that it becomes “erfahrbar” for group-members and “erkennbar” for outsiders.<sup>19</sup> Wolter also hints at the function of Rom 12.1–2 as providing a “theologisch-ethische Deutung” for what follows.<sup>20</sup> The advantage of the model is that “ethical” actions are more than merely right moral conduct: they have the function of displaying an identity. The problem, however, is that this function only appears to a sociological perspective on Paul’s community formation processes and is not related to concepts Paul himself might use, as part of the ancient encyclopedia. In his Romans commentary, Dunn had already hinted at a similar model, when he applied the categories of his version of a “New Perspective on Paul” to Rom 12:

In the letter so far Paul’s chief concern has been to redefine the relation between Jew and Gentile within the saving purpose of the one creator God. And that has involved a redrawing of the boundaries and redefining of the characteristics which mark out the people of God. Since ethics and communal relationships were part of these boundaries and distinctive characteristics, his task cannot be completed unless he carries on the process of redefinition into the sphere of ethics.<sup>21</sup>

Dunn’s account seems to relate the function of the ethical actions as identity markers for the redefined people of God more directly to the theological exposition in the preceding letter than Wolter’s does, but this may also be because his reading of the soteriology in the “theological exposition” of the letter sets great store by sociological categories. The integration is still one that appears only on the horizon of the interpreter.<sup>22</sup>

As a final model that emphasises a function of the concrete practice to which Rom 12–15 exhorts which goes beyond mere “ethics”, we will consider Barclay’s reading of Rom 12.1–15.13 as being about the “construction of a Christian habitus”.<sup>23</sup> Because the concept of a habitus implies dispositions, valuations, and perceptions in a given culture that are embodied,<sup>24</sup> this perspective on the “ethical instruction” sees certain actions, relations, and attitudes as expressive of

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**19** Wolter 2019, 244.

**20** Wolter 2019, 243.

**21** Dunn 1988b, 716.

**22** Or if it is presented as part of the ancient encyclopedia, then in very general terms, unrelated to the text of Romans, e. g.: “for a Jew it would be self-evident that faith and theology must come to expression in daily living” (Dunn 1988b, 708).

**23** Barclay 2015, 493–519, here 493. For Barclay’s retrieval of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, see Barclay 2015, 506–8, especially n. 23–25.

**24** Cf. Barclay 2015, 507.

values, and thus again as more than merely “right conduct”. It allows Barclay to interpret the language about the σῶμα in Rom 6.12–13 and 12.1 in terms of what is enacted in the body.<sup>25</sup> Some of his formulations seem very close to our own articulation in terms of sign production, for instance, when he says that for Paul “the body is the place where the resurrection life of Jesus (the new self) becomes visible and active in human lives”, that the “renewal of the mind” (Rom 12.2) needs to be “expressed in the ‘presentation of the body’” (12.1), or that “it is in the body that the believer ... is required, visibly and demonstrably, to display the presence of the resurrection of Christ, in the service to righteousness and holiness.”<sup>26</sup> Barclay is also right in emphasising that Paul is concerned with “the formation of a community structured by and oriented to the good news.”<sup>27</sup> What Barclay has in mind here are in particular criteria of worth, status, honour, and cultural distinctions which are part of the surrounding culture, but which have no place in the new community which is to be based on “unconditioned welcome”, and aims for a “way of life recalibrated in disregard of whatever ethnic, social, or individual characteristics had previously constituted the believer’s cultural or symbolic capital.”<sup>28</sup> The strength of this approach is that the community is supposed to express in their habitus a new orientation of values which correspond to the good news. Barclay can also bring into correspondence his interpretation of Paul’s theology of grace, as marked by incongruity with the worth of the human recipient, with the values that the embodied habitus should reflect, namely a “welcome” irrespective of criteria of worth, “ignoring norms or identities extraneous to the good news.”<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the logic of gifts which create obligations allows Barclay to claim a concept from the ancient cultural encyclopedia as underlying the nexus between the human response and God’s action in Christ.<sup>30</sup> Finally, Barclay can frame this nexus in terms of an element from Rom 12.1–2. He takes the phrase διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ to be the foundation of the act of presenting one’s body, and that this appeal is to the mercies of God “which bears no relation to the preceding status.”<sup>31</sup>

We have discussed Barclay’s reading in some detail, because it is an excellent example for how an account of Paul’s “theology” and his “ethics” could be integrated, based on concepts that are part of the cultural encyclopedia (gifts),

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<sup>25</sup> Barclay 2015, 504–505.

<sup>26</sup> Barclay 2015, 505.

<sup>27</sup> Barclay 2015, 508.

<sup>28</sup> Barclay 2015, 509.

<sup>29</sup> Barclay 2015, 512.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Barclay 2015, 505.

<sup>31</sup> Barclay 2015, 508.

and because “ethical” actions appear as expressive of something, and not merely as “right moral conduct”. Our own explanation is in many formal respects similar. However, we also have some reservations with regards to Barclay’s account. First, Barclay seems to put too much emphasis on “values” and “dispositions”, and not enough on the “missional” aspects of the new behaviour.<sup>32</sup> Second, while he claims that “God wills newly competent agents who express in practice their freedom from sin and slavery to righteousness”,<sup>33</sup> in his reading of Paul, incongruity is perfected to such an extent that human agency still seems to get less scope than it perhaps should (“what is given them is not a new set of competencies added to their previous capacities”<sup>34</sup>). The main differences, however, will emerge from our own positive proposal.

## 7.2 How Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15

In this section we show how our own explanation of Paul’s use of reason language in Rom 12.1 emphasises a new aspect in how Rom 12.1–2 frames 12.3–15.13. To show this we will (1) argue that Paul uses the paraenetic material to depict his vision of community life in Rom 12–15; (2) summarise our reading of Rom 12.1–2; (3) propose a way in which our reading of Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15.

### 7.2.1 Paraenesis to depict a vision of community life

We propose that Paul is using the literary form and the traditional content of “paraenetic” materials not in order to add a practical application to his exposition (like a modern sermon), but rather because in this way he can paint a picture of the kind of community with whose formation he is concerned.<sup>35</sup>

This then serves as the concrete picture of community life which is required for the missional collaboration which Paul seeks to promote. Our own assump-

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<sup>32</sup> For our use of “missional”, cf. section 1.4.

<sup>33</sup> Barclay 2015, 519.

<sup>34</sup> Barclay 2015, 518.

<sup>35</sup> Insofar as Paul encourages to a way of life which his hearers have not yet adopted, one should speak of a protreptic function; insofar as he encourages them in something they already share, of a paraenetic function. Our proposal is not, however, about the literary genre of Romans as such (cf. for instance Aune 1991).

tion on the “reasons for Romans” debate<sup>36</sup> is that Paul writes his letter to the Romans in order to win the Christ-followers in Rome for a friendly collaboration in his missional project.<sup>37</sup> Because this missional project requires a certain kind of community life and a particular understanding of the good news and its implications, Paul sets out his basic understanding of the good news in the body of the letter. But because this missional project requires a missional existence of the communities, he is at the same time using the letter to encourage them to the life which embodies such a missional existence, in appropriate sign production.

That paraenetic material serves such a function, in which a vision of more than “ethical” advice is offered, is strongly confirmed by the way in which this material is framed in Rom 12.1–2. To make this point clear, we will first summarise our reading of Rom 12.1–2.

### 7.2.2 Summary of our reading of Rom 12.1–2

In chapter 6, we have offered our own explanation of Paul’s use of reason language in Rom 12.1 as a contribution to reading Rom 12.1–2. Romans 12.1–2 functions as a protreptic appeal to a certain way of living in the communities of Christ-followers. Paul’s use of λογικός in Rom 12.1c alludes to traditions about genuine humanness, the role of human beings in the cosmos, and the exercise of reason as their specific capacity. It presents the way of living to which Paul exhorts as the fulfilment of the genuinely human vocation (and indirectly as the fulfilment of the aspiration of the philosophers).

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Donfried and Manson 1977, Wedderburn 1988, Jervis 1991, Theobald 2001, Reichert 2001. See the further literature cited by Barclay 2015, 455 n. 13. Since a full explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1, given its place in the structure of the letter, depends in part upon what Paul hopes to achieve in writing his letter as a whole, it is necessary here to state our assumption, even though there is no space to argue our point in detail. Our interpretation is similar to the emphasis on community formation in Barclay 2015, 455–457; cf. Theobald 2001, 14: “[Paulus] wollte die Römer für eine ehrliche apostolische Partnerschaft mit ihm dadurch gewinnen, dass er sie von seiner Sache überzeugte”.

<sup>37</sup> Jewett 2007, 726 speaks of “Paul’s missionary project” but restricts it too narrowly to Paul’s plans for Spain. Reichert’s proposal – that Paul wants to both prepare his hearers in Rome in case he can visit them and continue in his “Missionswerk” and equip them for a “selbständige Weiterverbreitung des Evangeliums” in case he will not – has much to commend itself (cf. Reichert 2001, 99). What we mean by “missional” emerges from our reading of the human vocation in terms of sign production (cf. our remarks in section 1.4).

We have further argued that presenting one's body as a living sacrifice (Rom 12.1b), the action to which Paul exhorts, refers to more than simply ethical living: what is in view is a missional existence, one that produces signs of the new reality which has been inaugurated in the messiah. Romans 12.1c identifies this as the genuinely human existence in which the vocation of human beings as such can be fulfilled. This is based on the liberation and renewal of human beings which Christ has brought and which now grounds the missional existence in the conditions of the new age which has been inaugurated in the death and resurrection of Jesus and become available for those who belong to him, both Jewish and Gentile Christ-followers.

We have further argued that in Rom 12.2 Paul speaks of the renewal of the mind and of the capacity to discern the concrete will of God in every situation of life in which Jesus-followers find themselves. We have circumscribed this discernment of what God wants as the concrete determination of how in a given situation Christ-followers can produce the best sign of the good news and the new creation. Such a sign will be an action which expresses the good news of Christ even in the adverse and hostile conditions of the present (cf. Rom 12.2a) and which is oriented toward the eschatological consummation in the new creation (cf. especially Rom 13.11–14).<sup>38</sup>

### 7.2.3 How this reading frames Rom 12–15

Our reading of Rom 12.1–2 implies that Paul frames the actions to which he exhorts in 12–15 as instances of the sign production in which the human vocation consists. Paul applies the concept of a human vocation, with its structure of a sign production based on an understanding of God in relation to the world, to those in Christ and to the new cosmos inaugurated in Christ. This means that the kind of actions for which Rom 12–15 gives examples are more than merely “ethical” acts. Rather, they are signs produced by newly liberated human beings which “interpret” what God has done through Christ, reflecting the new understanding of God and responding to it and embodying it appropriately and communicatively.

If our reading is on target, then Paul's allusion to the philosophical tradition about a human role in the cosmos, with its structure of grasping the truth about

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<sup>38</sup> The eschatological dimension which is implicit in Rom 12.2a becomes explicit in Rom 13.11–14. The correspondence between Rom 12.1–2 and 13.11–14 has been emphasised by Käsemann 1980, 348.

the cosmos and producing signs of this understanding, appeals to a concept that is part of the ancient encyclopedia, and that itself already implies an integration of “theology” and “ethics”. For both aspects are held together in the role of human beings in the cosmos, the vocation of those who are λογικοί. Both the true understanding of God in relation to the cosmos and the articulations as appropriate signs – words, deeds, relations, and dispositions – are based on the specific capacity of being λογικός.

Paul applies this concept of a human vocation to those who are in Christ and have been baptised. This means there are important discontinuities with the philosophical tradition. Their bodies have been liberated from having to produce signs of “sin” and “death” and are now able to produce signs of the new reality.<sup>39</sup> Their minds have been renewed and they are able to understand God as he has revealed himself in the Christ event.<sup>40</sup> Their role is the role of human beings in the cosmos, but it is in dynamic relation to the inaugurated new creation and oriented towards its eventual consummation.<sup>41</sup>

But at the same time, because the structure of the human vocation is the same, what Paul claims as something which can be fulfilled in the concrete actions done by those in Christ is the fulfilment of that genuine humanness to which the philosophers aspire.<sup>42</sup> This genuine humanness is only possible, for Paul, through what Christ has done, but in so far as they live up to it in concrete acts, it becomes a sign of *their* genuine human life.<sup>43</sup> The genuine humanness displayed in such actions is itself a sign of the good news, and hence missional, because the good news implies that what Christ has done has been for the rescue

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**39** See section 5.3.

**40** See section 6.4.

**41** See section 5.4.

**42** This is supported by Rom 16.19, where Paul explicitly expresses his intention for his hearers: “For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise in what is good (θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς σοφοὺς εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν) and guileless in what is evil” (NRSV). For the copious Stoic material on the figure of the wise man (ὁ σοφός; *sapiens*) see SVF 3.544–656, especially SVF 3.557–566 (the wise man does all things well [πάντ’ εὖ ποιεῖν] and his actions are perfect [πρᾶξι τελείαν]; cf. also Rom 12.2d). For a definition of the wise man as someone able to speak well on the great issues and to keep the right measure (μετρίως) in his dealings with the vicissitudes of life, see Isocrates, *Ad Nic.* 39 (cf. Rom 12.3 and the emphasis on unity [see also Rom 16.17]).

**43** Thus we agree with Barclay that “God’s grace ... generates and grounds an active, willed conformity to the Christ-life, in which believers become, like Christ, truly human, as obedient agents” (2015, 519), but we are not sure whether his insistence on the “eccentric existence” (cf. 518, following the work of D. H. Kelsey, cf. Barclay 2015, 501 n. 12) misses out on a dimension of genuine humanness which our reading of Romans (cf. chapter 5) attributes, as one of the implications of the Christ gift, to those who are rescued.

of human beings, not just from future “wrath”, but for their liberation and restoration to their genuinely human role in the cosmos. That restoration is not a re-ristination,<sup>44</sup> however, because it is the role of human beings within a cosmos in which the new creation has been inaugurated, and their sign production in the present – in suffering and prayer – can become part of God’s action to bring about the new creation in its full realisation.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the actions to which Paul exhorts are framed as missional signs. Paul is concerned with community formation, but this community formation serves the purpose of missional existence: a community which lives in the way outlined in Rom 12–15 is itself producing a sign of the new reality. It thus becomes the primary place, in advance of the eschatological consummation, in which the “new creation” is manifesting itself in a world that is still in “eager longing” for this to become fully apparent (Rom 8.19).

The fact that much of the content of Rom 12–13 is not materially different from what contemporaries could approve<sup>46</sup> should not be surprising, if Paul’s concern is not with “moral instruction” as such, but, rather, with inculcating a mindset that is able to understand the revelation of Christ as the basis for a missional existence, producing appropriate signs as a service to God “im Alltag der Welt”<sup>47</sup> and as summing up in articulate worship the praise and longing of a creation which is still in “labour pains”.<sup>48</sup> This means to live in such a way as that one’s actions, thought patterns, relationships, community structures, and patterns of worship are lived with the overriding concern for the appropriate sign production for the good news, within the new creation that has begun to be launched.

We may summarise how Paul’s framing in Rom 12.1–2 implies that the actions to which Paul exhorts are more than merely “ethical” in six points. First, because these acts are performed by agents who are indwelt by Christ and the Spirit, these acts are, as it were, “sacramental,” pointing to a reality which

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**44** Cf. also Rom 5.15–21, where it is clear that God is not just restoring “Adamic” humanity to an original situation. In Christ a new situation has begun, which fulfils yet goes beyond what was intended for “Adam.” Cf. also our discussion in section 5.2.4.1.

**45** Cf. section 5.4.

**46** For a detailed comparison of Rom 12–13 with Jewish-Hellenistic “ethical instruction” see Thompson 2011. For other contexts, see Schnelle 2014, 610. Sometimes, however, such comparisons neglect vital differences that arise due to the embedding of actions in a way of life (for such a type of critique, cf. Rowe 2016). Of course, the eschatological outlook of Rom 13.11–14, for instance, is very different.

**47** For the phrase cf. Käsemann 1970, though we use it without his implication that Paul seeks to abolish the concept of cult itself, which seems to owe much to his own context.

**48** For the formulation, cf. Wright 2013, 1509.

they also make present.<sup>49</sup> Second, because they are performed by subjects who are aware of a new kind of understanding.<sup>50</sup> Third, because they are done in a liberated body, which is no longer coerced by “sin” and “death”.<sup>51</sup> Fourth, because they are done in the context of a new kind of community.<sup>52</sup> Fifth, because they are done in obedience to the form the human task now takes (as Paul thinks, if our reading of Rom 12.1 is on target). Sixth, because they are now “missional”, in the sense that others can be drawn to the message of reconciliation when they see these actions.

This way of reading the contribution of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 to how Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15 fully coheres with Paul’s overall aims in writing the letter:<sup>53</sup> by framing his vision of their life together as a missional existence, which fulfils the genuinely human role in the cosmos, he commends and promotes a conception of their community life which is both required for the desired collaboration in his missional project and rooted in his theological understanding of the new way of being human in Christ, to which such existence aims to witness.

### 7.3 The ideal of a community fulfilling the human calling (Rom 12.1–13.14)

In this section we consider several examples from Paul’s portrait, in Rom 12.3–13.14, of the community of Christ-followers and how they should live to fulfil their human calling. The language of λογικός in Rom 12.1 points to the role of

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**49** This seems to be in part what Barclay 2015 emphasises in statements such as “Christian life is an impossible newness given as an unfitting gift, such that everything in this life refers back to its source and foundation in the Christ-gift, and forward to its eschatological fulfilment as eternal life” (517). Cf. also Schnelle 2014, 602.

**50** This would be similar to the Stoic idea that a completely right action requires right insight (cf. e.g. SVF 3.501). Cf. also Schnelle’s claim that Paul’s ethics is a “Einsichtsethik” or that “nicht im Materialgehalt seiner Weisungen setzt Paulus neue Akzente, sondern in der Begründung” (2014, 610), though it is not entirely clear what “Begründung” here means.

**51** Cf. our reading of Rom 5 and 6 in chapter 5.

**52** Which includes Jewish and Gentile Jesus-followers and cuts across social divides. Indifference to previous categories of worth is clearly important for such a new community, but our emphasis is that this displays a new way of being human, rather than simply a critical stance towards entrenched systems of honour. The positions discussed in section 7.1.3 can be seen as concerned with this aspect, without, however, seeing the importance of the calling of the community as such.

**53** We have hinted at our assumption in sections 5.6 and 7.2.1.

human beings within the cosmos. It puts an emphasis on genuine humanness, on understanding and the exercise of reason, and on humans discovering their place in the cosmos. Paul applies these ideas to the new reality of those in Christ.

These themes are to some extent reflected in the structure of Rom 12.1–13.14. For Paul, new creation is already at work in the “microcosm” of the community and each member must discover their place within it: They are to think clearly to discern their place and their different tasks within the “body” (Rom 12.3–8). Yet Paul expands the frame: they must also discern their place in their relations and towards outsiders (the wider world) (Rom 12.9–21) and negotiate their location in relation to the wider political reality (Rom 13.1–7). However, their overall place in the cosmos is oriented towards the eschatological horizon of new creation (Rom 13.11–14).

We have argued that Rom 12.1–2 frames the material in Rom 12–15 in terms of genuine humanness, the human vocation, sign production for the new creation, and a new kind of thinking. We will now look at examples within Rom 12.3–13.14, where Paul’s portrait resonates with these themes directly: in Rom 12.3–8, with thinking and vocation (section 7.3.1); at certain points in Rom 12.9–21, with genuine humanness, thinking, and sign production (section 7.3.2); in Rom 13.11–14, with a vocational sign production for the new creation (section 7.3.3).

### 7.3.1 The many tasks within the one body (Rom 12.3–8)

Having spoken of the human calling based on the human endowment with reason, the λογική λατρεία, it is highly significant that the first thing to which Paul exhorts in Rom 12.3 is a kind of thinking (μη ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ’ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν).<sup>54</sup> But what they should be thinking about is that they are one body in Christ,<sup>55</sup> that, within this larger whole, each one of them has a different task entrusted to them, and that they should not be thinking too highly of themselves and their role (μη ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ’ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν), but with appropriate moderation assess their own role (σωφρονεῖν) according to the measure that lies in the task entrusted to them (μέτρον πίστεως).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Cf. also νοῦς and δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12.2.

<sup>55</sup> This point is noted by Keener 2016, 167–172 (who also connects it to reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles [170]).

<sup>56</sup> For such a reading of μέτρον πίστεως, cf. Goodrich 2012, 2013b (πίστις as “trusteeship”); Barclay 2015, 510 (“role of communal responsibility”); Wolter 2019, 265–266. The main argument is

Thus, right at the start of this passage, Paul puts an emphasis on thinking as the human proprium required for genuine humanness, but now oriented towards one's place within the "body" of Christ. Paul addresses every individual in the community with this summons (παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν [Rom 12.3]) but this thinking occurs in the context of the community.<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, by rightly discerning their place within this larger whole, they are also oriented towards the new kind of service, the missional existence of the community. Paul expresses this vocational point with the simile of a human body (σῶμα) and its members (μέλη).<sup>58</sup> All the members of the "body" have a different function (οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πράξιν [Rom 12.4]), a particular role within a larger whole, which need to work together for the purpose of the whole. All those in Christ (Rom 12.5) have a common vocation – the missional existence of the community – but this overall vocation requires different functions, or, as they are called in Rom 12.6, different "gifts" (χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα).

Based on these two observations, we can conclude that Rom 12.3–8 confirms our reading of the λογικὴ λατρεία as referring to the genuine human vocation, in resonance with the philosophical traditions we have studied. Three observations are noteworthy in this regard.

First, the picture of organic unity of the community in which each member contributes to the purpose of the whole is decidedly "teleological." This coheres well with the entire providential and teleological background of the Epictetus parallels we have studied in chapter 4.

Second, the focus on a common task of the community also resonates with the themes of the larger discourse on being human and how the endowment with reason is what enables humans to fulfil their specifically human goal. We may point back to our discussion, in section 3.1.8, of Aristotle's *Politics*, where the endowment with reason and speech is the basis for the life of a πόλις and for the justice required for such a life together. The community of those in Christ has become possible through the Christ event; they have been liberated and re-

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the contextual coherence achieved for Rom 12.3–8 and the correspondence with 2 Cor 10.13. Cf. somewhat differently the reading of πίστις as "reliability" by Schumacher 2012, 229–230.

<sup>57</sup> So, rightly, Keener 2016, 168. Cf. Phil 2.1–5.

<sup>58</sup> The story of the application of this image in the political sphere, from Menenius Agrippa onwards, has been told many times. See the material in Walter 2001. For Stoic uses of this image see in particular Thorsteinnsson 2006, 151–2 (including Epictetus 2.10.4). Epictetus 2.10.4 (see section 4.2) is particularly fascinating because it explicitly uses the term λογισμός for the human capacity for reason and applies it to the members (hand or foot) with regards to thinking and acting with reference to the whole.

newed in their thinking, and now they can and should think clearly in the way required for the life and purpose of the community.

Third, the differentiation, from a basic human role, into more specific circumstances and adapted to personal characteristics also finds parallels in Greco-Roman philosophical contexts. We have discussed this aspect with regards to Epictetus 3.23 and 2.10 in section 4.2 (where we also referred to Panaetius' teaching about the four personae in Cicero's *De officiis*). In this perspective, Rom 12.3 also fits with the emphasis on self-knowledge required to fulfil one's role.<sup>59</sup>

Hence, the parallels which we have emphasised for the interpretation of Rom 12.1 are also fruitful parallels for Rom 12.3–8. To summarise how Rom 12.3–8 contributes in our reading to the missional vocation: the point is to be embedded within a particular (messianic) community and to exercise one's function within it in service of the common mission in a way that most promotes the common sign production for the gospel. This requires sound estimation of one's own role and individual gifts.

### 7.3.2 Signs of genuine humanness and the relation to others (Rom 12.9–21)

In Rom 12.9–21, Paul continues his portrait of the ideal life of the community but already broadens the focus towards outsiders (cf. Rom 12.14, 12.17–21). The passage is headed by a statement about genuine love (Rom 12.9a) which introduces a *leitmotif* developed in Rom 13.8–10 as a central mark of the life of those in Christ.<sup>60</sup> The short statements which follow (Rom 12.9b–13) paint in rapid strokes a picture of genuine humanness, in which participles (and adjectives) characterise the subjects in terms of ideal actions and dispositions.<sup>61</sup> This looks like a counter-portrait to the list that characterises the corrupted humanity of Rom 1.29–31. We note that the list includes service to God (τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες [Rom 12.11]).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Epictetus 2.10.1 and 1.6.25, discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>60</sup> Against Thorsteinsson 2010, 96, who finds the reference to love “actually quite peripheral”.

<sup>61</sup> For a similar determination of the function of the participles, cf. Reichert 2001, 260.

<sup>62</sup> Thus even though in a sense Rom 12 as a whole is under the heading of the service to God performed by Christ-followers, this particular statement expresses it concretely as well. This reading is to be preferred to the textual variant καιρω for Rom 12.11.

The actions in view in 12.9–15 are more concrete examples of the new life in the community.<sup>63</sup> While some statements are very basic and general (e.g. ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρόν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ [Rom 12.10])<sup>64</sup> others are more practical and tied to a given context (ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἀγίων κοινωνοῦντες [Rom 12.13]). But they are all signs of genuine humanness. The ethos described through these actions is not missional in the sense that these have to be direct acts of proclamation: it includes statements about members getting along and not being engaged in competition for honour (τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι [Rom 12.10]). But it is missional in the sense that by behaving in these genuine human ways, they are producing signs which witness to the truth that a new way of being human has become possible in Christ.<sup>65</sup> This is further supported by the observation that some of the thematic combinations seem to recall earlier statements from the letter.<sup>66</sup>

In this portrait of what the genuine human vocation looks like, it is once more significant that Paul includes a statement about the right kind of thinking (φρονεῖν) in Rom 12.16. They need to think clearly and appropriately about their role within the community and their contribution to its unity, and about their role and their position towards the wider world.

And this clear thinking once more has to do with their missional vocation, as becomes clear in Rom 12.17b: For they are to be minded towards the noble and good (προνοούμενοι καλὰ) and this before all human beings (ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων).<sup>67</sup> This supports our reading in terms of sign production, because what they are thinking about should express itself in actions which others perceive (and hence is missional).

And since Rom 12.17b stands in parallel to the injunction not to repay evil for evil in Rom 12.17a (μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες), we may infer that even the statements about not taking revenge (Rom 12.19–21) have in view the purpose of the community's existence, namely being a witness to what the good news proclaims, the new creation inaugurated in Christ, and producing the ap-

<sup>63</sup> While Rom 12.14 looks towards outsiders, it may still refer to what should be done when the community meets. This verse is often compared to Jesus tradition; for analyses, see Wilson 1991, 165–171; Thompson 1991, 96–105; Jacobi 2015, 87, 92–96; cf. Wolter 2019, 290.

<sup>64</sup> Note how this is taken up again, forming a kind of *inclusio*, in Rom 12.21. Though there, additionally, it emphasises the injunction not to take revenge.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Rom 12.17.

<sup>66</sup> For example Rom 12.12 recalls Rom 5.2–5, which already reflects the new situation in Christ (cf. section 5.1).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. also Phil 4.8. Note also the motif of προνοία as one of the marks of being human (cf. Dierauer 1977, 227–229).

propriate signs of genuine humanness. As far as possible, they should live in peace with all human beings (Rom 12.18), and display genuine humanness in this way. But if this is not possible, it is precisely their reactions to hostility which can function as signs faithfully produced for the new reality of which they are called to be witnesses. Paul has already explained in Rom 8.22–23 that – within the eschatological horizon he presupposes – this may involve suffering.

Thus we conclude that Rom 12.9–21 resonates at certain points directly with an emphasis on a genuine human vocation, on clear thinking in service of this vocation, and on producing signs which reflect the new reality which has begun in Christ.

### 7.3.3 Rom 13.11–14: The human vocation in its eschatological horizon

Romans 13.11–14 places the human calling into its eschatological horizon.<sup>68</sup> Thus it explains in more detail what not being “conformed to the present age” (Rom 12.2a) means and how the “renewal of the mind” (Rom 12.2b) relates to the new creation.<sup>69</sup> The human calling has the structure of a sign production based on understanding. We can see this structure also in Rom 13.11–14, with an emphasis on eschatology: (1) The aspect of understanding that Paul emphasises in Rom 13.11–12b is the discernment of the eschatological moment, the Christ-followers’ location with regards to the renewal of creation. (2) Paul exhorts to a sign production based upon this understanding in Rom 13.12c–14. The connection between the right understanding and the actions which reflect it can be seen most clearly in the language used in Rom 13.12cd, which recalls both earlier statements which we have argued should be understood as describing a sign production (in Rom 12.1b [see section 6.2] and in Rom 6.12–23 [see section 5.3.2.2]); but it can also be seen in the language used in Rom 13.14, which makes it likely that also Rom 13.13 should be understood in this way. The following remarks substantiate this argumentative outline.

*Ad* (1): Paul emphasises the discernment of the eschatological moment in Rom 13.11 (εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν). This is about knowing what “time it is” in

<sup>68</sup> Cf. the significant parallels of our passage with 1 Thess 5.1–11, which is full of similar eschatological motifs, and culminates with a vocational statement (5.10) and an encouragement to unity (5.11).

<sup>69</sup> For links between Rom 12.2 and Rom 13.11–14, cf. e.g. Cranfield 1979, 679; Byrne 1996, 327 (though he seems to restrict the function of the eschatological reference to motivation); Hahn 2017, 237.

terms of the new creation inaugurated in the Christ event and its soon expected consummation (ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία [Rom 13.11]), and acting appropriately (“waking up” [Rom 13.11]) based on the recognition of the moment. The σωτηρία in Rom 13.11 refers not just to the rescue from divine wrath, but to the moment when creation will be fully transformed to the new creation and humans transformed and embodied within it.<sup>70</sup>

Paul uses the imagery of night and day to express the eschatological “location” of those in Christ in Rom 13.12ab: The night (νύξ) has advanced (it is coming to its end), the day (ἡμέρα) is near (ἤγγικεν). The imagery of Rom 13.11 and 13.12ab mesh together (cf. the image of ἐγερθῆναι): the approaching dawn is that of the near σωτηρία (Rom 13.11), including the fully transformed new creation.

*Ad (2):* The two exhortations in Rom 13.12cd make use of the eschatological imagery that Paul has set up in Rom 13.12ab:

13c ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους

13d ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός

The darkness (σκότος) obviously aligns with the night (νύξ), the light (φῶς) with the day (ἡμέρα), in their eschatological valence as set up by Paul’s language. Paul uses these terms to qualify the actions to which he exhorts and thereby makes a connection between these actions and what they signify and embody with respect to eschatology: the ἔργα τοῦ σκότους are actions which produce signs of “darkness”; the formulation ἐνδύσασθαι τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός has in view actions which produce signs of “light” (though the actions are referred to metonymically<sup>71</sup>). Thus Rom 13.13c and 13.13d are clear instances of sign production.

This is supported by the observation that these exhortations are similar to the exhortations in Rom 12.1b and Rom 6.13, 6.16, 6.19, which use παράσταται language in different ways to speak about sign production, as we have argued in sections 6.2 and 5.3.2.2. This similarity is most apparent in the overlap of the

**70** Cf. our discussion of Rom 8.17–30 (section 5.4.2). Through Christ and the Spirit the transformation of those in Christ has already begun; this incipient renewal is the condition for their ability to produce signs in the present, which God can use in “producing” the new world (cf. 1 Cor 15.58).

**71** The formulation refers to the “putting on” rather than the “using” of the “weapons”. But the contrastive parallelism with τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους makes it clear that actions are in view, and not just an “identity”. Jewett’s assumption (2007, 822–823) that ὄπλα here must refer to “armour” instead of “weapons” is unnecessary.

image of the weapons (ὄπλα) in Rom 6.13, both for negative (μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῆ ἀμαρτίᾳ) and for positive sign production ([παραστήσατε] τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ), with its use in Rom 13.13d.

Thus, we may conclude that Rom 13.12 describes the sign production of those in Christ in the present as pointing to the new creation. The genuine human vocation in the eschatological present consists of actions which are both signs of the new creation and which embody it in the present.

A reading of Rom 13.12 in terms of sign production is also supported by Paul's use of similar language in Rom 13.14a (ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν). Here what they should be “putting on” (ἐνδύσασθαι) is Christ.<sup>72</sup> This shifts the emphasis to another way of describing the sign production of the community: the actions to which they are exhorted are pointing to Christ, they witness to the Christ event and its significance. Because Christ is the one in whose death and resurrection a new age has been inaugurated, this formulation still belongs to the eschatological horizon. It also points to Christ as the one who is genuinely human and through whom they can exercise their genuinely human vocation.

Our interpretation of Rom 13.12 and 13.14 makes it likely, that also Rom 13.13 should be understood to be drawing a connection between “ethical” action in the present and what it implies in terms of eschatological understanding. While Paul's language in Rom 13.13 sounds just like a description of decency in terms of conventional morality (εὐσχημόνως)<sup>73</sup> and warns of excessive behaviour which any moralist might want to rule out, the eschatological valence of the day and light imagery established in Rom 13.11–12b gives Paul's language of ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατεῖν an eschatological focus, which merely ethical applications of day and night imagery would lack.<sup>74</sup>

They are not to engage in bouts of drinking and revelry and strife and so on (Rom 13.13) because they would thereby behave just as when they could not do otherwise, being beholden to the desires of the body, and producing signs of the rule of “sin” (cf. Rom 6.12). Their behaviour would be producing signs of the “night” from which they are already liberated, even as the entire cosmos has

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72 For comparative material on this image cf. Wolter 2019, 343–344. Our reading in terms of sign production has the advantage of integrating this language with Paul's other statements and bringing out the active, missional and vocational emphasis which includes, but goes beyond Wolter's reading of the image (344).

73 Cf. e.g. Dunn 1988b, 788; Byrne 1996, 400.

74 An example for the latter would be Seneca, *Ep.* 122.

not yet been transformed to the light of “day” which their sign production is to anticipate and embody in the present.<sup>75</sup>

Hence, we may conclude from the above remarks that Rom 13.11–14 clarifies the human vocation in terms of eschatology and in relation to Christ. The shape of the human calling in Paul is to discern what God is doing in relation to the world and to be part of a community which produces the signs shaped by that understanding and embodying it appropriately (ethos) and communicatively (mission). Given that for Paul and early Christ-followers, the Christ event and what it inaugurates is the decisive action of God in the present, fulfilling the human calling requires this eschatological understanding and the appropriate reflection of it, both in distance from the world beholden to the “darkness” (Rom 13.12c, cf. Rom 12.2a) and in being “armed” and fully equipped with the weapons of “light” (13.12d). By producing signs which appropriately reflect the meaning of the Christ event, their semiotic sphere of action becomes charged with the meaning of who Christ is. Christ is the truly human one who has brought about the change of conditions which can release the genuinely human life, the life that fulfils the human calling (Rom 5.12–21). Romans 13.11–14 confirms that genuine humanness means living in such a way as to embody who Christ is and what he did for the world and the new creation which he has inaugurated in appropriate and intelligent action, as sign production of and for the new creation.

Thus, we conclude that Rom 13.11–14 resonates with Rom 12.1–2 and with how it frames the material in Rom 12–13. It amplifies the eschatological notes of new creation which are hinted at in Rom 12.2 and makes explicit how the genuinely human vocation is Christ-shaped (which was only implicit in Rom 12.1b via its reference to Rom 6). The new humanity is marked in particular by Christ and the new creation, and thus their actions in the present are not merely “ethical” but vocational signs of an integrated missional existence.

## **7.4 Signs of the kingdom and the united community: Rom 14.1–15.13**

Further direct resonances with our explanation of Rom 12.1–2 in terms of sign production and vocation can be found in Rom 14.1–15.13. In this section we

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<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the contrast between “putting on” Christ (Rom 13.14a) and not providing for the flesh and its desires (Rom 13.14b) does not suggest that the former merely refers to ethical behaviour; rather it makes it likely that providing for the flesh and its desires amounts to a failure to be genuinely human in the way that it is now possible: by producing with one’s actions signs of the liberation, through Christ, of the body from its enslavement to desires.

argue in outline that in Rom 14.1–15.13 Paul explains (1) a meta-principle which is (2) vital for the unity of the community of those in Christ. (3) The unity of the community is itself the ultimate sign of the genuine humanness that has become possible in Christ: when Jews and Gentiles glorify God together, they fulfil their vocation as the new humanity.

Romans 14.1–15.13 confirms our reading of Rom 12.1 in terms of a human vocation and of sign production at several points. For the meta-principle is itself explained in terms of vocation and sign production.

Most scholars assume that Paul speaks in Rom 14.1–15.6 about a situation in Rome, where the labels “weak” and “strong” refer to actual groups (and hence that Paul “addresses real [not hypothetical] problems in the Roman congregations”<sup>76</sup>), while a minority sees a reference to general types of behaviour, such as Paul might have encountered in various places.<sup>77</sup> Scholars have offered widely diverging proposals on the identification of the “strong” and the “weak”:<sup>78</sup> a majority see the “strong” as predominantly Gentile Christ-followers (but including Jews like Paul) and the weak as predominantly Jewish Christ-followers (though including proselytes and God-fearers).<sup>79</sup> Others have seen the “weak” as Gentile Christ-followers, who as former God-fearers are still influenced by Jewish customs,<sup>80</sup> or the “weak” as Jews who are not Jesus-followers and the “strong” as Jews who are,<sup>81</sup> or have associated the labels with status differences among Christ-followers in Rome.<sup>82</sup> For our own reading, it is not necessary to determine the extent to which Paul’s exposition in Rom 14.1–15.13 is specific to the situation in Rome, nor to identify the precise contours of the groups or types of behaviour that are in view. This is because the resonances with our reading of Rom 12.1–2 in terms of vocation and sign production are at the level of how Paul argues, and do not directly depend on a reconstruction of a social or historical situation. However, we concur with the majority view that Paul’s language

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**76** Barclay 2015, 511.

**77** E.g. Stowers 1994, 320 (“dispositions of character”); Reichert 2001, 271–275 (the “weak” is a “Typus, der ... noch nicht durch konkrete Personen repräsentiert ist” [271]); Thorsteinnsson 2010, 91–92; cf. Wolter 2019, 348.

**78** For a concise overview see Wolter 2019, 347–348.

**79** Cf. Wolter 2019, 347.

**80** E.g. Schmithals 1988, 492 (who lists a lot of comparative material on “wine” and “meat” consumption [491–492]).

**81** So Nanos 1996, 85–165 (criticised by Reasoner 1999, 131–136).

**82** So Reasoner 1999.

fits best with a social context in which there are different views on the observance of Jewish food laws and Sabbaths.<sup>83</sup>

For our first point, then, we note the following. In 14.1–15.13 Paul addresses in initially<sup>84</sup> somewhat veiled terms a problem that has been a central point of contention throughout his ministry, namely the problem of aspects of Jewish ethos which can no longer be maintained in the same way as before for all those who now belong to a community in which Gentile Jesus-followers are accepted without having to become Jewish. Paul tries to explain a meta-principle and he chooses the practice of abstaining from meat (expressed as eating vegetables [Rom 14.2]) as a concrete example to illustrate this principle.<sup>85</sup>

The principle concerns cases where there are different convictions about particular actions (e.g. eating or not eating meat) among different Christ-followers. When two Christ-followers come to opposite stances regarding such a question, their stance may also imply a judgment about the other and about how the other lives as a Christ-follower. Paul urges them not to despise or judge the other based on their stance but to accept one another<sup>86</sup> based on their having been accepted by God already (ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο [Rom 14.3]).

Significantly for our reading, Paul argues for this acceptance of the other based on the vocation of the other. For the acceptance by God is based upon what Christ has done, so that they belong to him, and upon this a new service is founded.<sup>87</sup> Thus, when discussing potential tensions in the community, he reaches precisely for the category of vocational service. In Rom 14.4, Paul proceeds to argue by using metaphors for vocation: who are you to judge the “house-slave belonging to another” (ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην), who is responsible to their own master (κύριος).<sup>88</sup> It is also confirmed by the vocational language of not living or dying for one-self,<sup>89</sup> but to the κύριος in Rom 14.7–8. Thus, Paul

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**83** Barclay 2015, 511 claims a “now widespread consensus” regarding this point, which he elaborates in Barclay 2011.

**84** It is made explicit in Rom 15.8–9.

**85** That a generalisation is in view can be seen from the fact that Rom 14.5 mentions a different practice (relating the observation of special days). Cf. also Rom 14.21 (drinking wine).

**86** Cf. Rom 14.1, Rom 15.7 (ἀλλήλους).

**87** Cf. Rom 14.9, 14.15 (ὑπὲρ οὐ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν). Cf. also our discussion of Rom 6 in section 5.3.

**88** Cf. also Rom 14.12 (using λόγος but not in a sense relevant for Rom 12.1). For slaves as property of their masters see Bradley 2011, 242 (slaves as “items of property over which their owners had complete powers of disposal”). Further, Nasrallah 2019, 57–59 on the varied ontological status implied in such perceptions. Paul’s point here is that no one else but the κύριος has a right to judge the service of those who belong to him.

**89** For this language as vocational, cf. Rom 6.10–11.

confirms the idea of a service to God (or perhaps here Christ) for all Christ-followers in order to stress that this does not give one Christ follower the right to judge another's service to God.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, Paul's explanation of this acceptance can be illuminated by our notion of sign production. Paul can let certain differences of conviction and different vocational judgments stand (Rom 14.5) because the overriding principle is that their actions should be producing the appropriate signs in which their vocation consists. In some cases, they may perform or not perform a particular action, but what matters is that their doing or not doing so produce an appropriate sign:

ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ· καὶ ὁ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ ἐσθίει, εὐχαριστεῖ γὰρ τῷ θεῷ· καὶ ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐσθίει καὶ εὐχαριστεῖ τῷ θεῷ. (Rom 14.6)

This leads us to our second point.<sup>91</sup> Such thinking is required for the unity of the community because it is able to overcome differences of opinion by adopting a viewpoint which sees actions and decisions not merely as acts, but in terms of sign production in which what signifies and what is signified matter, and in some cases what is signified matters more.<sup>92</sup>

What an action signifies depends on circumstances, which include the convictions of fellow Christ-followers. An act which produces a sign of one's own conviction may be an appropriate sign in some circumstances. But insofar as it creates a stumbling block for the "brother", is to be judged a wrong act, precisely because of the sign it produces (Rom 14.13).<sup>93</sup> Even if it is a good conviction in itself,<sup>94</sup> insofar as it harms a "brother", it is no longer a "walking in love" (οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς).<sup>95</sup>

**90** Cf. also the self-examination with regards to one's role in the "body" in Rom 12.3–8. This point holds at least in matters that do not pass a certain threshold (thus Paul uses the example of *λάχνα*). If the point would be circumcision, we should rather expect the intense polemics of Philippians 3.2–3.

**91** Beginning from Rom 14.13, Paul focuses on how the principle of acceptance is important for unity.

**92** The same principle is expressed in 1 Cor 10.31 (εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε).

**93** Paul plays with different uses of *κρίνειν* in Rom 14.13.

**94** Cf. the reference to the good spoken of as evil (Rom 14.16). The meta-stance Paul takes is also the basis for the statement in Rom 14.14, which points to a logic of sign production as well: insofar as something becomes, in context, a sign of what is *κοινόν*, it may no longer be appropriate as a sign to be produced by the agent who wants to serve Christ, even if their personal conviction is different. The discussion in 1 Corinthians 10.23–33 is, of course, closely related.

**95** And thus it deviates from the *leitmotif* of love (cf. Rom 12.9a, Rom 13.8–10).

The relevance of an understanding in terms of sign production for the unity and vocation of the community is clearly confirmed by Rom 14.17–18. The particular questions of food and drink are not the issue in and of themselves,<sup>96</sup> but insofar as they become the occasion for an appropriate sign production in the given circumstances and given the involved agents: whether the sign concerns “brothers” in the community or even outsiders.<sup>97</sup> What matters is the “kingdom of God” and serving in it:

- 17a οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις καὶ πόσις  
 17b ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.  
 18a ὁ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ  
 18b εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ  
 18c καὶ δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. (Rom 14.17–18)

Paul here clearly states that what matters is not the particular praxis in terms of food and drink (Rom 14.17a), but whether one’s actions produce an appropriate sign of δικαιοσύνη, εἰρήνη and χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (Rom 14.17b). What is required is that these actions become signs for the kingdom of God (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ [Rom 14.17a]). The phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ<sup>98</sup> refers both to those aspects of the current age in which God’s reign is already inaugurated through those in Christ, who already “rule”, producing appropriate signs of δικαιοσύνη (cf. our discussion of Rom 5.17 and 5.21 in section 5.1.3), and to the consummate reality in the future, the new creation to which their sign production points. The community in which δικαιοσύνη is displayed in this way is the “already-inaugurated” sign of the new world which has been decisively launched in Christ.<sup>99</sup> It is in this way (ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ) that they fulfil their vocation, serving Christ (Rom 14.18a). In doing so, they produce signs and serve in a way which is well-pleasing to God (Rom 14.18b, cf. Rom 12.1, 12.2). And someone who serves in this way is also approved by human beings (δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις [Rom 14.18c]), both other Christ-followers and those outside.<sup>100</sup> This shows that such sign production is also missional, because it communicates a different way of being human, one which can overcome differences of ethos in service of a common calling, as the “body” of Christ.

<sup>96</sup> For a perspective in which humans go beyond sustenance, see also Epictetus 1.6.14.

<sup>97</sup> The perspective on outsiders may be implicit in the subject of Rom 14.16 (βλασφημείσθω). It is explicit in Rom 14.18 (δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 4.20; 6.10–11; 15.24; 15.50; Gal 5.21; 1 Thess 2.12.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Rom 5.17 and 5.21.

<sup>100</sup> Even though outsiders might also react differently, with incomprehension or even persecution.

This leads us to our third point. The unity in the “body” is itself the ultimate sign for the kingdom and the new way of being human. Paul stresses the importance of this unity in Rom 14.19, where what counts is the building up of the community (ἡ οἰκοδομή ἢ εἰς ἀλλήλους).<sup>101</sup> But it becomes clear that this unity functions as a sign of what God is doing, when, in Rom 14.20, Paul calls the united community itself τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ which would be undermined by human actions insisting on divisions based on “food”.<sup>102</sup> The sign of unity is at the same time God’s work and something to which the appropriate vocational sign production of those who belong to the community contributes (which requires clear thinking about one’s own convictions, and the differing convictions of other members in the “body”).

This point is articulated particularly clearly towards the end of our passage, in Rom 15.5–7. Paul articulates the goal of a united community in the form of a wish that expresses what he has been trying to promote with his writing:<sup>103</sup>

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δάψη ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν (Rom 15.5).

This picks up exactly Rom 12.1–2 by expanding upon the kind of unity in the “body” of Christ that followed as his first explanation of the λογικὴ λατρεία in Rom 12.3–8. They need unity in the kind of thinking (φρονεῖν) required for their vocational purpose, defined by Christ, so that they can produce the appropriate signs which fulfil their genuinely human calling:

ἴνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Rom 15.6).

Their calling is to praise God, together, as a united community, in which Jews and Gentiles who belong to the messiah, Jesus, can stand together as a renewed humanity.<sup>104</sup> Epictetus describes the human vocation as a ὑμεῖν τὸν θεόν

**101** Cf. also Rom 15.2.

**102** Barclay 2015, 512, 515 seems to restrict the reference of the “work of God” to a “person”, rather than the community (like e.g. Cranfield 1979, 723). In contrast to Rom 14.15, however, the context of Rom 14.19 and the overall trajectory towards the unity expressed in Rom 15.5–7 seems to favour an interpretation in terms of the community (so e.g. Dunn 1988b, 825; Jewett 2007, 866 [though he strains the metaphor of οἰκοδομή (Rom 14.19) by understanding ἔργον as “building erected by God”]). Note that Epictetus 1.6.19 offers a fascinating vocational parallel to the ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 14.20.

**103** Cf. the encouragement (παρακλήσις) in Rom 15.5 with Rom 12.1a.

**104** This becomes explicit in Rom 15.8–9.

(1.16.20), such as God can be known in his providential works. Paul describes the human vocation here as giving glory to God (δοξάζειν τὸν θεόν), such as he has made himself known in the messiah. And when they do this together, as Jewish and Gentile Christ-followers, with one mind and with one voice, their worship proclaims in words what their unity communicates as the ultimate sign of the new way of being genuinely human, which has become possible through the rescue brought in Christ: the true humanness of the Jew-plus-Gentile community created in the risen Christ and by the Spirit.<sup>105</sup> This is what underlies Paul’s appeal for mutual welcome:

Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ἡμᾶς εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.  
(Rom 15.7)

They should accept one another, as Christ has accepted them, and in this way produce a sign that gives God glory (εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ). Their unity based on Christ is a sign of the δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ. The conclusion of the discursive argument of the letter, Rom 15.7–13, brings these themes to a climax, in a complex tapestry which weaves together scriptural texts – law, prophets, writings – with a focus on the messiah and the renewed humanity in which Jews and Gentiles (Rom 15.8–9) can be brought together in the messianic communities, in their common worship and in their joint service.

## 7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown that our novel explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 emphasises a new aspect in how Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15. By applying the idea of a human vocation – with its structure of a sign production based on a new understanding of God – to the task of those in Christ, Paul frames the “ethical” material and the actions to which he exhorts as a missional sign production in which the human vocation is fulfilled. In framing Rom 12–15 in this way, “theology” and “ethics” are integrated by a conception that is part of the ancient encyclopedia. This is because the structure of the human vocation as a sign production based on an understanding of God in relation to the world already integrates in itself “theology” and “ethics”. Paul’s application of the idea to those in Christ goes beyond anything Epictetus might have envisaged, because such existence is oriented towards Christ and the new creation. However, because the structure of the human vocation is the same, he might have still

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. also how Ephesians 2.11–21 develops such ideas explicitly.

recognised, had he come across Paul's letter, that Paul claimed in this genuinely human existence the fulfilment of the aspirations of the philosophers.

Furthermore, we have pointed out resonances in Rom 12–15 with these themes from Rom 12.1–2. Thus, we have seen that the integrated missional existence which is offered in an idealised picture in Rom 12–15, despite using conventional forms, nevertheless contains a strong emphasis on the vocation of Christ-followers to represent God and witness to the good news by their deeds and words. We have also pointed out how the logic of sign production, with which we have analysed the structure of the human calling in Paul, and in the philosophical tradition, is an influential part of the picture offered in Rom 12–15. The goal of the united community, which represents the fulfilment of genuine humanness, is to overcome the divide between Jews and Gentiles, by co-relating them to Christ, in mutual appreciation, common worship and joint service to God. Paul hopes that his writing will prepare a future collaboration in the matter of the good news with the Christ-followers in Rome. He draws on powerful proreptic motifs that are familiar from philosophical discourse and which are influential in the wider cultural contexts. But these are ultimately rooted in his theological anthropology, which, we have argued, is centrally determined by the idea of a vocation for human beings. It is in the shape of this vocation that what is separated out as theology and ethics, or theory and praxis, is inseparably linked and bound together. The notion of sign production further emphasises how this is grounded in the defining characteristic for human beings in Paul's time: their endowment with reason. This reason has been renewed in the wake of the Christ event, and the renewed human beings can now aspire to embody and communicate the truth of the good news in a way that anticipates the new creation and thus contributes to its eventual consummation.

## 8 Paul on the human vocation: Concluding summary

In this final chapter we briefly summarise our main results.

In chapter 1, we proposed that the problem of why Paul uses the language of λογικός in Romans 12.1 deserves fresh consideration in its ancient context. We have sketched our own solution in outline: by using the language of λογική λατρεία, Paul appeals to the philosophical idea of a genuinely human vocation in the cosmos and claims its possible fulfilment in the communities of Christ-followers. Our solution rests on a fresh reading of some of the parallels that interpreters have adduced, in particular Epictetus 1.16.20–21, and on a broader contextualisation of the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα. We have pointed out weaknesses and strengths of previous proposed solutions, which chiefly render λογικός either as “reasonable”, “spiritual”, or “genuine”, though we have also discussed Reichert’s proposal (“communicative”) and Scott’s recent suggestion (“guided by reasoning thought”). These proposals either focus on linguistic parallels (the “semantic approach”) or on thematic parallels (the “*traditionsgeschichtlich* approach”). The problem with the “semantic approach” is that the parallels are linguistically similar, but may be thematically different from Rom 12.1; conversely, the “*traditionsgeschichtlich* approach” finds parallels which are thematically similar (resting on a judgment about the topic), yet may be linguistically distant. We have advocated an approach which focuses on fewer qualitative parallels, which are explored in depth and within a broader ancient discourse. Finally, we have introduced some of our interpretative terms (“human vocation”, “genuine humanness”, “sign production”).

In chapter 2, we have evaluated Scott’s recent study on the semantics of λογικός, which identifies seven different categories of its use. We have found that Scott’s study puts some important linguistic constraints on other solutions, but that it contains several methodological problems, and that his own proposal for Rom 12.1 contextualises too narrowly and misses the significance, within the ancient cultural encyclopedia, of discussions involving humans as λογικὰ ζῶα and of the evaluative connotations of such language within ancient discourse on what it means to be human. In particular, we have examined the evidence on which Scott’s own proposal for Rom 12.1 rests and shown that it offers inadequate parallels for λογική λατρεία. In the same chapter (section 2.2), we have then explored the definition of human beings as θνητὰ λογικὰ ζῶα using a corpus-based discourse analysis. We have shown in detail that this definition was pre-Pauline, associated mainly with Stoicism, but also became part of other philosophical traditions, and would have been well known to wider audiences. We

thus show that it is plausible to assume that Paul could allude to the concept. We have then surveyed key discourses in which the notion of human beings as rational animals is used in discourse on the human place in the cosmos, on the human vocation, and on the ideals of genuine human life. This represents the first step in our approach towards a broader contextualisation of Rom 12.1.

In chapter 3, in complementary fashion, we have surveyed key texts in the wider Greco-Roman discourse on what it means to be human (mainly based on an evaluation of texts discussed in secondary literature). Through this broader contextualisation we have shown the prominent role given to the human endowment with reason in ancient anthropological reflection. These traditions link up with our investigation into the initially mainly Stoic definition of human beings as  $\theta\eta\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\kappa\acute{\alpha}\ \zeta\omega\alpha$ , which marks an endpoint of a development, in which central aspects of what it means to be human are associated with humans' specific capacity as beings endowed with reason. This includes justice, worship, community life, and cultural production. Through this we could show that within the ancient encyclopedia, speaking about humans as rational animals is no mere classificatory exercise, but can be a way of speaking about genuine humanness. In the same chapter, we have also discussed the idea of a human role in the cosmos and the language used to express such an idea. In conversation with a study by Heinemann, we have identified three criteria for the notion of a human vocation in Greco-Roman philosophical contexts: divine intentionality, a task for human beings, and a distinct capacity on which this task is based, which can be recognised by human beings. We have then discussed this notion by means of several examples: we have analysed in detail an important passage in Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* (which uses Aristotle's lost work as a source) which shows the language and teleological motifs that form part of discussions of the human role in the cosmos; we examined further evidence in Seneca, which shows how normative conceptions of the human task are based upon their distinct capacity of being rational; finally, we have cited further examples which show that this idea was widespread and how it could be expressed using a variety of language.

In chapter 4, we have examined key texts in Epictetus which are necessary for understanding Epictetus 1.16.20–21 as a qualitative parallel to Romans 12.1. The main result is that we have shown that Epictetus 1.16 uses the language of  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  to speak about the distinct capacity on which a human vocation is based. Epictetus 1.16.20 describes what this vocation consists in with the image of singing hymns to God and uses the language of  $\epsilon\pi\gamma\omicron\nu$  (Epictetus 1.16.21) to identify this description as his task as one who is  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ . We have shown this through a detailed exegesis of the entire *Discourse* 1.16. We were able firmly to locate Epictetus on the map of the ancient discourse on being human by pointing out several resonances with themes and motifs we studied

in chapters 2 and 3. Such an attempt can make plausible, as we argued, the proposal that Epictetus is an important parallel for Rom 12.1 because he brings to clearest expressions traditions which were widespread. We have further shown, based on Epictetus 1.6 and 1.16, that there is a two-part structure to the human vocation in Epictetus. We have analysed this structure as a sign production based on an understanding of the world in relation to God: humans are meant to use their specific capacity, reason, to discern God's providence and to produce signs of their understanding. Such "sign production" involves intelligent articulations of God's providential concern for human beings as well as an appropriately "ethical" response in terms of gratitude. The language of singing a "hymn to God" (Epictetus 1.16.20) is suitable as a description of the human vocation which captures both aspects. In this chapter we have also shown, based on an analysis of Epictetus 2.9, that the definition of human beings can be directly employed to speak about genuine humanness. All of this has prepared us for reading the reason language in Rom 12.1 in a vocational sense.

In the light of these findings, we have turned to Romans in chapters 5–7. In chapter 5, we have argued that there is strong evidence in Rom 1–8 for reading Paul's argument as being about genuine humanness as well as being about salvation, in a way in which both are fully integrated. We have shown this, first, by arguing that Rom 5.12–21 is key to the argument of Rom 1–8 and that it claims that the Christ event implies that a new way of being human is available for those in Christ. This was supported both by general considerations about the Adam-Christ comparison and in particular by our reading of the language of "ruling" in Rom 5.17 and 5.21. Second, we have confirmed the importance of genuine humanness for Romans 1–8 by an analysis of Rom 1.18–32 which shows that Paul here describes the corruption of genuine humanness and that his critique of humans implies the idea of a human vocation. We have shown this both with reference to Jewish-scriptural traditions and with reference to Greco-Roman traditions. The broad contextualisation in terms of the wider discourse we have examined in chapter 3–4, both in terms of language and motifs, has allowed us to detect in Rom 1.18–21 not only the idea of a human vocation, but also a structure of the human vocation which is similar to the structure of the human vocation in Epictetus, namely an appropriate sign production based upon a true understanding of the world in relation to God. We have further argued that the strong emphasis upon the corruption of thinking in Rom 1.21–22 and Rom 1.28 supports our claim that the issue is genuine humanness. This is because, in the light of the wider discourse we studied in the previous chapters, the corruption of thinking is at the same time the corruption of that which makes humans human and is the basis of their human calling. Further support for our reading has come from Paul's use of Jewish traditions about dehumanising

idolatry in Rom 1.23–25. That genuine humanness and the idea of a human vocation underlies Paul’s argument in Rom 1.18–32 is particularly important in view of the strong links between Rom 1.18–32 and Rom 12.1–2. In this chapter, we have also argued, third, that Rom 6.1–11 claims that through the messiah’s death and resurrection the bodily conditions for human beings have changed, such that it is now possible for those in Christ to exercise their genuinely human vocation. This vocation consists in producing signs of δικαιοσύνη. This reading is confirmed in Rom 6.12–23, where we have argued that Paul’s language of *παρίσταναι* describes the vocation of Christ-followers as a sign production which is missional in that it witnesses to and embodies the meaning of Christ’s death and resurrection. By producing signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, those in Christ make manifest the truth about how God has rescued human beings so that they can exercise their genuinely human role in the cosmos. This interpretation of Paul’s *παρίσταναι* language in Rom 6 is important because Paul recalls it in Rom 12.1b. Fourth, we have briefly argued that Rom 8.5–6 further supports our reading by emphasising the role of the Spirit for the renewed thinking required for the genuinely human vocation, while Rom 8.17–30 puts the human vocation into a dynamic relation to a cosmos in which the new creation has been inaugurated: human beings are called, in suffering and prayer, and in the power of the Spirit, to be people in whom the signs of new creation are already coming to birth. In these respects, Paul goes significantly beyond Epictetus and the philosophical tradition. Finally, we indicated how such an emphasis on genuine humanness makes excellent sense in terms of Paul’s own sense of vocation as an “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom 11.13). Having established these points we could then turn to Rom 12.1.

In chapter 6, we have proposed our novel explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 and shown how it works exegetically in Rom 12.1–2. Key to our explanation is the recognition that Epictetus 1.16 uses the language of λογικός to speak about the capacity upon which a human vocation is based, and that Epictetus 1.16.20–21 is a parallel to Rom 12.1 in precisely this respect. We have demonstrated, first, that the syntax puts constraints upon any interpretation of the λογική λατρεία in Rom 12.1c. For Rom 12.1 is an act of exhortation or encouragement to a certain action (as marked by the παρακαλεῖν in Rom 12.1a; cf. Epictetus 1.16.21). This action is described as a “presentation of one’s body as a living sacrifice” in Rom 12.1b. In Rom 12.1c (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν) Paul makes a comment upon this action, using the reason language we set out to explain. This comment must contribute to the overall aim of exhortation to the action described in Rom 12.1. We have argued that the action described in Rom 12.1b is missional sign production for the new creation inaugurated in the messiah. This interpretation is strongly supported by the links created by Paul’s use of

παρίσταναι language in Rom 12.1b and Rom 6, where Paul uses it to describe the calling of those in Christ as a new service in which the body is used for producing signs of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ such as it has been displayed in Christ, and, hence, the vocation of producing signs of new creation and the good news. In this interpretation, Paul's description, in Rom 12.1b, of the missional task of those in Christ as a sign production based upon an understanding of God as he has made himself known in Christ should be compared with Epictetus' description of the task of human beings as "singing hymns to God" (Epictetus 1.16.20). As we have seen, this is an apt image to express the two-part structure of the human vocation as an understanding of divine providence in the world and responding to it in appropriate sign production. Epictetus identifies *this* description as his vocation (ἔργον) as a human being (λογικός [Epictetus 1.16.21]). In our interpretation of Paul's reason language in Rom 12.1, Paul makes the same move: Rom 12.1c identifies the description of the missional sign production (Rom 12.1b) as the genuinely human vocation (λογικὴ λατρεία) of those in Christ. This meets our syntactical criterion because arguing that a certain action is the fulfilment of one's role as a human being in the cosmos is an effective protreptic strategy. To establish that within the ancient encyclopedia, the λογικὴ λατρεία could refer to a "genuinely human vocation" we needed to argue three points. First, that λατρεία could be used in Rom 12.1c to speak of a service to God as a vocation. We have made this plausible based on an investigation of Paul's own use of λατρεία and λατρεύειν (including consideration of LXX tradition), an example from Plato's *Apology* and a passage in Philo. Second, that λογικός in Rom 12.1 could refer to the specifically human capacity on which a vocation is based. Such a sense is clearly documented in our reading of Epictetus 1.16–20. Given that Epictetus 1.16.20–21 is a strong thematic parallel to Rom 12.1, and in the light of our overall considerations of the philosophical and wider cultural traditions we have treated in chapters 2–4, and whose significance for Rom 1–8 we established in chapter 5, this assumption can claim strong support. Third, that the adjective λογικός could modify the action noun λατρεία in such a way as to point to its subject. We have shown that this is possible based on a general consideration of the ways in which adjectives can modify nouns, which includes the subject of such an action. We have confirmed this by looking at examples of adjectives modifying the noun λατρεία. But we have demonstrated the point by discussing an example in Diogenes Laertius where the adjective λογικός is actually used to modify an action noun in such a way as to point to human beings as its subject. Because λογικός can refer to human beings as the generic subject of a human task, and because λατρεία can refer to a service to God by any subject, we could then conclude that it is possible that the λογικὴ λατρεία refers to the idea of a human vocation. Owing to the aspirational dialectic inherent in the

concept of a vocation we have argued that the best rendering of λογικὴ λατρεία is “genuinely human vocation.” The result of our new explanation of Paul’s reason language in Rom 12.1 is that Paul presents the missional sign production in Rom 12.1b as the genuinely human vocation in Rom 12.1c. We have then further shown in this chapter how Rom 12.2 coheres with our reading of Rom 12.1. We have argued that the renewal of the mind refers to an active process of appropriating the new understanding of God (in relation to the world) that has become available in the Christ event. We have further argued that δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12.2c should be understood as vocational discernment. It is concerned with finding the best way, in a given situation, to use one’s actions to produce signs of the good news and of the new creation inaugurated in the messiah.

In chapter 7, we have shown how our novel explanation of Paul’s reason language emphasises a new aspect in how Rom 12.1–2 frames Rom 12–15. We have argued that Rom 12.1–2 implies that the missional sign production of those in Christ is their truly human vocation. This frames the actions to which Rom 12–15 exhorts as vocational signs. The notion of a human vocation (as a sign production based on an understanding of God) integrates what are traditionally called “theology” and “ethics”. If Paul appeals to such a conception in Rom 12.1, as our new explanation of Paul’s reason language suggests, then this would help explain the integration of Paul’s “theology” and “ethics”, which interpreters have claimed in various ways, by means of a concept that is part of the ancient encyclopedia. We have further shown that, in select passages in Rom 12.3–15.13, there are direct resonances with the main themes of our explanation of Rom 12.1–2 (genuine humanness, the human vocation, sign production, a new kind of thinking). We have established that Rom 12.3–8 emphasises vocational thinking with regards to the unity of the “body”; that, at several points in Rom 12.9–21 there is an emphasis on genuine humanness and a new kind of thinking; that Rom 13.11–14 amplifies the eschatological and christological dimensions of the truly human sign production; and, finally, that the argument of Rom 14.1–15.13 grounds an appeal for mutual welcome and unity in arguments about the Christ-followers’ vocation and service to Christ. Towards the end of this passage, Paul makes it clear that in particular the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christ-followers, in their united worship and joint service, is the major sign of the new way of being genuinely human and the inaugurated new creation in Christ. Paul’s own vocation is to exhort those in Christ to this way of fulfilling their role as human beings in a cosmos that is itself being transformed.

# Abbreviations and Conventions

In general, the abbreviations listed in the SBL Handbook of Style (2nd ed.) have been used. Some works are cited by abbreviations not (or differently) listed in the SBL Handbook of Style or are cited as specified below:

- APhR Ancient Philosophy & Religion  
BDAG Cited by lemma.  
CGCG van Emde Boas, Evert, Albert Rijksbaron, Luuk Huitink, and Mathieu de Bakker. 2019. *Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. Quoted by paragraph numbers.  
DK Diels, Hermann, and Walther Kranz. 1951–1952. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 6th ed. Hildesheim: Weidmann.  
DNP Der Neue Pauly (cited as BNP by the SBL Handbook of Style).  
EBR Cited by lemma.  
GE Montanari, Franco, Madeleine Goh, and Chad Schroeder. 2015. *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*. Leiden: Brill. Cited by lemma.  
LS Used to refer to passages in the collection of Long and Sedley 1987, cited by number and letter.  
LSJ Cited by lemma.  
SVF Cited by volume and number (except where page indicated).  
ZNT *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament*

In general, Greek, Roman and Jewish sources have been cited using the abbreviations in the SBL Handbook of Style. We have used different abbreviations for the following authors or works:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Aristotle, EN        | for <i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>                      |
| Cicero, ND           | for <i>De natura deorum</i>                       |
| DL                   | for Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae philosophorum</i> |
| Galen, PHP           | for <i>De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis</i>    |
| Sextus Empiricus, AM | for <i>Adversus Mathematicos</i>                  |

For inscriptions, the following abbreviations are used:

- IG *Inscriptiones Graecae. Editio minor*  
IKorinthMeritt Meritt, Benjamin D., ed. *Corinth VIII.1. The Greek Inscriptions 1896–1927*, Cambridge 1931.

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>IMaked</i>   | Rizakis, G. Touratsoglou, ed. <i>Ἐπιγραφές Ἄνω Μακεδονίας. 1. Κατάλογος ἐπιγραφῶν</i> . Athens 1985.   |
| <i>IOropos</i>  | Petrakos, B. G., ed. <i>Ἐπιγραφικά τοῦ Ἰωρωποῦ</i> . Athens 1980.  |
| <i>IPriene</i>  | von Gaertringen, F. Hiller, ed. <i>Inschriften von Priene</i> . Berlin 1906.   |
| <i>IPDésert</i> | Bernand, André, ed. <i>Les Portes du désert: Recueil des inscriptions grecques d'Antinooupolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Apollonopolis Parva et Apollonopolis Magna</i> . Paris 1984. |
| <i>SEG</i>      | <i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>   |
| <i>TAM II</i>   | Kalinka, Ernst, ed. <i>Tituli Asiae Minoris, II. Tituli Lyciae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti</i> . Vienna 1920 – 1944  |

Biblical texts are cited according to NA 28, BHS and Rahlf's edition of the LXX. Greek texts are cited according to the editions in the TLG canon (in some cases we name them explicitly), except where otherwise noted. Latin texts are cited according to the editions in *PHI Latin texts*, except where otherwise noted.

Translations for classical sources may be indicated by name only, when they are either part of the Loeb Classical Library, the Oxford World's Classics or the Penguin Classics. (In some cases, translations are also cited as secondary literature.)

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